

Local Development Plan

Preferred Options Paper

MARCH 2018

Have your say

Public consultation on the Preferred Options Paper (POP) will begin on **28 March 2018**, and will be open for a period of 9 weeks, ending on **30 May 2018**.

Availability of Preferred Options Paper

The POP document and supporting information, including the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Interim Report, will be available on the Council's website:

www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

The POP document is also available in hard copy to view during office hours at the following locations:

Planning Office, Bridgewater House, 23a Castlewellan Road, Banbridge, BT32 4AX

Banbridge Civic Building, Downshire Road, Banbridge, BT32 3JY

Craigavon Civic and Conference Centre, 66 Lakeview Road, Craigavon, BT64 1AL

Palace Buildings, The Palace Demesne, Friary Road, Armagh, BT60 4EL

Your comments on the POP Document and supporting information can be submitted by the various means below:

By email: ldp@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

By post: Planning LDP Team
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
Bridgewater House
23a Castlewellan Road
Banbridge, BT32 4AX

Online Questionnaire: <https://armaghbanbridgecraigavon.citizenspace.com>

The closing date for the receipt of comments is: **30 May 2018, at 5.00pm**

Please note that representations made at the POP stage should relate to strategic planning issues affecting our Borough. There will be an opportunity to engage in respect of more specific issues later in the LDP process.

The POP and supporting documents can be made available on request in other formats, and alternative languages where possible, by contacting the Council's Planning Office:

By telephone: 0300 200 7830 (NI General Planning Line);
0300 0300 900 (Main Council Line)

Public Consultation Arrangements

Public consultation on our Preferred Options Paper will run from 28 March 2018 and end on 30 May 2018. In the course of this consultation period there will be a series of public engagement sessions, during which you will have opportunity to view the POP document and supporting information and engage with members of our Local Development Plan team. Details of these events are set out below:

DATE	EVENT TYPE	LOCATION
Tuesday 10 April 2018	Public Engagement Session Afternoon (1.30pm - 3.30pm) Evening (5.30pm - 7.30pm)	The Palace Demesne Friary Road Armagh BT60 4EL
Wednesday 11 April 2018	Public Engagement Session Afternoon (1.30pm - 3.30pm) Evening (5.30pm - 7.30pm)	The Palace Demesne Friary Road Armagh BT60 4EL
Wednesday 18 April 2018	Public Engagement Session Afternoon (1.30pm - 3.30pm) Evening (5.30pm - 7.30pm)	The Old Town Hall 1 Scarva Street Banbridge BT32 3DA
Thursday 19 April 2018	Public Engagement Session Afternoon (1.30pm - 3.30pm) Evening (5.30pm - 7.30pm)	The Old Town Hall 1 Scarva Street Banbridge BT32 3DA
Tuesday 24th April 2018	Public Engagement Session Afternoon (1.30pm - 3.30pm) Evening (5.30pm - 7.30pm)	Millennium Court Arts Centre, William Street, Portadown, BT62 3NX
Friday 27 April 2018	Public Engagement Session Afternoon (1.30pm - 3.30pm) Evening (5.30pm - 7.30pm)	Brownlow Community Hub 7 Brownlow Road Craigavon BT65 5DL
Tuesday 1 May 2018	Public Engagement Session Afternoon (1.30pm - 3.30pm) Evening (5.30pm - 7.30pm)	Tommy Makem Arts & Community Centre 7 Cow Fair Keady Armagh BT60 3UE
Friday 4 May 2018	Public Engagement Session Afternoon (1.30pm - 3.30pm) Evening (5.30pm - 7.30pm)	Brownlow Community Hub 7 Brownlow Road Craigavon BT65 5DL
Tuesday 15 May 2018	Public Engagement Session Afternoon (1.30pm - 3.30pm) Evening (5.30pm - 7.30pm)	Rathfriland Community Centre John Street Rathfriland BT34 5QH
Tuesday 22 May 2018	Public Engagement Session Afternoon (1.30pm - 3.30pm) Evening (5.30pm - 7.30pm)	Lough Neagh Discovery Centre Oxford Island BT66 6NJ

Foreword

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council is very pleased to present our Preferred Options Paper (POP) as the initial stage in the development of the Borough's first Local Development Plan (LDP).

The transfer of the majority of planning powers to Council combined with Community Planning provides us with a real opportunity to shape the future of our Borough. Currently all planning decisions are considered in the context of Central Government Area Plans, some of which are well past their notional end dates. The new LDP is an essential tool in achieving our Council's vision and aims. It allows us to bring forward a planning framework which will guide sustainable development, support inward investment and protect and enhance our environment.

The LDP supports the delivery of the Council's Community Plan 'Connected', 2017-2030, which provides a strategic framework for the Borough for collaborative working, helping to integrate local and regional strategies and plans which will deliver positive change for local communities. Ensuring that local voices are considered is fundamental to the Community Plan process and as such, it is crucial that the LDP as the spatial reflection of the Community Plan, includes a meaningful and robust engagement framework.

The Preferred Options Paper (POP) is the first formal stage in the preparation of the LDP, and the first of three main public consultation documents that we will issue during the Plan process. The POP is designed to promote focused debate on key issues of strategic significance which are likely to influence the direction of future development within our Borough to 2030. As such this Paper sets out the key plan issues and the options available to address them, along with our Council's Preferred Options.

The main purpose of this consultation is to encourage feedback from a wide variety of interests and stakeholders so that they may be taken into account during the preparation of the Draft Plan Strategy, which is the next phase of the LDP. Therefore the POP offers the opportunity to influence the LDP, which will contain the planning policy framework and land use proposals needed to guide future development decisions within the Borough up to 2030.

Your views are very important to us and we welcome your comments on our Preferred Options Paper.



**Alderman Freda Donnelly,
Chair of Planning and Regulatory Services Committee**

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1. Introduction

The following section outlines the purpose of the Local Development Plan (LDP) and provides an overview of the stages involved in the LDP process.

Background

In April 2015, the responsibility for planning transferred from the former Department of Environment (DOE) to Local Councils under the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. This broad range of new powers and responsibilities

includes the preparation and review of the Local Development Plan (LDP) for the Borough, which our Council has begun work on.

What is the purpose of the Local Development Plan?

The Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Local Development Plan (LDP), comprising the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan, is to inform the general public, statutory authorities, developers, investors and other interested bodies of the policy framework and land use proposals that will guide development decisions within the Borough up to 2030.

The LDP will seek to facilitate future growth throughout the Borough for

housing, employment and services, whilst protecting our unique environment. The planning framework for development and land use over the plan period will be developed in line with the widely accepted term of Sustainable Development which is defined as ‘meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’

In order to contribute to the delivery of sustainable development, the LDP will

take account of the regional direction in the Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS), the Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland (SDS) and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS). Once adopted, the LDP will replace the operational planning policies in the existing Area Plans that were produced by the former Department of the Environment (DOE) – now Department for Infrastructure (DfI).

The Local Development Plan Process

There are four key stages in the LDP process (as illustrated in **Figure 1.1**), summarised as follows:

Stage 1 Initial Plan Preparation

The initial stage of the LDP process has now been completed and includes the following:

- Preparation of the evidence base which currently includes 14 topic-based Preparatory Papers (as listed in **Appendix B**);
- The Annual Housing Monitoring Summary Tables up to the period 31 March 2016;
- Publication of the LDP Timetable and Statement of Community Involvement (SCI);
- Informal consultation with Elected Members by way of a series of workshops;
- Formal engagement exercise with Section 75 Groups;
- Formal consultation with Statutory Consultation Bodies;
- Preliminary policy review;
- Initial stage of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) - incorporating the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Rural Proofing;
- Initial stage of Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA); and now the
- Publication of the **Preferred Options Paper (POP)** and associated documentation for public consultation. Associated documentation includes:
 - SA Scoping Report
 - SA Interim Report incorporating SEA and Rural Proofing;
 - EqIA Report;
 - Preparatory Papers (evidence base);
 - Annual Housing Monitor Summary Tables (up to 31 March 2016).

Figure 1.1 Stages in the Local Development Plan (LDP) Process

LDP STAGES	KEY ACTIONS
1	Publish Timetable Publish Preferred Options Paper
2	Publish Draft Plan Strategy and associated Assessments/Reports Independent Examination of Draft Plan Strategy Adoption of Plan Strategy
3	Publish Draft Local Policies Plan and associated Assessment/Reports Independent Examination of Draft Local Policies Plan Adoption of Local Policies Plan
4	Production of Supplementary Planning Documents Annual Monitor and 5 year review

Sustainability Appraisal Incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment

Note

The indicative timescales for the Key Stages in the LDP process are outlined in the Local Development Plan Timetable which is available to view on the Council's

website, at:
<https://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/resident/local-development-plan-residents/>

The formal Timetable lists the relevant Assessments / Reports that are published alongside the main Plan Documents.

The Sustainability Appraisal (SA), referred to previously, assesses the sustainability of the LDP proposals and how they will combine and interact in the LDP to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The SA which incorporates the SEA is a continual process which runs parallel with the preparation of the LDP. Integral to this process is the consideration of social, economic and environmental issues.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) and Rural Proofing is also carried out to assess the likely impact of the LDP proposals on the different sections of the community and whether it appropriately and proportionately caters for those living and working in rural areas as well as for those in urban areas.

The **Preferred Options Paper (POP)** sets out the Key Issues of strategic significance deemed to affect the Borough, along with the preferred options to address them. The Key Issues have emerged from our evidence base, from engagement with Elected Members and from formal and informal consultation with Statutory Consultation Bodies. The POP is a public consultation document and is not a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and appeals.

The main purpose of the POP is to promote and stimulate debate on the Key Issues and to encourage feedback from a wide range of public, community and key stakeholders, which will help to inform the next stage of the LDP process. For the majority of the Key Issues the POP has identified a range of options, with justification for the Council's preferred option. In some circumstances only one option has been identified due to there being no reasonable alternative options, however the rationale behind this is explained. At this stage in the process it is important to note that whilst a preferred option has been identified, no final decision has yet been made by the Council. The feedback received in respect of this consultation document will assist

in informing the appropriate way forward for the LDP.

In order to inform the POP, a preliminary review of operational planning policy has been carried out. A copy of this is available on the Council's website. However a more detailed policy review will be carried out in advance of the Plan Strategy.

Stage 2 Preparation and Adoption of the Plan Strategy

The Plan Strategy will set out the Council's strategic objectives and strategic policies to facilitate and manage development, along with a spatial strategy that indicates in broad terms the locations where different types of development will be accommodated within the Borough. During this stage the Council will make the Draft Plan Strategy and associated documentation including the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report and Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) available for consultation, after which all valid representations will be fully considered by the Council.

When the Council considers that all legislative requirements in the production of the Draft Plan Strategy have been met and that it is ready for the Independent Examination (IE), it will be forwarded to the Department (DfI) along with associated documentation and supporting evidence, for consideration. Following the IE, the Independent Examiner will issue a report to the Department (DfI) who will in turn issue a Binding Report to the Council, requiring it to incorporate any changes before adopting the Plan Strategy.

Stage 3 Preparation and Adoption of Local Policies Plan

The Local Policies Plan is the second document comprising the LDP. The Draft Local Policies Plan will be consistent with the adopted Plan Strategy and will set out the Council's detailed policies and proposals (zonings and designations)

regarding the future development of the area. The Draft Local Policies Plan will be a public consultation document and form a key part of the public participation process. During this stage the Council will gather information to help determine if bespoke local policies are required and to help inform the preferred locations for development in accordance with the Plan Strategy.

When the Council considers that all legislative requirements in the production of the Draft Local Policies Plan have been met and that it is ready for the Independent Examination (IE) it will forward it to the Department (DfI) along with associated documentation and supporting evidence, for consideration. As with the Plan Strategy document, the purpose of the IE is to determine the soundness of the Draft Local Policies Plan taking into account all representations and counter representations. Following the IE, the Independent Examiner will issue a report to the Department (DfI) who will in turn issue a Binding Report to the Council, requiring it to incorporate any changes before adopting the Local Policies Plan.

Stage 4 Monitoring and Review

Following the adoption of the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan, the Council will monitor and review the LDP, to help establish how the objectives in the Plan are being achieved and whether changes are required. The Council will carry out a review of its LDP every 5 years and no later than 5 years from the date of adoption of the Local Policies Plan.





2. Policy Context

The following section provides an overview of the regional and local policy context that has informed the preparation of this Preferred Options Paper (POP) and that will continue to be taken into account through the LDP process.

These include:

Regional Policy

- Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035
- Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS)
- Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS)
- 'Sustainable Water – A Long Term Water Strategy for Northern Ireland' 2015 – 2040
- Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)
- Planning Policy Statements (PPSs)
- A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (PSRNI)
- Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

Local Policy

- Existing Development Plans
- The Council's Corporate Plan 2015-2017
- The Council's Community Plan 2017-2030 'Connected'

Background

The Local Development Plan (LDP) is required to 'take account' of the regional policy context set by the Northern Ireland Executive and Central Government Departments, which includes amongst others, the Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS), the Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern

Ireland (SDS) and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS). Furthermore the LDP must also be prepared within the context of the Council's Corporate Plan and take account of the Council's Community Plan and other Council policies and strategies.

Policy Context (Regional and Local)

Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035

The Regional Development Strategy 'Building a Better Future', published in March 2012, is the Government's overarching spatial strategy for Northern Ireland up to 2035. The Strategy aims to take account of the economic ambitions and needs of the Region, and put in place spatial planning, transport and housing priorities that will support and enable the aspirations of the Region to be met.

The RDS takes account of key driving forces such as population growth and movement, demographic change, the increasing number of households, transportation needs, economic changes, climate change and the spatial implications of divisions that still exist in our society. The aims of the RDS, insofar as they relate to our Borough, are as follows:

- support strong, sustainable growth for the benefit of all parts of Northern Ireland;
- support our towns, villages and rural communities to maximise their potential;
- promote development which improves the health and well-being of communities;
- improve connectivity to enhance the movement of people, goods, energy and information between places;
- protect and enhance the environment for its own sake;
- take actions to reduce our carbon

footprint and facilitate adaptation to climate change;

- strengthen links between north and south, east and west, with Europe and the rest of the world.

Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS)

The Government's Sustainable Development Strategy 'Everyone's Involved', published in 2010, is aimed at identifying and developing actions that will improve the quality of life for current and future generations. The SDS sets out the following guiding principles of sustainable development:

- living within environmental limits;
- ensuring a strong, healthy, just and equal society;
- achieving a sustainable economy;
- promoting good governance;
- using sound science responsibly; and
- promoting opportunity and innovation.

The Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 requires that the LDP is prepared with a view to promoting and furthering the objective of sustainable development. A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is carried out alongside the preparation of all LDP documents to ensure that the policies and proposals in the LDP are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. An Interim Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report, incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), has been published

alongside this Preferred Options Paper (POP) and is also subject to public consultation.

Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS)

Regional transportation is addressed through 'Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future (ESTF) – A New Approach to Regional Transportation' published in June 2011. It complements the RDS and sets out how regional transportation will be developed beyond 2015. The RTS complements the RDS, with strategic objectives aimed at providing a transportation network that supports economic growth whilst enhancing the quality of life for all and reducing environmental impacts of transport.

'Sustainable Water – A Long Term Water Strategy for Northern Ireland' 2015 – 2040

The Sustainable Water Strategy, published in March 2016, provides a framework for action which will facilitate implementation of a range of initiatives aimed at delivering the long term vision to have a sustainable water sector in Northern Ireland. As the responsibility for the water sector is spread across a number of Government Departments, the strategy seeks to deliver a more joined up approach, setting out a range of initiatives to deliver the Executive's long term goal of a sustainable water sector in Northern Ireland. The Strategy intends to achieve this by encouraging a sustainable and integrated approach to managing all our different water needs in a way

which promotes regional development, without compromising the environment or increasing flood risk.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)

The SPPS, published in September 2015, reaffirms the regional strategies that are contained within the RDS and sets out strategic planning policy for a wide range of planning topics. In order to assist with the delivery of sustainable development, the SPPS includes the following core planning principles which shall be taken into account during the preparation of the LDP:

- Improving Health and Well-being;
- Creating and Enhancing Shared Space;
- Supporting Sustainable Economic Growth;
- Supporting Good Design and Positive Place Making; and
- Preserving and Improving the Built and Natural Environment.

The SPPS also sets the strategic direction for the new councils to bring forward detailed operational policies within future LDP. This framework sets out regional strategic objectives and associated strategic policy for 16 subject areas, such as housing and transportation.

To inform the preparation of the POP a preliminary review of the operational policies in the retained Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (PSRNI) has been carried out and is available to view on the Council's website. However, a more detailed policy review will need to be carried out ahead of the Draft Plan Strategy, during which the precise detail of individual policies will be considered as well as how they can be tailored to the local needs of the Borough.

Planning Policy Statements (PPSs)

A number of retained PPSs provide the operational planning policy across a range of subject areas. Under the new planning system introduced in Northern Ireland in 2015, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council has the opportunity to develop its own planning policies to address the particular circumstances of the local area. New planning policies will be contained in both the Plan Strategy and the Local Policies Plan of the LDP. Within the Plan Strategy, policies will be strategic and Borough-wide. Within the Local Policies Plan, policies will be tailored to specific sites or areas.

Until our Council has developed its own tailored policy the current operational policy produced by Central Government will continue to apply, in tandem with the SPPS and other material planning considerations. As outlined above, a detailed policy review of the PPSs shall be carried out during the preparation of the Draft Plan Strategy.

A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (PSRNI)

The Planning Strategy (published in 1993) established the objectives and policies for land use and development appropriate to the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland. The Strategy also provided a basis for coordinating decisions in both the public and the private sectors, setting out regional policies for the control of development in order to ensure a consistent approach to planning matters.

Whilst the majority of PSRNI policies have been gradually replaced, a small number remain operational and will do so until a new Plan Strategy is adopted for the Borough. A detailed policy review of the remaining PSRNI policies shall be carried out during the preparation of the Draft Plan Strategy.

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

A range of supplementary planning guidance (SPG) supports the regional policies of the PPSs and the SPPS. It is the Council's intention to bring forward Central Government planning guidance including 'Building on Tradition: a Sustainable Design Guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside' and 'Creating Places' – Achieving Quality in Residential Developments.' The SPPS directs that these documents will remain material considerations and are to be taken into account in assessing planning development proposals, where relevant. However the SPG will be reviewed as required, in order to reflect the Council's policies, where appropriate.

Local Policy Context

Existing Development Plans

The existing Development Plans that are relevant to our Borough are as follows:

- Armagh Area Plan (AAP) 2004;
- Armagh Area Plan 2004, Alteration No.1 - Armagh Countryside Proposals;
- Banbridge / Newry and Mourne Area Plan (BNMAP) 2015;
- Craigavon Area Plan (CAP) 2010;
- Craigavon Town Centre Boundaries and Retail Designations Plan 2010; and
- Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan (DSTAP) 2010.

Both the existing Development Plans for the Armagh and Craigavon areas (which relate to the former Armagh City and District, and former Craigavon Borough respectively) fully fall to our new Borough area, following the drawing of the new NI Council boundaries in 2015. The DSTAP 2010 relates to the area brought into the north-west corner of the Borough, in the County Armagh part of the former DST Borough Council area. This area includes 3 existing settlements (Derrylee, Tamnamore and Clonmore). A large part of the Borough is still covered by BNMAP 2015. An area to the east of the former Banbridge District Council area was transferred to the new neighbouring Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area (including 4 settlements and part of one additional settlement).

Due to the varying ages of the extant Development Plans there are inconsistencies in approach with regards to a number of planning issues as well as the degree of emphasis in respect of the principles of sustainable development. However, the existing Plans are an important consideration in the LDP process, as they provide a starting point for the review of our spatial planning options.

The Council's Corporate Plan 2015-2017

Our Corporate Plan sets out the Council's Vision, Mission and 3 Corporate Priorities upon which our Council's resources and efforts will be focused:

1. **Place** - increasing prosperity through developing the economy, employment, connectivity and environment;
2. **People** - improving everyone's quality of life, opportunity, safety and wellbeing; and
3. **Position** - giving the leadership to tackle the issues that matter and influencing decision makers at all levels.

One of the Top 10 priorities of the Corporate Plan includes the commencement of preparatory work for the development of the LDP, acknowledging that it is a key area of work that will assist in achieving the Council's Corporate Priorities detailed above. The LDP will continue to be prepared within the context of the current Corporate Plan until the Draft Corporate Plan 2018-2023, is finalised and published.

The Council's Community Plan 2017-2030 'Connected'

Councils have a statutory responsibility to participate and lead in Community Planning. The Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014 and the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 link the Community Plan and Development Plan processes suggesting that the LDP should be 'the spatial reflection of the Community Plan.'

The Vision of the Community Plan will implement a future direction for the Borough with the goal of establishing 'a happy, healthy and connected community, a vibrant and sustainable economy and appealing places for living, working and learning' and provides a strategic framework for the Borough which will guide future policy, regeneration and

spatial planning.

Every effort has been made to establish linkages with the Community Plan throughout the consideration of our Key Issues and the development of our options in the POP. The Community Plan will continue to be taken into account throughout the preparation of the LDP.

Council Masterplans and Strategies

The Council has produced a number of Masterplans and Strategies for our Borough including Town Centre Masterplans / Development Frameworks, Regeneration and Development Strategy (2015 – 2020) and 'Transform: A Tourism Strategy (2017 -2022). These documents have informed the preparation of the POP, and will continue to be taken into account throughout the LDP process as they emerge and develop.





3. Borough Profile

As a backdrop to the Key Issues that this Preferred Options Paper will consider, this Section provides a broad overview of the Borough, which includes key information and future projections in relation to our population, households, economy, infrastructure and environment.

Borough Profile

The Borough extends to an area of approximately 554 square miles and adjoins the boundary of five neighbouring Council areas: Mid Ulster District Council, Newry Mourne and Down District Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (by Lough Neagh) and Monaghan County Council in the Republic of Ireland, as shown in **Map 5.1**.

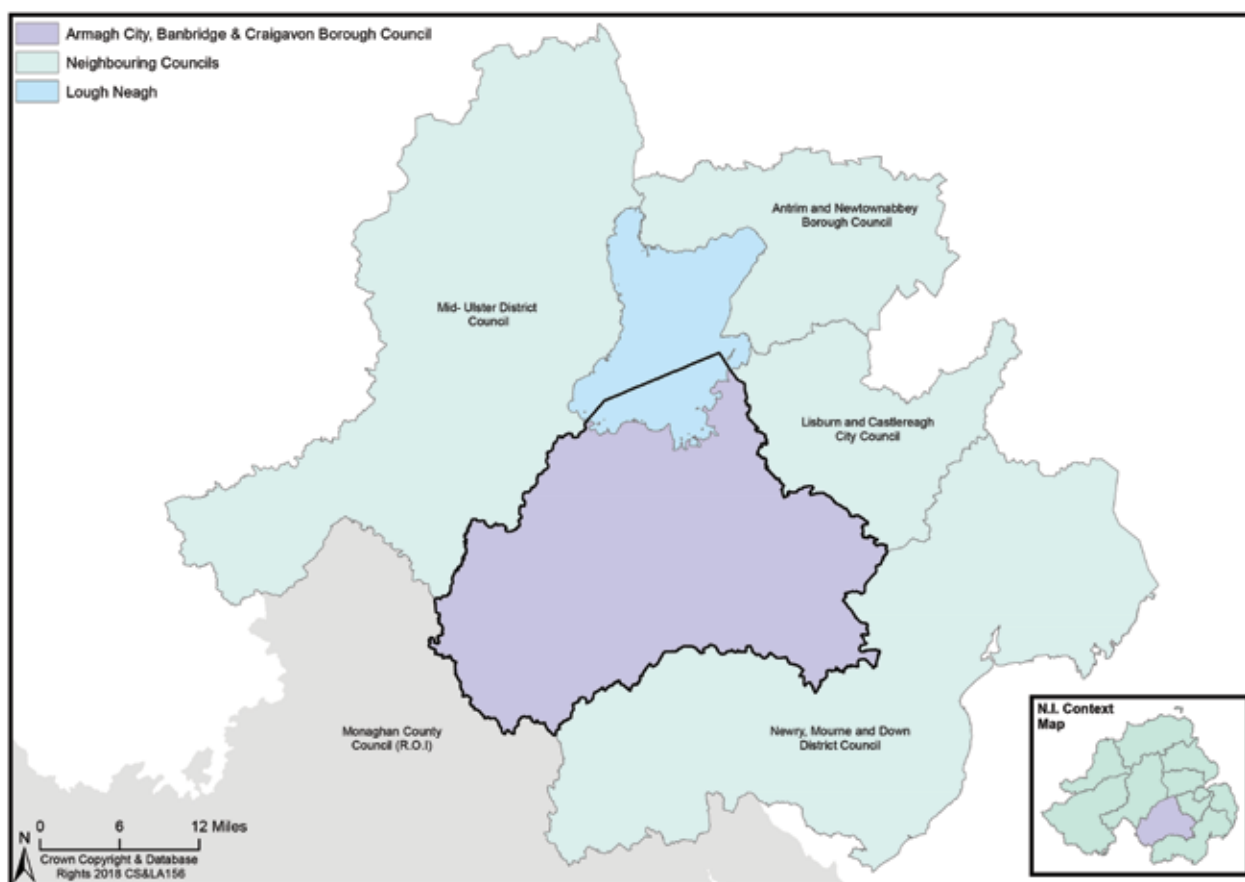
At specific stages in the preparation of the LDP, engagement with our neighbouring councils will take place to ensure that cross cutting issues are identified and to consider how such issues can be

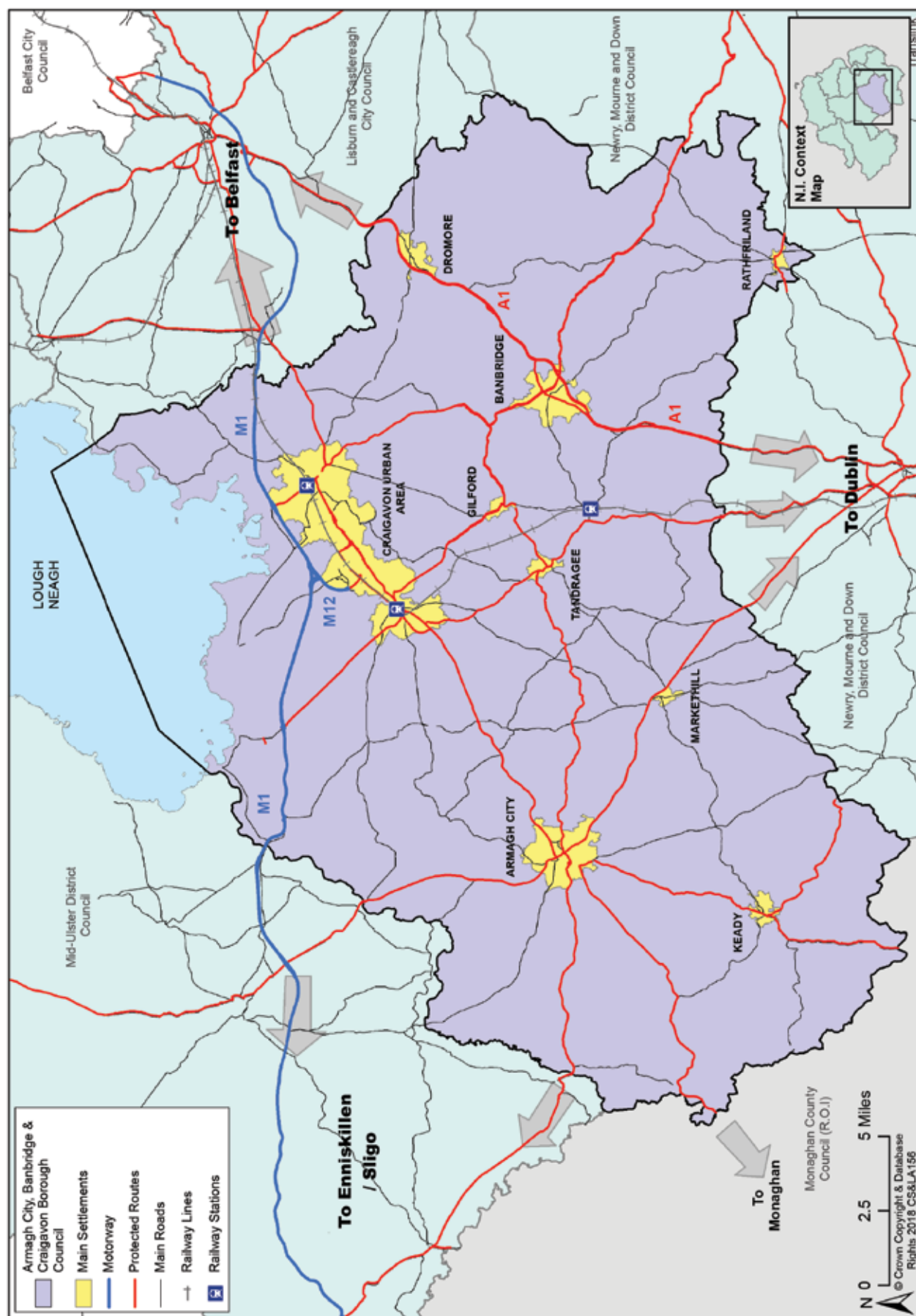
appropriately dealt with through the LDP process.

The Borough extends from the southern shores of Lough Neagh to the foothills of the Mourne in the east, to the Blackwater Valley in the west. Three main river corridors, Blackwater, Lagan and Upper Bann, traverse the Borough. It comprises a diverse mix of attractive rural and urban landscapes, including the Ecclesiastical Capital of Ireland (Armagh City), the 'Orchard County', rolling drumlin countryside and areas of peatland, as well as an abundance of heritage assets, such as Dromore Motte and Bailey.

The Hub Settlements of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Urban Area have the potential to benefit further from their strategic position on the Belfast/Dublin and Belfast/Enniskillen/Sligo Economic Corridors. The Spatial Context of the Borough is illustrated in **Map 5.2**.

Map 5.1: Neighbouring Council Areas





Map 5.2 : Spatial Context

Key Facts

As a backdrop to the Key Issues that this Preferred Options Paper will consider, this Section provides a broad overview of the Borough, which includes key information and future projections in relation to our population, households, economy, infrastructure and environment.

Population

207,775	Borough population in 2015
237,483	Borough's projected population by 2030
14.3%	projected increase in population from 2015-2030 (approximately 30,000 people)
0-15 Age	22% of Borough population in 2015, projected to change to 21% by 2030
16-64 Age	63% of Borough population in 2015, projected to change to 60% by 2030
65+ Age	15% of Borough population in 2015, projected to change to 19% by 2030
82.4	Female Life expectancy (years)
78.9	Male Life expectancy (years)
50.4%	Female population of Borough
49.6%	Male population of Borough
7%	population that are employment deprived
7%	population that are health and disability deprived
11%	population that are education, skills and training deprived (according to the NISRA Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017)
78,454	Number of households in 2015
90,803	Number of households projected by 2030
2.63	Average household size in 2015 (persons)
2.59	Average household size projected by 2030 (persons)
All	Household sizes (1-5+ persons) projected to increase by 2037 (2012 Household Projections), with the greatest increase in the number of 1 and 2 person households.

Economy

8,105	VAT/PAYE registered businesses in the Borough
72,866	employee jobs in the Borough
16%	employed in Manufacturing within the Borough
5%	employed in Construction within the Borough
78%	employed in Services within the Borough
1.5%	employed in Other Sectors within the Borough (Source: NI Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES), Sept 2016 (rounded figures))
£24,320	full time median wage for those employed in the Borough
3,192	Active Farms (2016)
£14.5 million	Annual value of quarrying - highest of all 11 Councils
145,000	Overnight trips to the Borough (NISRA -2016)
£26 million	Expenditure on overnight trips (NISRA - 2016)
20.86%	Average Town Centre Vacancy Rate (2016 – DfC - Town Centre Database)
78.15%	of school leavers within the Borough achieved at least 5 GCSE'S A*-C (2015)

Settlements

104	Settlements, comprising:
3	Hubs (Armagh City, Banbridge Town and Craigavon Urban Area)
6	Local Towns
29	Villages
66	Small Settlements

Infrastructure

79%	of households have access to internet (NISRA- 2016)
Project Kelvin	The Strategic Hub for direct high speed fibre link to North America
30	minutes to Belfast
12.96	minutes (maximum) travel time to GP Premises
36.76	minutes (maximum) travel time to Accident and Emergency
59	Waste Water Treatment Works
9	Centres for recycling and disposing of household waste
48%	of Local Authority Collected Municipal waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting during 2016/17 (Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics)
4	Train Stations/Halts (Lurgan, Portadown, Poyntzpass and Scarva), strategically positioned on the North / South and East / West economic corridors

Environment

Built Heritage Designations and Assets

1	Area of Significant Archaeological Interest
160	Scheduled Monuments
1,052	Listed Buildings
5	Conservation Areas
37	Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes

Nature Conservation Designations

4	Sites of International Importance (1 Ramsar Wetland, 2 Special Areas of Conservation(SAC) and 1 Special Protection Area (SPA))
26	Sites of National Importance (1 National Nature Reserve (NNR), 21 Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) and 4 Nature Reserves (NR))
80	Sites of Local Importance (3 Local Nature Reserves and 77 Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCI))



4. Vision, Overarching Principles and Strategic Objectives

The following section further explores the relationship between the LDP and the Council's Corporate and Community Plans, from which the Vision for the LDP has been developed. It also provides an overview of the Overarching Principles that will guide the plan making process and the Strategic Objectives that support the Vision of the LDP. Together, these have informed the Key Issues and Options that are considered in this Preferred Options Paper.

Vision

The Council has a key role in meeting the needs of citizens who live and work in the Borough through the provision of services directly, or with other partners. The Corporate Plan, 2015-2017, has a clear aim to **“Prosper the Place, Serve the People and Strengthen our Position.”**

We have 3 corporate priorities which focus efforts and resources to increase prosperity through developing the economy, employment, connectivity and the environment; improving everyone's quality of life, opportunity, safety and wellbeing; and giving leadership to tackle the issues that matter and influencing decision makers at all levels.

The Council has produced its first Community Plan 'Connected' which is an overarching strategy for the Borough. It provides a framework for collaborative working, helping to integrate other local and regional strategies and plans so as to deliver positive change for

local communities. Through working in partnership, it is hoped that the potential of the Borough will be unlocked for the benefit of everyone. This ethos is reflected in the vision of our Community Plan: *“We have a happy, healthy and connected community, a vibrant and sustainable economy and appealing places for living, working and learning.”*

The Community Plan identifies 3 strategic themes: Community, Economy and Place. Three cross cutting themes are also identified i.e. connectivity, equality and sustainability, which are at the centre of everything we do.

The LDP is required to 'take account of' the Community Plan and as such the LDP will act as the spatial reflection of the Community Plan. In order to ensure this, we will continue to develop these two processes together as closely as possible in order to bring real opportunities for our citizens to become fully involved in

shaping the Borough.

Due to the close relationship between the two plans, the LDP Vision is based on the Community Plan Vision, in that it is citizen focused and aspires to improve the quality of life for everyone. However, with the LDP Vision, emphasis is placed on land use and the creation of quality places.

The Vision for the LDP is:

“Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough will be a place of choice to live, work and visit with a vibrant and sustainable economy supported by a healthy and connected community.”

Question

1. Do you agree with our Vision for the LDP?

Overarching Principles

The primary aim of the Regional Development Strategy (RDS), the Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) is to further sustainable development. As outlined in our Policy Context (in Section 2), the LDP is required to 'take account' of the regional policy context. Therefore it is vital that the LDP facilitates development in a manner that enables our social and economic priorities to be pursued whilst ensuring that our built and natural environment is appropriately managed, both now and into the future.

The development of the LDP is underpinned by 5 Overarching Principles, that are based on the Core Principles contained in the SPPS (as referred to in Section 2), but tailored to meet local circumstances and to reflect the LDP Vision in addition to the aims of the Council's Community Plan and Corporate Plan. These Overarching Principles will inform the LDP's Strategic Objectives and in turn the Council's overall LDP approach as set out in the Preferred Options.

The LDP's Overarching Principles are as follows;

1. Improving Health and Well-being

The way places and buildings are configured, patterns of movement in the space around us and the level of access to quality open space, employment and quality education are all factors that can make us feel good and influence the choices we make, which may contribute positively to improving our health and wellbeing. The SPPS acknowledges that the planning system has an active role to play in helping to better the lives of people and communities and in supporting the Northern Ireland Executive's key priority of improving health and well-being.

In order to improve the health and well-being of our society, the LDP will seek to bring forward policies that are pro-active

in nature, aimed at ensuring development proposals are designed to encourage healthier lifestyle choices. Through the development of policies that contribute to the quality of our local environment, improve access to sustainable transport modes (including walking and cycling) and develop green and blue infrastructure, the LDP can assist in the delivery of the Council's commitment to improving the health and well-being of our communities.

2. Enhancing Connectivity and Accessibility

The provision of an accessible and well connected society is essential for supporting all aspects of contemporary life and is integral to the sustainable growth of our Borough in terms of both telecommunication/ fibre and transportation infrastructure. Not only is it critical to the quality of life of our population, but it is also necessary for creating and maintaining networks and connectivity to support development and encourage investment in our Borough.

In order to enhance connectivity, it is vital that the LDP adopts a holistic approach that considers access to, and movement within areas and also linkages with surrounding areas. As such the LDP has an important role in facilitating the provision of a modern, accessible and connected environment by ensuring that development proposals, at an early stage in the design process, have regard to creating an environment that:

- is accessible to all sections of our community, regardless of race, political and religious background or mobility, therefore enhancing opportunities for shared communities and spaces;
- has a high standard of connectivity to and within places; and
- promotes sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport, including developing linkages to green and blue

infrastructure.

3. Supporting Sustainable Economic Growth of the Borough

Developing our Borough as a centre of excellence for entrepreneurship, innovation and investment is a strategic priority of our Council and is essential for the sustainable growth of our economy. The SPPS recognises that planning has a key role in achieving a vibrant economy and that a 'modern, efficient and effective planning system is essential to supporting the Executive in its efforts to promote long term economic growth.'

The LDP will seek to facilitate the sustainable economic development of our Borough through:

- identifying and protecting an adequate supply of land for economic growth;
- supporting rural economic development of an appropriate nature and scale;
- supporting the delivery of a modern transportation network that ensures the efficient movement of people and goods;
- developing economically competitive and vibrant town centres;
- facilitating sustainable infrastructure, telecommunications and utilities development; and
- facilitating appropriate tourism development within our Borough.

4. Managing and Protecting our Built and Natural Environment

Our unique landscape is one of our Borough's greatest assets. From its diverse landscapes and earth science features, including Lough Neagh and its shores, wetlands, woodlands, rivers and meadows, there is a wealth of natural assets to be sustained, enhanced and enjoyed by our residents and visitors.

Another important feature of our Borough is our built heritage and archaeological assets, such as Navan Fort, which contribute significantly to our environment and local distinctiveness. Whilst a large number of our natural and built heritage assets are protected by various designations, not all of our assets are protected even though they make a vital contribution towards the quality and character of our environment.

The SPPS recognises that our built and natural environment ‘provides an important contribution to our sense of place, history and cultural identity.’ Furthermore, the SPPS also recognises that the quality of our local environment can also influence our health and well-being, and help tackle social deprivation. Our unique natural and built environment makes an important contribution to supporting our economy and as such the LDP has a vital role in ensuring that our environmental assets are managed and protected in a sustainable way, so that they are protected, conserved and enhanced for future generations.

5. Supporting Quality of Design and Place Making across the Borough

Buildings and their surroundings, and how they function, have a significant effect on the character and quality of a place, contributing to the vibrancy and diversity of places. The provision and maintenance of a high quality local environment is important for portraying a positive image of our Borough and for the sustainable growth of our local economy, by providing an environment where people want to live, work and take their leisure.

The SPPS acknowledges that the planning system has an active role in helping to improve the lives of people and communities in Northern Ireland, recognising that well designed buildings and successful places can have a positive impact on how we feel. Making the best use of our assets is key to maximising our Borough’s future potential and as such the LDP has an important role to play in terms of protecting and enhancing our cherished places but also creating new positive places that enhance our quality of life and environment.

The LDP will seek to provide a clear and consistent framework for place making and design across all development proposals and will also address the design requirements of certain types of development that require particular care or attention to detail.

Areas that may warrant additional design and place-making criteria and/or guidance (as discussed in **Key Issue SOC 3**) include:

- heritage, townscape and landscape assets;
- residential development (urban);
- rural development; and
- urban areas / town centres.

By developing additional design advice and guidance the LDP will assist in safeguarding the character and quality of such areas, and also provide an opportunity to respond to the local circumstances of our Borough.

Question

2. Do you agree with our proposed Overarching Principles?

Strategic Objectives

In order to fully realise its vision, the LDP is supported by strategic objectives. The strategic objectives have been developed taking account of the regional direction set out in the Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS), the Sustainable Development Strategy, the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and other regional policy. Central to regional policy direction is sustainable development and as such the strategic objectives are structured under the headings of the three pillars of sustainable development,

that is social, economic and environment. The SPPS requires planning authorities to deliver on all three pillars in a balanced way, therefore no one theme or objective should be given priority over another but rather the strategic objectives should be approached in line with the widely accepted term of sustainable development of ‘meeting the needs of the present without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’ As such the following strategic objectives have been identified:

Social Objectives

- To further develop Armagh City, Banbridge and the sub-regional Craigavon Urban Area* as the main hubs for growth.
- To support the role of local towns and villages as attractive and vibrant local service centres providing a level of development appropriate to their position in the settlement hierarchy.
- To support rural communities by providing appropriate and sustainable opportunities for development in the countryside.
- To provide a sufficient supply of land for new housing to meet the housing needs by 2030.
- To facilitate the diverse range of specific housing needs over the Plan period.
- To facilitate community safety and shared spaces through high quality designs and layouts of proposed schemes.
- To facilitate development of community and cultural facilities at locations accessible to the local communities they serve.

*Craigavon Urban Area consists of Portadown, Central Craigavon and Lurgan.

Economic Objectives

- To facilitate the creation and maintenance of conditions that provide for a dynamic, diverse and robust economy to encourage existing and new businesses to invest.
- To facilitate the growth of the economy by ensuring an adequate provision of accessible land for a range of employment uses which offers a choice of sites at a range of locations.
- To support, regenerate and promote vibrant town centres.
- To support tourism development by creating and identifying opportunities for sustainable tourism development and by safeguarding key tourism assets from inappropriate development.
- To promote Armagh City as a major tourist destination while respecting its unique built heritage assets, cultural product and unique setting through sensitive development.
- To facilitate economic development of an appropriate nature, scale and location in the countryside; including employment in the primary sector (agriculture, forestry and mining); while recognising the growing importance of self-employment, homeworking and farm diversification.
- To facilitate economic regeneration and support the connectivity of disadvantaged and deprived areas.
- To facilitate investment in power, water, sewerage infrastructure and waste management, particularly in the interests of public health.
- To facilitate physical and digital connectivity which meets the needs of businesses and private households.
- To protect strategically important transportation and public utilities infrastructure and where possible enhance connectivity within the Borough and with other centres

Environmental Objectives

- To conserve, protect and where possible enhance the natural and built environment to improve biodiversity, achieve quality design and promote health and well-being.
- To promote sustainable high quality design in all developments to assist with climate change adaptation and place-making.
- To prevent inappropriate new development in areas known to be at risk of flooding or that may increase the flood risk elsewhere and put in place measures to assist in flood risk management.
- To protect and develop networks of green and blue spaces to support biodiversity and habitats and promote health and well-being.
- To facilitate integration between land use, planning and transportation to encourage a shift to more sustainable and active modes of transport.
- To safeguard unique sensitive landscapes from inappropriate development.
- To protect and enhance the network of open spaces in the Borough and promote opportunities for connections to create an enhanced network of pedestrian paths, cycleways and ecological corridors to improve linkages throughout the Borough.
- To support the generation of energy from renewable sources in appropriate locations whilst affording protection to the environment including sensitive or vulnerable landscapes.

Question

3. Do you agree with our LDP Strategic Objectives?



5. Spatial Growth Strategy

The Spatial Growth Strategy sets out the direction for development and use of land for the period of the plan, thus providing a strategic framework that will assist the Council in achieving the vision and objectives of our Local Development Plan.

Our Spatial Growth Strategy, and the Strategic Key Issues for this section have been informed by the following:

- the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035;
- our evidence base, as contained within the relevant Preparatory Papers;
- the existing Area Plans; and
- projected population / household / job growth statistics.

Key Issues

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Key Issue SGS 1: Defining a Settlement Hierarchy

Key Issue SGS 2: Allocating housing

Key Issue SGS 3: Allocating economic development lands

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Spatial Growth Strategy

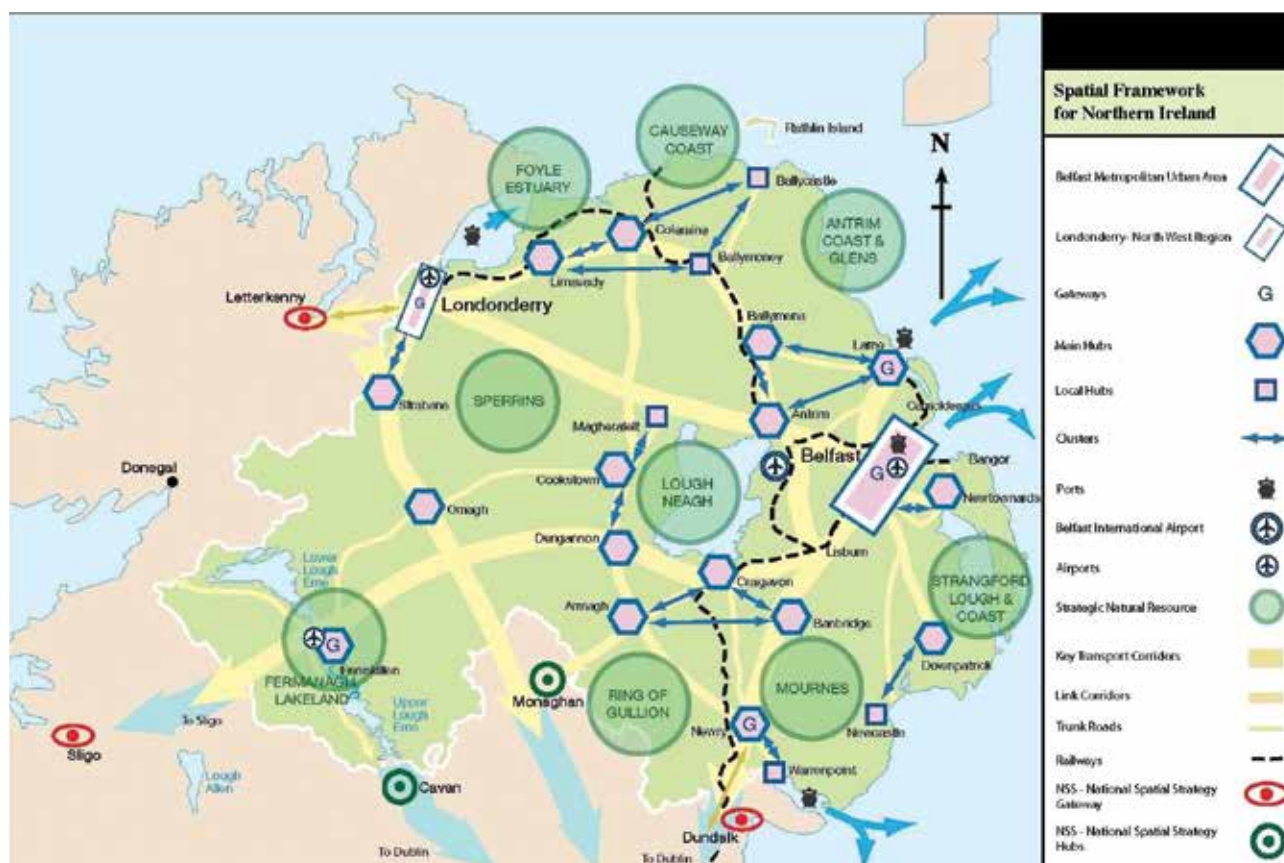
The LDP is required to contain a Spatial Strategy setting out the direction for development and use of land for the period of the plan. The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035 'Building a Better Future' sets objectives around promoting population growth and economic development in the main

Hubs and sustaining rural communities living in small towns, villages, rural small settlements and the open countryside.

The RDS identifies Armagh City, Banbridge Town and the Craigavon Urban Area as main Hubs and highlights the potential to cluster and capitalise on their strategic

position on the Belfast/Dublin and Belfast/Enniskillen/Sligo Economic Corridors as detailed in the RDS Spatial Framework below in **Figure 5.1**.

Figure 5.1: RDS 2035 Spatial Framework for Northern Ireland



Three of the five elements of the Spatial Framework apply to our Borough (Hubs and Clusters of Hubs, The Rural Area and Corridors). The Borough is strategically positioned on the axis of the main East/West and North/South Economic Corridors and is supported by high quality road and rail links within Northern Ireland and to the Republic of Ireland. It also sits on the southern shores of Lough Neagh which is identified in the RDS 2035 as a Strategic Natural Resource.

The Borough has the largest population of the NI Council areas outside of Belfast and the population is projected by NISRA to increase by around 30,000 to around 237,000 by 2030. This increase in population is projected to be the largest increase of any of the 11 Northern Ireland (NI) Council areas between 2015 and 2030. In addition, the number of households in the Borough is projected to increase by 15.7% (12,349) over the plan period which is significantly higher than the

equivalent projected NI average growth of 9.4%. Furthermore, it is estimated that approximately 12,233 new jobs are needed by 2030 to match the projected increase in the Borough working age population as outlined in **Table 5.1** below.

Table 5.1 –Population, Household and Job Growth (2011-2030)

Year	2011*	2015	2030	2015-30 (Increase Nos)	2015-30 (Increase %)
NI Population	1,810,683	1,851,228	1,980,017	128,789	6.95
ACBCBC Population	199,693	207,775	237,483	29,708	14.29
NI Households	703,275	721,860	789,858	67,998	9.4
ACBCBC Households	75,506	78,454	90,803	12,349	15.7
ACBCBC Jobs & projected No required 2015-2030		104,114	116,347	12,233	11.8%

Source: - NISRA 2012-2037 population projections* 2011 figure based on 2011 NISRA Census usual resident population. Other years are NISRA 2012 projected population figures.

Key Issue SGS 1: Defining a Settlement Hierarchy

Background

The Borough's existing Settlement Hierarchy is as designated in the existing Area Plans – the Armagh Area Plan 2004 and Alteration No. 1: Armagh Countryside Proposals, the Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan (BNMAP) 2015, the Craigavon Area Plan 2010 & Craigavon Town Centre Boundaries and Retail Designations Plan 2010; and the Dungannon/South Tyrone Area Plan 2010.

The existing hierarchy comprises **104 Settlements**, across 4 tiers which are:

3 Hubs

6 Local Towns

29 Villages

66 Small Settlements

The existing settlements vary greatly in size, form, function and capacity to accommodate growth. Some of the larger settlements currently designated as Villages are urban in character, accommodating important local businesses and a range of shops and services whilst others act more so as 'dormitory settlements' adjacent to the Hubs and lack facilities and services. A number of settlements have declined and lost basic services which were present when designated, whilst some have grown significantly since they were designated.

The approach to designating settlements varied between the existing Area Plans. Each Plan identified a settlement hierarchy which guided future growth and development. Some of the Plans are well past their notional end date and were prepared before the RDS. There are therefore differences between the Plans in relation to the tiers within the settlement hierarchy and the potential growth within each tier. As some of our existing settlements have been designated outside the context of the RDS Housing Growth Indicators (HGIs) some have fairly generous settlement development limits. In a number of instances, these generous limits have afforded significant opportunities for growth. The approach to settlement designation when considering new settlements should attempt to introduce a level of consistency in the new LDP.

The RDS provides a Hierarchy of Settlements and Related Infrastructure Wheel which outlines the patterns of service provision that are likely to be appropriate at different spatial settlement levels from villages to principal cities. This is reproduced in a composite table in **Table 5.2**.

The Hierarchy of Settlements and Related Infrastructure model recognises the strong relationship between settlement size and the levels of service that can be supported as presented in **Figure 5.2 (General Settlement Hierarchy)**. The RDS and the 'Infrastructure Wheel' also recognise that settlements often provide either a greater or lesser range of services and facilities than the core population may dictate. It is not appropriate therefore to consider settlement or urban population size alone in classifying

service settlements within the Borough – the population of rural hinterlands can also support services in urban centres.

The LDP will consider a number of issues, including the level of services as detailed in **Table 5.2**, when determining if a settlement is placed within the appropriate level of the Settlement Hierarchy or if a new settlement should be designated. This is outlined in detail in the Strategic Settlement Evaluation Preparatory Paper No 14, available to view on the Council's website.

Figure 5.2: General Settlement Hierarchy

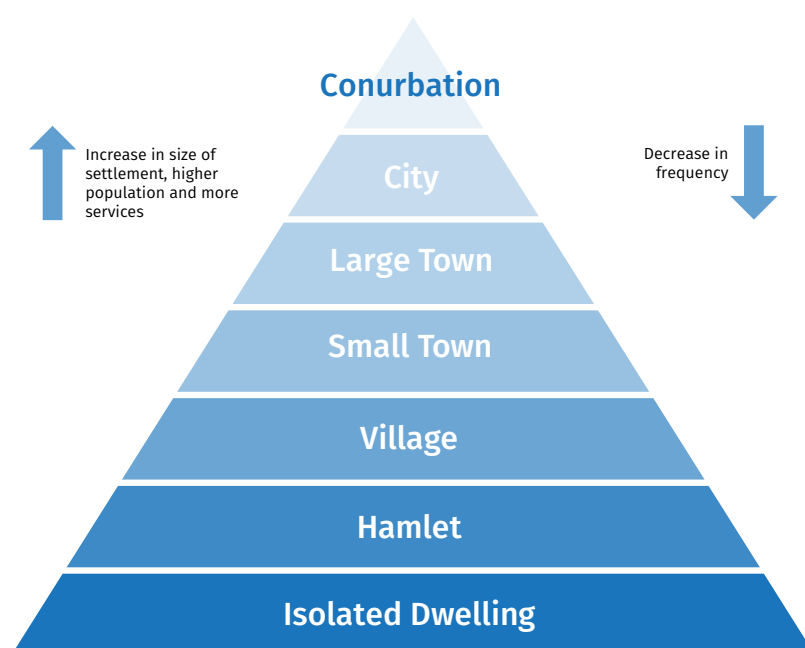


Table 5.2: Composite Table of RDS Settlement Hierarchy and Related Infrastructure Wheel

	Principal City	Regional Town	Smaller Towns	Villages
Skills	University	Further Education, Special Schools	Library, Post Primary	Nursery, Primary School
Health	Acute Hospital, A&E, Maternity	A&E Hospital, Children's Home, Minor Injuries, Outpatients	Pharmacy, Health Centres, Social Services, Day Care Centres	Doctor, Ambulance, Outreach Services
Social	Museums/Galleries, Conference/Concert Arena	Leisure Centre (pool), Visitor Centre, Advice Centres, Arts & Culture Centre	Community Centre, Sports Facility, Welfare Services	Local Hall, Play Areas
Environment	Power Generation, AONB/ASSI	Water & Sewage Treatment Plants, Waste-landfill, Waste-recycle	Recycling, Renewables, Water & Sewers Supply	Access to clean water, Sewage disposal
Commercial	Department Stores, Specialist Shops, Arts & Cultural Facilities	Shopping Centres, Retail, Warehousing, Range of Restaurants	Supermarket, Restaurants, Mix of Retail Facilities	Shop, Pub, Post Office, Petrol Station
Justice	Police HQ, High Court, Prison, Forensic Science	Police District, County Court, Probation Service	Police Station	Neighbourhood Watch
Productive	Tourism Signature Projects, Science Centre, Major Industrial Parks, Strategic Devt. Zones	Industrial Park, Tourism Office	Enterprise Centre, Information Office	Workshop/ Business Unit
Networks	Ports & Airports, Key Transport Nodes, Energy Generation Interconnector	Major Roads, Bus/Rail, Park & Ride, Cycle Network	Link Corridors/ Trunk Roads, Bus/Rail to larger centres	Local Roads, Broadband, Urban Street Lighting, Local Bus, Cycle

The Strategic Settlement Evaluation considered settlement size, form, function and capacity against the RDS Housing Evaluation Framework tests and the RDS Settlement Related Infrastructure Wheel, which suggested changes including reclassification of some existing settlements. As part of the evaluation an analysis of built-up nodes in the countryside was also carried out – full details of which are outlined in the Strategic Settlement Evaluation Preparatory Paper.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue SGS 1 (Defining a Settlement Hierarchy)

Option SGS 1 A

Bring forward a new settlement hierarchy through re-classification of existing settlements where appropriate, and to include new settlements / new settlement nodes:

Justification

This preferred option includes a 4-tier Settlement Hierarchy as identified in **Table 5.3** and shown on **Map 5.3**, which would provide consistency across the Borough in terms of the classification of settlements in relation to size, form, function and capacity in line with RDS direction. The proposed hierarchy contains a total of 106 settlements (3 x Hubs, 6 x Local Towns, 30 x Villages and 67 x Small Settlements) – 2 more settlements than the current Settlement Hierarchy. This option retains Armagh City, Banbridge Town and Craigavon Urban Area (inc Portadown, Central Craigavon and Lurgan) as Hubs (Tier 1 Settlements) and makes no change to the 6 Local Towns (Tier 2 Settlements). Following consideration of the Borough's settlement hierarchy and settlement classification,

small changes are proposed to the Villages and Small Settlements (Tier 3 and Tier 4 Settlements) as set out below. This approach is considered to provide a more consistent approach across the Borough, which would ensure a more equitable and sustainable approach to future growth and development.

The following changes are proposed across the Borough's Settlement Hierarchy:

- **Derrymacash** re-classified upwards to a Village
- **Scotch Street** re-classified upwards to a Village
- **Derrylee** re-classified downwards to a Small Settlement

New Small Settlements (or nodes) are to be recommended at the following locations:

- **Pier / Byrnes Rampart, Craigavon**
- **Whitehall Road, Aghagallon**
- **Derryadd, Craigavon** (an additional second node)

For the distribution of settlements (existing and new) refer to **Map 5.4**. The ability of each of the settlements to accommodate growth will differ depending on a number of factors including physical, environmental and infrastructural constraints.

Map 5.3 – Proposed Growth Strategy

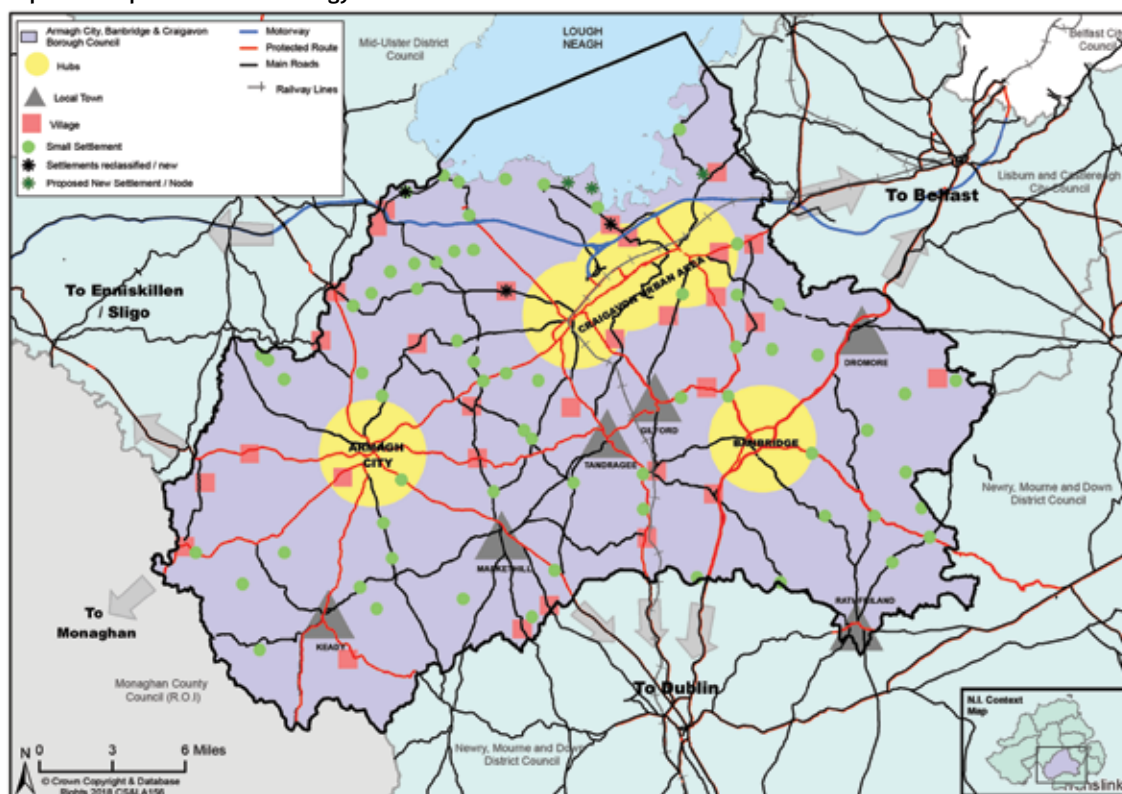


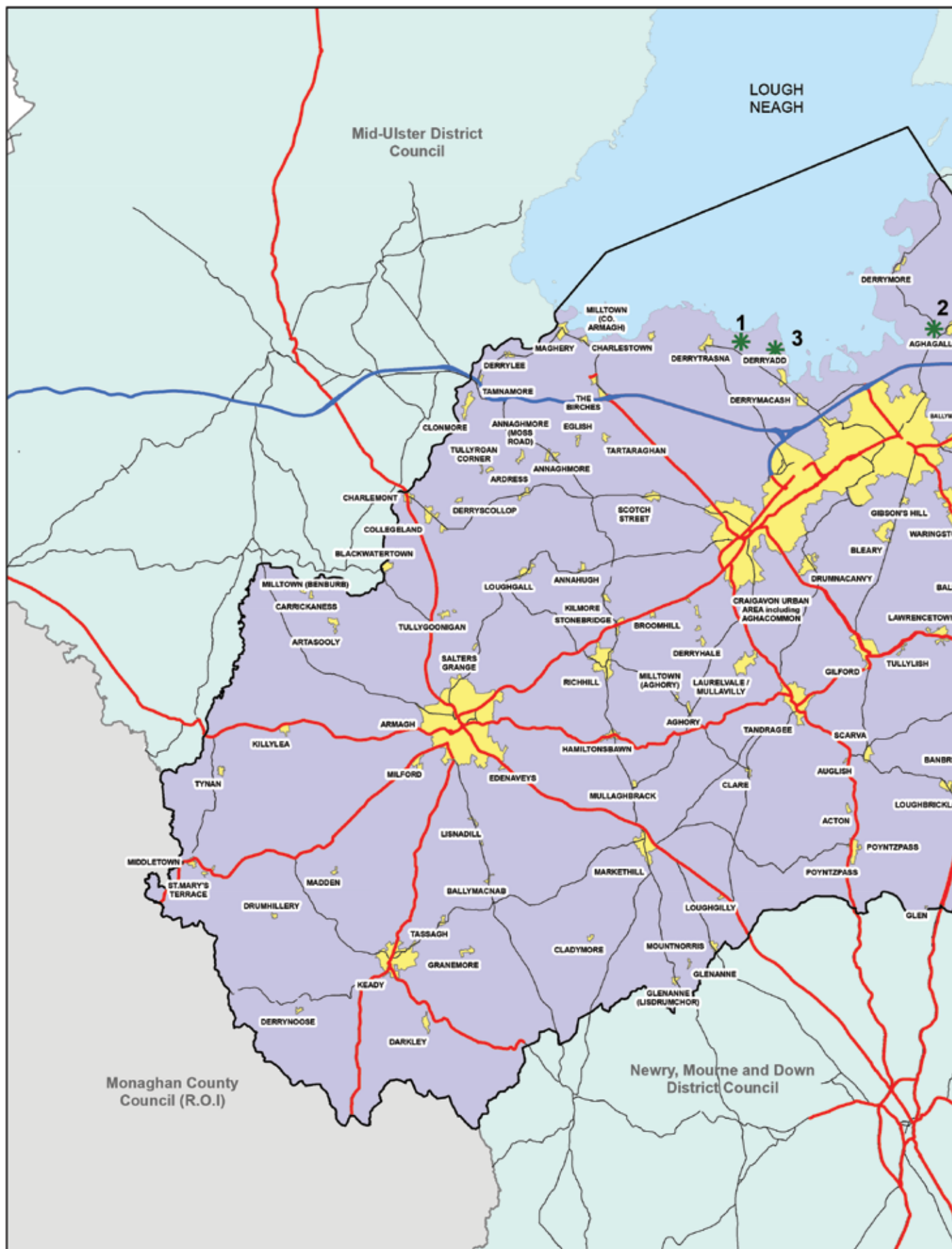
Table 5.3: Proposed Settlement Hierarchy

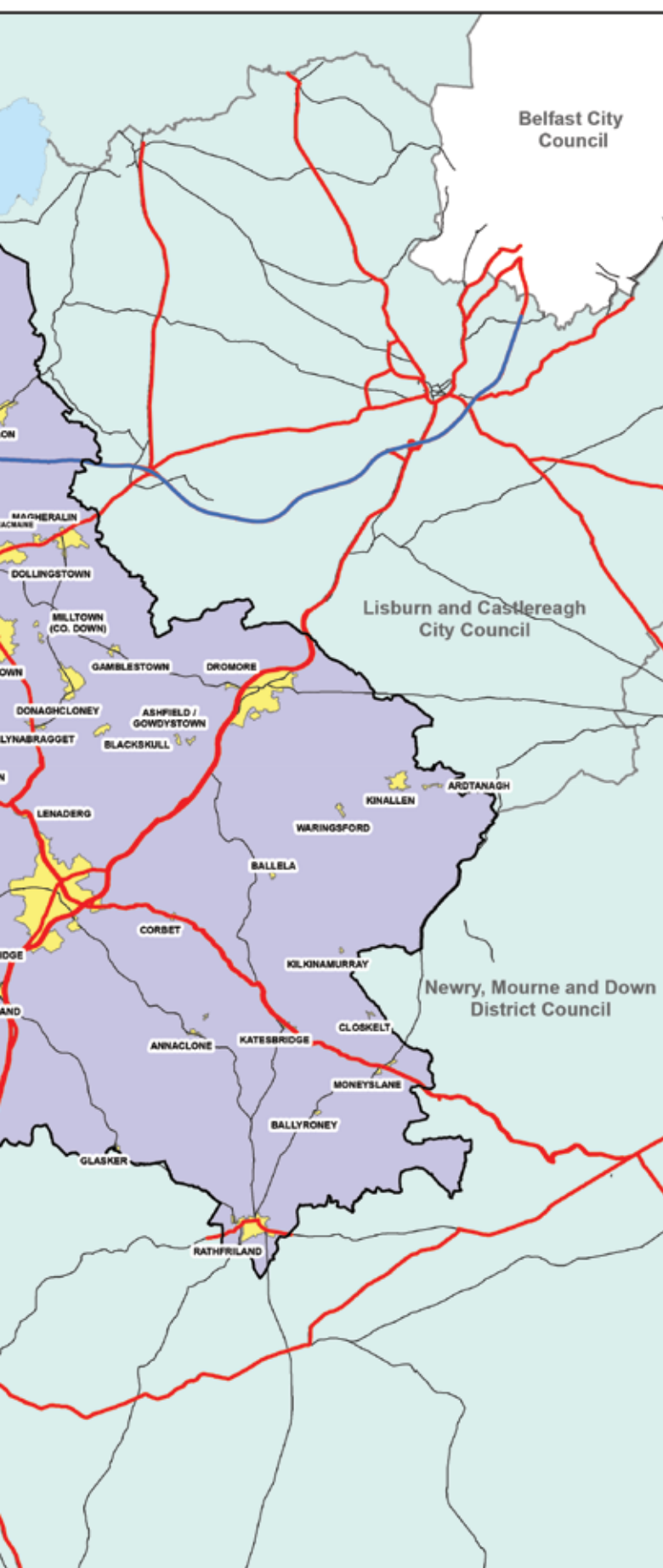
Settlement Hierarchy	Armagh (Former Council Area)	Banbridge (Former Council Area)	Craigavon (Former Council Area)	Dungannon (Former Council Area)
Main City/ Town/ Urban Area	Armagh City	Banbridge	Craigavon Urban Area (inc Portadown, Central Craigavon & Lurgan)	N/A
Local Towns	Keady Markethill Tandragee	Dromore Gilford Rathfriland	N/A	N/A
Villages	Blackwatertown Charlemont Darkley Glenanne (Lisdrumchor) Hamiltonsbawn Killylea Laurelvale/Mullavilly Loughgall Middletown Milford Mountnorris Poyntzpass Richhill Tynan	Kinallen Lawrencetown Loughbrickland Scarva	Aghacommon Aghagallon Bleary Dollingstown Donacloney Drumnacanny Magheralin Waringstown Scotch Street Derrymacash	Clonmore Tamnamore (Eastern part in Co. Armagh).
Small Settlements	Acton Aghory Annaghmore Annaghmore (Moss Rd) Annahugh Ardress Artasooly Auglish Ballymacnab Broomhill Carrickaness Cladymore Clare Collegeland Derryhale Derrynoose Derryscollop Drumhillery Edenaveys Eglish Glenanne Granemore Kilmore Lisnadill Loughgilly Madden Milltown (Aghory) Milltown (Benburb) Mullaghbrack Salters Grange St. Mary's Terrace Stonebridge Tassagh Tullygoonigan Tullyroan Corner	Annaclone Ardtanagh Ashfield / Gowdystown Ballela Ballyrone Closkelt Corbet Glasker Glen Katesbridge Kilkinamurray Lenaderg Moneyslane Tullylish Waringsford	Ballymacmaine Ballynabragget Blackskull Charlestown Derryadd Derrymore Derrytrasna Gamblestown Gibson's Hill Maghery Milltown (Co. Armagh) Milltown (Co. Down) Pier/Byrnes Rampart Tartaraghan The Birches Whitehall Road	Derrylee

Suggested changes: Existing settlements reclassified as indicated in red and new candidate nodes/ settlements as indicated in blue.





Note: This option does not un-designate any existing settlements.

Map 5.4 Location of Existing Settlements and Proposed Settlements





Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon LDP

-  Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council
-  Settlement Development Limits
-  Motorway
-  Protected Routes
-  Main Roads
-  Proposed New Settlement / Node
1. Pier / Byrnes Rampart
 2. Whitehall Road
 3. Derryadd (new node)

Note:
Craigavon Urban Area comprises Central
Craigavon, Lurgan and Portadown
areas and incorporates Aghacommon Village.



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Alternative Options

Option SGS 1B

Retain existing settlement hierarchy with no additional new settlements / no new settlement nodes.

This option would maintain the status quo as designated in the existing Area Plans. It would not allow the reclassification of existing settlements, or the designation of new settlements, settlement nodes and dispersed rural communities, to reflect any changes

to settlement size, form, function and capacity since when designated in the extant Area Plans in line with RDS direction. This would result in an inconsistent approach to growth and development across the Borough.

Question

4. Do you agree with our preferred Settlement Hierarchy?

Key Issue SGS 2: Allocating housing

Background

Planning for future housing growth across the Borough is one of the core functions of the LDP as the provision of housing is key to population growth, which in turn provides the critical mass to support the provision of infrastructure and services such as health, education and community facilities. This is all the more critical when we consider that our Borough has the largest population of the NI Council areas outside of Belfast and our population is projected to have the largest increase (almost 30,000 persons to 237,000) of any of the 11 NI Council areas between 2015 and 2030.

As specified in the RDS, the allocation of housing growth to specific locations in a council area is a matter to be determined through the development plan process. It offers direction to help achieve sustainable patterns of residential development.

In considering individual allocations, the size, role, accessibility and function of each settlement along with available services and facilities must be taken account of. The Hubs should be the primary focus for housing growth. The allocation should also recognise the need to sustain rural communities living in smaller settlements and the open countryside and small towns and villages should be consolidated and revitalised in their role as local service centres.

Alongside the RDS, the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) identifies that the following considerations should inform the housing allocation within the LDP:

The RDS Housing Growth Indicators (HGIs) – have been produced as a guide for those preparing development plans. The figures are an estimate of the new dwelling requirement for the period 2012-2025 for each of the 11 NI Councils.

The RDS Housing Evaluation Framework – which takes account of the varying capacities of settlements and will assist councils in making judgements on the allocation of housing growth. The Framework details resources, environmental capacity, transport, economic development, urban and rural character and community services as tests to assist housing allocation considerations.

Allowance for existing housing commitments – i.e. dwellings already constructed from the base date, approvals not yet commenced and residential development proposals likely to be approved.

Urban Capacity Studies – an assessment of the potential of brownfield sites to provide housing land, the availability of infill sites and the potential to reuse existing urban buildings.

Allowance for windfall housing – an estimate of the potential housing returns from previously developed land within the urban footprint which may become available for housing during the lifespan of the LDP.

Application of a sequential approach and identification of suitable sites for settlements in excess of 5,000 population

– This involves identification of suitable housing sites in larger settlements through a sequential approach where there is a clear preference in the provision of housing within existing urban areas in order to promote recycling of land and buildings. This approach envisages compact urban forms, more housing within existing urban areas and reduced urban sprawl. Related to this task is RDS direction setting a regional target of 60% of new housing to be located on appropriate 'brownfield' sites within the urban footprints of settlements greater than 5,000 population.

Housing Needs Assessment/Housing Market Analysis (HNA/ HMA) – carried out by Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), these studies provide an evidence base to guide the amount of land required to facilitate the right mix of housing tenures including open market and special housing needs such as affordable housing, social housing, supported housing and Travellers' accommodation.

Transport Assessments – these may be required for certain sites for residential use to achieve integration with public transport and other alternatives to the car. Some of these steps need to be employed at a later stage in the plan process. At this early stage in the process, those most relevant are:

- the RDS HGIs; and
- existing housing commitments.

Policy Context (Regional and Local)

The RDS expresses regional housing needs as Housing Growth Indicators (HGIs), which are produced as a guide for the preparation of the LDP. The HGI is an estimate of the new dwelling requirement for the Council area over a fixed period (2012-2025). This then allows us to extrapolate housing allocation over the Plan period (2015-2030). The figures are

based on current population/household formation trends and projected requirements in the future. They are therefore guidance, rather than a cap on housing development in the area or a target to be achieved.

In April 2016, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) published a revised

HGI figure of 14,400 dwellings for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough for the period 2012 to 2025 (approximate allocation of 1108 units per year), using NISRA 2012-based household projections. This is a reduction on the previous HGI for the period 2008 to 2025 which allocated a total of 21,300 dwellings (approximately

1250 units per year) across the three former Council areas. Projecting the updated RDS HGI figure of 14,400 on a pro rata basis to 2030 gives a figure of **19,850** for the plan period. In considering the Borough housing allocation figure, we should be mindful that there remains a considerable amount of undeveloped land that is zoned for housing, as well as significant housing potential from other unzoned land (see reference above to windfall and urban capacity studies).

At this stage in the plan process, it is not considered necessary to set out the precise allocation for each settlement but it is reasonable to consider how housing should be apportioned across the various tiers of settlement. The precise number of dwellings that will be allocated to each settlement will be set out later in the plan-making process, taking account of the size of the settlement, the availability of services and facilities, the level of committed housing and its environmental capacity for development. All the housing allocation options take into account RDS direction, including the RDS Hierarchy of Settlement and Spatial Framework Guidance, the HGI figure of 19,850 for the plan period and our proposed settlement hierarchy.

We carry out an Annual Housing Monitor to determine the amount of housing built and to assess the remaining housing potential within the settlements in our Borough. Currently, we do not undertake a rural housing monitor to assess the number of houses being built in the countryside, outside existing settlements. Therefore, we can only estimate the number of rural houses built in the countryside over the plan period based on the number of rural planning applications approved that add to our housing stock which can be translated into a dwelling. This means that replacement dwelling approvals are excluded (no net addition in housing stock) and outline approvals (houses can only be built following a reserved matters or a full planning approval) from the overall figure used to project future dwellings likely to be built in the countryside. Initial evidence suggests that during the period 2010 – 2016 approximately 32% of approvals in the countryside were replacement category, which is outlined in more detail under **Key Issue SOC 2 – Supporting Sustainable Rural Housing**.

In advance of the Plan Strategy, further evidence will be gathered to ascertain how the past rural approval trend/rates

sit with the suggested rural housing yield over the plan period. However, at this stage in the process it is reasonable to consider how future housing should be allocated across the four tiers of the Settlement Hierarchy (Hubs/Local Towns/Villages and the Small Settlements and the rural area). **Table 5.4** details the number of households within the four tiers of the Settlement Hierarchy in 2011.

Table 5.4: The Settlement Hierarchy Household Split (2011)

Settlement Hierarchy Tiers	H/holds (No.) 2011	H/hold (%) 2011
1. Hubs (Armagh City, Banbridge Town & Craigavon Urban Area)	38,279	51
2. Local Towns	7,519	10
3. Villages	8,812	11
Total of Hubs, Local Towns and Villages	(54,610)	(72)
4. Small Settlements & Rural Area	20,896	28
Borough Total	75,506	100

Source: - NISRA Census 2011.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue SGS 2 (Allocating Housing)

Option SGS 2A

Focus housing growth on the Hubs whilst sustaining rural communities to reflect regional direction.

Table 5.5: Preferred Housing Allocation (HGI - 19,850 units) across the Settlement Hierarchy

Settlement Hierarchy Tiers	Preferred Housing Allocation (%)	Preferred Housing Allocation (No.)
1. Hubs (Armagh City, Banbridge Town & Craigavon Urban Area)	52	10,322
2. Local Towns	10	1,985
3. Villages	13	2,581
Total of Hubs, Local Towns & Villages	(75)	(14,888)
4. Small Settlements & Rural Area	25	4,962
Borough Total	100	19,850

Justification

This option directs the majority of our allocation to the main Hubs to grow their populations whilst sustaining rural communities. This option and the associated housing allocation is considered consistent with RDS regional policy direction.

Our Hubs are the best locations in terms of infrastructure provision, connectivity, access to services/goods and employment to accommodate housing in a sustainable manner. **Table 5.5** details the suggested housing allocation across the 4 tiers of the Settlement Hierarchy. This option increases the HGI (%) housing allocation in the Hubs from 51% to 52% based on household information in the 2011 Census, which equates to approximately 10,300 units up to 2030. The Local Towns allocation remains the same at 10%, which equates to approximately 1985 units and the Villages allocation increases by 2% to 13%, which equates to approximately

2580 units. The RDS states that a strong network of smaller towns supported by villages helps to sustain and service the rural community. The allocation to the Small Settlements and Rural Area has been reduced slightly from 28% to 25%.

This preferred approach is in keeping with RDS direction which states that over the last 10 years there has been a disproportionate amount of growth in smaller settlements and significant growth in the open countryside. If this pattern were to continue, it could affect the role of larger settlements and be contrary to the objectives of the Strategy for strong growth in larger urban areas.

It is considered that an allocation of 25% of our HGI housing units to the Small Settlements and the Rural Area would help secure the long term sustainability of our rural communities and allow appropriate levels of growth in Small Settlements

and the open countryside. A sustainable approach to further development will be important to ensure that growth does not exceed the capacity of the environment or the essential infrastructure expected for modern living.

Alternative Options

Option SGS 2B

Maintain the housing allocation in line with the proportion of households at each level of the settlement hierarchy (2011 Census).

This option would maintain the status quo in relation to the proportion of households across the Borough Settlement Hierarchy at the time of the 2011 Census, but would not reflect RDS objectives for strong growth in larger urban areas. The RDS also sets a regional target of 60% of new housing to be located in appropriate 'brownfield' sites within the urban footprints of settlements

greater than 5,000 population, so a high housing allocation to the larger settlements is preferable in pursuit of this target.

Option SGS 2C

Maintain the housing allocation in line with the proportion of population at each level of the settlement hierarchy (2011 Census).

This option would maintain the status quo in relation to the proportion of population across the Borough Settlement Hierarchy at the time of the

2011 Census but would not reflect RDS objectives for strong growth in larger urban areas. As the RDS sets a regional target of 60% of new housing to be located in appropriate 'brownfield' sites within the urban footprints of settlements greater than 5,000 population, a higher housing allocation to the larger settlements is preferable. Additionally, households are considered a better guide for determining future housing unit need than population numbers and housing units are the format used in the RDS HGIs.

Question

5. Do you agree with our preferred option for allocating housing across the settlement hierarchy?

Key Issue SGS 3: Allocating economic development lands

Background

The Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2015-2017 states that growing our local economy is top of our agenda in terms of Corporate Priorities. Within the Place Corporate Priority, the Council aims to increase prosperity through developing the economy, employment, connectivity and environment. The Council's Regeneration & Development Strategy aligns itself to the Corporate Plan and sets out a framework for a more joined up approach to economic development and regeneration. These two documents fed into 'Connected', the Community Plan for our Borough, which has a 2030 vision to have 'A happy, healthy and connected community, a vibrant and sustainable economy and appealing places for living, working and learning.'

The Community Plan has an outcomes based approach with three main themes of Community, Economy and Place alongside the cross cutting themes of connectivity, equality and sustainability. The long-term outcomes for the Economic Theme are - 'Our Borough is a centre of excellence for entrepreneurship, innovation and investment; people are better equipped to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by our dynamic economy; and our Borough is the destination of choice for international visitors.'

Our LDP has an important role in further developing a vibrant economy and facilitating employment through the zoning of land and the development of planning policy to support business

development and job growth. Whilst the LDP cannot directly provide jobs, it can provide the planning framework to support the vision, themes and actions of the Council's Corporate Plan, Community Plan and Regeneration and Development Strategy by ensuring that there is an adequate supply of land in appropriate places to facilitate sustainable economic growth, that retains existing businesses and attracts new investment.

Policy Context (Regional and Local)

Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)

The RDS provides a framework for strong sustainable economic growth across the region and recognises that a growing regional economy needs a co-ordinated approach to the provision of services, jobs and infrastructure.

Strategic Guidance, RG1, of the RDS directs that we should 'ensure adequate supply of land to facilitate sustainable economic growth' to offer a range and choice of sites in terms of size and location to promote flexibility and provide for the varying needs of different types of economic activity. It also indicates that zoned land should be protected

and that economic development should be promoted in the Hubs. It also seeks to promote a network of economic development opportunities, with provision to be made in the LDP for an adequate and continuous supply of land for employment purposes.

Employment land should be accessible and located to make best use of available services, whilst avoiding, where possible, areas at risk of flooding. The RDS indicates that the focus should be on larger urban centres and regional gateways taking advantage of their locations on the regional transport network.

The RDS provides an Employment Land Evaluation Framework as detailed in **Table 5.6**, which outlines a process to enable councils to identify robust and defensible portfolios of sites for their LDPs. This involves taking stock of the existing situation, understanding future requirements and then identifying a new portfolio of sites. This provides the opportunity to safeguard zoned and existing employment sites, review our existing employment sites and identify the need for new employment lands at Local Policies Plan stage.

Table 5.6: The Employment Land Evaluation Framework (RDS)

The Employment Land Evaluation Framework (RDS 2035)	
Stage 1 Taking Stock of the Existing Situation	An initial assessment of the 'fitness for purpose' including the environmental implications of the existing employment land portfolio. This is principally in order to identify the 'best' employment sites to be retained and protected and identifying sites that should clearly be released for other uses.
Stage 2 Understanding Future Requirements	Quantify the amount of employment land required across the main business sectors during the development plan period. This is achieved by assessing both demand and supply elements and assessing how they can be met in aggregate by the existing stock of business premises and by allocated sites. Account should also be taken of turnover of existing sites due to relocation or closures. Both short/medium term and strategic provision need to be considered in this process.
Stage 3 Identifying a 'New' portfolio of sites	Devise qualitative site appraisal criteria to determine which sites meet the occupier or developer needs. Confirm the existing sites to be retained, replaced or released, and any gaps in the portfolio. In this allocation, consideration should be given to previously used sites, and in the reallocation, the environmental impact of one site relative to others should be included. The results of Stage 2, together with this site- appraisal should provide a robust justification for altering allocations for employment land.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)

The SPPS does not introduce any significant changes to economic development policy contained in PPS 4: Planning and Economic Development. It sets the direction for Councils to bring forward detailed operational policy within their new LDPs.

Both PPS 4 and the SPPS set regional policy objectives for economic development which are to:-

- a) promote sustainable economic development in an environmentally sensitive manner;
- b) tackle disadvantage and facilitate

- job creation by ensuring the provision of a generous supply of land suitable for economic development and a choice and range in terms of quality;
- c) sustain a vibrant rural community by supporting rural economic development of an appropriate nature and scale;
- d) support the re-use of previously developed economic development sites and buildings where they meet the needs of particular economic sectors;
- e) promote mixed-use development and improve integration between transport, economic development

- and other land uses, including housing; and
- f) ensure a high standard of quality and design for new economic development.

The SPPS reiterates the role for LDPs to ensure that there is an ample supply of suitable land available to meet economic development needs on a range and choice of sites in terms of size and location to promote flexibility. Account should also be taken of issues such as accessibility to all sections of the community, availability of adequate infrastructure, specialised needs of specific economic activities, potential

environmental impacts and compatibility with nearby uses.

The SPSS also recognises the need to support and sustain vibrant rural communities consistent with the RDS and to strike a balance between facilitating new development and protecting the environment from inappropriate development. Local policies and proposals may be brought forward in the LDP, where it is supported by evidence which will address development such as farm diversification, agricultural development and tourism development of an appropriate nature, scale and location.

Planning Policy Statement 4 (PPS4) – Planning and Economic Development

PPS 4 sets out the Department's objectives, planning policies for economic development uses and indicates how growth associated with such uses can be accommodated and promoted in development plans. In order to achieve the objectives of PPS 4 the LDP, where considered appropriate, should meet economic development needs by offering a supply of economic development land, by safeguarding existing economic development land; identifying sites for mixed use development, including Business Use Class B1(a)* and reallocate existing economic development lands for alternative uses where appropriate. New LDPs should also specify acceptable employment uses and outline supporting actions by way of guidance in terms of key design, layout, infrastructural and landscaping requirements.

*The Planning (Use Classes) Order (Northern Ireland) 2004 Part B –Class B1 Business, Class B2 Light Industrial, B3 General Industry & B4 Storage or Distribution. (Superseded by 'The Planning (Use Classes) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015')

Economic Development in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough

In terms of economic activity, employment levels are high in the Borough (71% compared to the NI average of 68%). It is recognised there is potential to further grow and expand the employment base through the provision of additional jobs, of which **approximately 12,200** are estimated to be required over the Plan period from 2015-2030.

Given the strategic location of the Borough and Craigavon performing a sub-regional function, there are significant

opportunities to attract a wide range of major employment types, in particular on the North/South and East/West Economic Corridors. The Borough is also a strategic hub for Project Kelvin – the direct connection of a telecommunications cable to North America. This project represents a major investment in broadband technology which will support businesses that depend on secure, ultrafast connections.

The rural area also provides important opportunities for employment through agriculture, quarrying, forestry and other rural related enterprises. The relationship between the rural area and the main settlements is interdependent and sustaining rural communities will be an important focus of the LDP. The aim will be to ensure a balance between protecting the countryside and allowing further opportunities for sustainable development.

The Council area has a diverse employment base containing a strong manufacturing and logistics base with a significant amount of public sector jobs in health, education and central/local government as well as wholesale and retail trade. This broad employment base reflects the 3 Hubs importance as major administrative and service centres for their catchment with a range of government departments as a provider of educational and health services.

Craigavon is located within 30 minutes of Greater Belfast and has a strong manufacturing and logistics base. Craigavon has three distinct, yet complementary town centres of Portadown, Central Craigavon and Lurgan. Armagh traditionally had a strong employment base in agriculture, education, health/social and defence sectors, but this offering has reduced in recent years due to cut-backs and changes in the job market. Armagh has significant potential for growth in the tourism market with its unique cultural and heritage base. Banbridge is located on the A1/M1 transport corridor between Belfast and Dublin, with a strong retail base and it is considered an attractive location to live with a good quality natural and built environment with excellent leisure facilities and open spaces.

The fastest growing sectors within the economy are invariably those which

are service related and exportable. The following areas are expected to offer potential for employment growth over the next decade: bio-technology, agri-food, digital/creative industries, financial services, social enterprise, professional and technical services, health and biomedical, tourism, advanced manufacturing/engineering and environmentally sustainable products linked to recycling and renewables.

Within the Borough, it is anticipated that there will be further employment opportunities in a number of sectors including digital tech, tourism, agri-foods, advanced manufacturing and the health and biomedical sectors. In selecting economic land for development, the LDP should try to facilitate growth in these sectors and provide sites with quality environments located on transport corridors to attract further investment.

A very important issue for our Borough is 'Brexit' and the decision in June 2016 by the United Kingdom Referendum to exit the European Union. Considering that the adjoining jurisdiction of the Republic of Ireland (Monaghan County Council) will remain within the EU and that they are a major trading partner, currently there is uncertainty over the impact that this will have on the Borough's economy and future investment. Discussions are ongoing between the UK Government and the EU/Ireland on what form the border will take and trade arrangements. Until these discussions are agreed and arrangements in place, it will be very difficult to accurately predict the medium to long term economic and social impacts of Brexit on our Borough and the decision to exit the EU.

The LDP may also consider the use of Enterprise Zones in urban areas in which policies to encourage economic growth and development are employed.

Table 5.7 details the status of the lands zoned within the existing Area Plans for industry/employment/economic development lands, including the total area zoned, the area developed (including the average per year), the area lost to other non-employment uses/constraints and lands remaining.

Table 5.7: Summary of Zoned Land and uptake of Industrial/Economic Development Land (Jan 2015)

Settlement	Total Area Zoned (Hectares)	Area Developed (Hectares)	Average Area Developed per year (Hectares)	Area lost or discounted* (Hectares)	Area Remaining (Hectares)
Armagh Area Plan 2004: Adopted January 1995=20 years old @ time of 2015 survey.					
Armagh City	25.37	4.72	0.24	11.5	9.15
Keady	3.38	0	0	0.3	3.08
Markethill	2.23	0	0	1.16	1.07
Tangrantee	5.65	0	0	1.95	3.7
ACDC Total	36.63	4.72	0.24	14.91	17
Banbridge/Newry & Mourne Area Plan 2015: Adopted Oct 2013=1.33 years old @ time of 2015 survey.					
Banbridge Town	32.33	0.75	0	0	31.58
Dromore	16.32	0	0	0.78	15.54
Rathfriland	1.54	0	0	0	1.54
BDC Total **	50.19	0.75	0.56	0.78	48.66
Craigavon Area Plan 2010: Adopted August 2004=10.42 years old @ time of 2015 survey.					
Craigavon Urban Area ***	180.49	14.86	1.43	5.94	159.69
CBC Total	180.49	14.86	1.43	5.94	159.69
Borough Total	267.31	20.33	2.23	21.63	225.35

* Area remaining (hectares) excludes any area that cannot be developed due to constraints (e.g. flooding) or has been developed for non-employment uses (e.g. housing). ** No zoned employment land in Gilford. *** Craigavon Urban Area contains Portadown, Central Craigavon & Lurgan.

Economic Development Land

To estimate the number of overall jobs required in the Borough over the plan period (as detailed in the Employment Preparatory Paper and presented in **Table 5.8**), a methodology has been used based on economic activity, unemployment rates and the 2012-2037 population projections from NISRA.

By applying this methodology, it is possible to estimate the number of people who will be economically active in 2015 and 2030. This estimate of the job requirement within the Borough up to 2030 can then be translated into approximate employment land requirements.

Table 5.8: Estimate of Job Requirements (2015-2030)

	2015	2020	2025	2030	Increase 2015-30
A. Population Estimate by Year*	207,800	218,100	228,300	237,500	29,700
B. Estimate of population aged 16-74 **	148,100	152,700	158,800	165,500	17,400
C. Number Economically Active 16-64 (2015 Econ Activity Rate: 74%) ***	109,594	112,998	117,290	122,470	12,876
D. The number in employment: (less 5%: assumed unemployment rate) ****	104,114	107,348	111,425	116,347	12,233

Notes: *2015 NISRA ACBCBC Population projections. ** Figures for ACBCBC population aged 16-74 based on NISRA 2012-37 projected population aged 16-74. *** Figure for economically active % assumes a continuation of 2015 figure for population 16-64 (61%: June 2016 Labour Force Survey). **** Unemployment rate assumed to remain at ACBCBC 2011 Claimant Count levels (5%). NB -Those unemployed are included in the economically active total.

It is estimated that approximately **12,233** new jobs are needed to match the projected increase in the Borough's working age population by 2030. This need for 12,233 new jobs is estimated as equating to 245 ha of economic development lands at a density of 50 jobs per hectare. This has been revised from the original Employment Preparatory Paper due to the publication of revised data including NISRA population projections. It is however acknowledged that not all new jobs created within the Borough will be on zoned employment lands as some businesses will have capacity in their current premises, or jobs will be created in other sectors.

As previously outlined in 2015 there were **226ha of remaining zoned employment lands** within the Borough. Below details the remaining economic development lands broken down into each of the former Council areas. (Full details are outlined in **Table 5.7**).

- **17 ha in Armagh;**
- **49 ha in Banbridge; and**
- **160 ha in Craigavon.**

At 2015 within the Borough, we had 226ha of remaining zoned employment lands and approximately 125ha of vacant/mixed

use/undeveloped unzoned lands suitable for employment uses. If we accept that this has the potential to return a total of approximately 350 hectares of zoned economic/potential development land remaining across the Borough, there would appear to be no immediate need to identify additional land. However, there are zoned lands that are considered inappropriate to develop due to flooding, for example, approximately 12ha of land in Armagh, or where they are not supported by the necessary infrastructure to meet the specific needs of certain businesses.

In keeping with the RDS, there is a need to assess the 'fitness for purpose' including environmental implications of existing employment land provision, location and availability. This will help to identify the 'best' employment sites to be retained and protected, replaced or released for other uses. This exercise should provide a network of economic development opportunities to ensure an adequate and continuous supply of land for employment purposes over the plan period at the most easily accessible locations. The focus will be on larger urban centres taking advantage of their locations on the regional transport network in line with regional policy.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue SGS 3 (Allocating economic development lands)

Option SGS 3A

Apportion economic development lands in relation to former Council populations and in addition reflect Craigavon's sub-regional function.

Justification

This option considers the overall population of the 3 former Council areas and then allocates economic development land (245ha) based on the % population that each Council made up of the total at the time of the 2011 Census. The total 2011 population of the three former Councils was 200,702. Assuming the former council areas broadly coincided with their hinterlands, it is possible to apportion growth with regard to catchment by considering populations at the time of the 2011 Census as follows:

The NISRA 2011 Census population of the former Councils and land allocation are as follows:

- Armagh = 59,340. This equates to 29.57% of the combined total = 72ha;
- Banbridge = 48,339. This equates to 24.08% of the combined total = 59ha; and
- Craigavon = 93,023. This equates to 46.35% of the combined total = 114ha,

This option assumes the small portion of Dungannon Borough Council that transferred to ACBCBC is principally

provided for by the provision of employment lands in Armagh and Craigavon.

In order to fully recognise that **Craigavon performs a strong sub-regional function** with a strong manufacturing and industrial base it is considered that the current provision of 160ha should be retained based on RDS direction, its location on a key transport corridor and also the quantity of Invest NI owned lands in Craigavon which has specified criteria to meet in terms of exporting, business status and type. It is also considered that 160ha within Craigavon should be retained to support the 'Enterprising Economy' outcomes in the Community Plan.

Therefore the **recommended allocation of economic development lands** is as follows:

- **Armagh = 72ha**
- **Banbridge = 59ha**
- **Craigavon = 160ha**

This preferred option would ensure an adequate supply of employment land

across the Borough to 2030 and meet the RDS guidance to direct employment lands to the Hubs. It would provide each of the 3 Hubs and 6 local towns with an appropriate allocation of economic development lands whilst safeguarding the existing lands zoned for economic development uses. This option helps maximise the benefits from efficient use of existing facilities, infrastructure and locations of the key transport corridors. The preferred option also acknowledges the RDS direction that Craigavon performs a strong sub-regional function with a strong manufacturing and industrial base.

A review will also be carried out of existing employment lands to ascertain if they are offering a range in terms of their size, location and compatibility with surrounding established uses. Additionally, the review will consider deliverability of lands and involve contacting owners of undeveloped zoned economic development lands to inquire if they are willing to release their lands at market value over the plan period for economic development use.

Alternative Options

Option SGS 3B

Apportion lands equally across former council areas focused on 3 x Hubs.

This option provides each of the main Hubs with an equal share aiming to provide around **82 ha** minimum in each of the 3 main Hubs (Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Urban Area). The benefit of this approach is that it treats each location equally, which could be of benefit to Armagh by offering a greater range and choice, but in turn could significantly restrain growth in Craigavon in relation to current and future provision.

Option SGS 3C

Apportion lands in relation to population of Hubs (City/ Town / Urban Area).

This option considers the overall population of the 3 Hubs (Armagh City, Banbridge Town and Craigavon Urban Area) and then allocates the economic development land that is required over the plan period (245ha). This is apportioned based on the % that their population made up of the combined population of the Hubs at the time of the 2011 Census. The combined 2011 population total of the 3 Hubs was 95,595.

The NISRA 2011 Census population of the Hubs and land allocation are as follows:

- **Armagh City**= 14,749. This equates to 15.43% of the population of the Hubs =**38ha**;
- **Banbridge Town** = 16,653. This equates to 17.42% of the population of the Hubs =**43ha**; and
- **Craigavon Urban Area** = 64,193. This equates to 67.15% of the population of the Hubs =**164ha**.

Apportioning growth on the basis of 2011 Hub populations and an allocation of 245 ha, 164 ha should be allocated to Craigavon, 43 ha to Banbridge and 38 ha for Armagh. While this would support economic growth in Craigavon it could potentially restrain growth in Banbridge by reducing the offering currently available.

Question

6. Do you agree with our preferred option for allocating economic development lands?





6. Social Theme

This theme is derived from the Strategic Objectives set out in Section 4:

- To further develop Armagh City, Banbridge and the sub-regional Craigavon Urban Area (consists of the 3 distinct components of Portadown, Central Craigavon and Lurgan) as the main hubs for growth.
- To support the role of local towns and villages as attractive and vibrant local service centres providing a level of development appropriate to their position in the settlement hierarchy.
- To support rural communities by providing appropriate and sustainable opportunities for development in the countryside.
- To provide a sufficient supply of land for new housing to meet the housing needs by 2030.
- To facilitate the diverse range of specific housing needs over the Plan period.
- To facilitate community safety through high quality designs and layouts of proposed schemes.
- To facilitate the development of community and cultural facilities at locations accessible to the local communities they serve.

The Key Issues set out in this section have been informed by the Strategic Objectives detailed above, the Policy Context set out in Section 2 and our evidence base.

Key Issues

Urban Housing

Key Issue SOC 1: Supporting quality sustainable urban housing and balanced communities

Rural Housing

Key Issue SOC 2: Supporting sustainable rural housing

Design and Place- Making

Key Issue SOC 3: Supporting good design and positive place-making

Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation

Key Issue SOC 4: Protecting open space

Key Issue SOC 5: Facilitating open space / play provision in new largescale residential developments

Community and Cultural Facilities

Key Issue SOC 6: Facilitating community and cultural facilities to meet the needs of the Borough

Developer Contributions

Key Issue SOC 7: Facilitating development through Developer Contributions

Urban Housing

Key Issue SOC 1 Supporting quality sustainable urban housing and balanced communities

Key Facts

Settlements

- the Borough currently has **104** designated settlements¹
- the largest settlement by far is Craigavon Urban Area Hub², comprising approx. one third of the Borough's entire population (32.2%)³
- the **3** Hubs together accommodate almost half of the Borough's population (47.9%), including Banbridge (8.3%) and Armagh (7.4%)³

Housing Breakdown

- the total housing stock in the Borough is **83477** housing units (April 2017)⁴
- under three-quarters of all dwellings in the Borough are owner-occupied (70.3%)⁵
- **11.3%** of households are social housing tenure, compared to **14.9%** NI average, with **14.3%** private rental and other rental/rent free at **4.0%**⁵
- there is a greater proportion of detached dwellings (42.4%) and half the proportion of apartments (5.0%) in the Borough than the NI average (35.6% and 10.7% respectively)⁴
- there are **7640** NI Housing Executive owned properties in the Borough (having sold off approx. **14178** properties to date), the vast majority of which would be in urban areas⁶

Social Housing

- **327** social housing units are needed within the Borough over 2017-2022, with the greatest need in Armagh (99), Banbridge (56) and Lurgan (86)
- **51** supported housing units needed for the period 2016-2019
- **1850** intermediate housing units needed for the period 2015-2025
- **3074** applicants are on the social housing waiting list (March 2017). **41%** (1264) of these are in housing stress
- Single, small adult and elderly applicants comprise **81%** of those in housing stress
- **73%** of the waiting list are for single households and small families (mainly 1 and 2 bedroom)
- **16%** of the waiting list are elderly (483), over half of these are in housing stress (252)⁶

Deprivation

- **8** of the **100** most deprived areas across Northern Ireland are located in the Borough – all are located in the **2** main urban Hubs of Craigavon Urban Area (7) and Armagh (1)⁸

Housing Growth

- of the **19850** new housing units required within the Borough over the plan period (April 2015 – December 2030):
 - **52%** are proposed to be allocated to the **3 Hubs** (Tier 1 Settlements, 10322 units)
 - **10%** are proposed to be allocated to the **6 Local Towns** (Tier 2, 1985 units)
 - **13%** are proposed to be allocated to the **Villages (currently 29 No.)** (Tier 3, 2581 units)
 - the remaining **25%** are proposed to be allocated to the **Small Settlements (currently 66 No.)** and the **countryside** (together comprising Tier 4, 4962 units), with Small Settlements having a current estimated yield of 2064 units (10.4%)⁷

Urban Housing Capacity

- from April 2014 - March 2016, **1024** urban housing units were completed, across 56 of 104 Settlements, with a build rate of **512** per annum⁹
- overall **944.8ha** of land remain available across the **104** Settlements (either as Phase 1 zoned housing land or unzoned land with extant or expired residential approvals), with a potential for **21956** units, at 31 March 2016⁹

Sources:

¹ See Borough Settlement List and Hierarchy with proposed changes, Table 5.3 in Spatial Growth Strategy, Key Issue SGS 1

² Craigavon Urban Area Settlement comprises Central Craigavon, Lurgan and Portadown

³ NI 2011 Census, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

⁴ NI Housing Stock Statistics, Land and Property Services NI Valuation List, April 2017

⁵ NI 2011 Census, NISRA. Notes: Owner-occupied includes owned outright, owned with a mortgage, and shared ownership; Social Housing includes NI Housing Executive and Housing Associations properties

⁶ Northern Ireland Housing Executive Housing Strategy for Local Development Plans - Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, February 2018

⁷ See Spatial Growth Strategy Key Issue SGS 2 (Allocating housing); and Background in Key Issue SOC 2 (Supporting sustainable rural housing)

⁸ NISRA Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 (NIMDM2017), a mechanism for ranking the 890 Super Output areas (SOAs) in NI from the most deprived (rank 1) to the least deprived (rank 890), across 7 distinct deprivation types (or domains).

⁹ Council Planning Department (LDP Team) Annual Housing Monitor 2014/2015 and 2015/2016

Background

Housing, which includes all types of residential accommodation for the purposes of the LDP, continues to represent the greatest pressure on the land resource throughout our Borough, like Northern Ireland as a whole. It is likely to continue to be the most widespread urban land-use change for many years to come. Urban, in this topic, means that within all settlement limits across the 4 tiers of the Settlement Hierarchy ie. from City/Hubs down to Small Settlement.

As referred to in the POP's **Housing Allocation Strategy**, earlier in **Key Issue SGS 2**, the Borough's projected population rise over the plan period contributes

to it having the largest Housing Growth Indicator (HGI) figure of all 11 Councils in Northern Ireland, with an estimated housing need of 14400 housing units for the period 2012-2025 (15.3% of NI total). The projected rise in the Borough's elderly population will also have particular implications in terms of the type and design of housing required to address their needs, as well as on local service provision and community facilities, near to or within residential developments.

The most up-to-date urban housing capacity figure of 21956 units (based on the Housing Monitor up to March 2016)

exceeds the LDP's projected housing need of 19850 units up to 2030, by 10.6%, would appear to suggest that there is sufficient land available with current settlement limits. This however does not necessarily reflect local circumstances. Some settlements may have insufficient land available within their limits to meet the required need over the plan period and in other settlements there may be an oversupply (taking account of the Housing Allocation Strategy). Further detailed assessment is therefore required ahead of the Local Policies Plan to ascertain the distribution of committed development and overall urban housing capacity, to help allocate housing growth

appropriately across the Settlement Hierarchy in line with the proposed Spatial Growth Strategy. The annual monitoring process will help to give an up-to-date picture of this.

Further information on the breakdown of urban housing capacity across the Borough's 104 Settlements, up to 31 March 2016, is contained in the Council's Housing Monitor Summary Reports 2016 which are available to view in the Local Development Plan Section on the Council's website. The Housing Monitor does not monitor Phase 2 land (as currently provided in 2 of the 4 extant Plans (Craigavon; and Dungannon/South Tyrone)).

This first Key Issue SOC 1 in the Social Theme reflects the important role of the new LDP in facilitating an adequate and available supply of quality housing to meet the needs of everyone in the Borough. Building on regional

direction and the existing planning policy framework, the focus is to create balanced sustainable communities that are welcoming and attractive places to live; that provides opportunities for the community to share in local employment, shopping, leisure and social facilities; and that will last into the future. The overall approach is underpinned by the principles of quality, sustainability and inclusivity.

Meeting affordable/social housing¹ need is an important part of achieving balanced communities. This is dealt with further in the amplification around the preferred option for urban housing (SOC 1A), along with a host of other cross-cutting issues that are raised in the POP. As one of the principal components of the LDP, urban housing helps deliver on most of its social objectives, as well as a number of others (economic and environmental).

¹ The SPPS states that affordable housing relates to social rented housing (provided at affordable rent by registered Housing Associations) (HA) and intermediate housing (shared ownership housing provided through a registered HA e.g. Co-Ownership Housing Association, also sometimes referred to as affordable owner occupied). The social housing sector includes: General Needs Social Housing (social rented through NIHE or registered HA, also deemed affordable), Supported Housing or Special Housing Needs (accommodation with complementary housing support services to cater for people with a range of specific needs including those leaving the various programmes of care within health services, probation and certain vulnerable homeless persons) and Traveller Accommodation.

Policy Context (Regional and Local)

Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035

The RDS sets regional direction that aims to deliver housing in a more sustainable manner. It recognises that the right environment can help strengthen community cohesion, through the development of integrated services and facilities; fostering a stronger community spirit and sense of place; and encouraging mixed housing development (RG6). It supports urban and rural renaissance (RG 7), through the process of development and re-development in urban areas and revitalising the centres of small towns and villages. It seeks to manage housing growth to achieve sustainable patterns of residential development, with the promotion of more sustainable housing development within existing urban areas (RG 8).

In the context of the RDS Spatial Framework (Metropolitan Belfast, Derry/

Londonderry, Hubs and Clusters of Hubs, the rural area, and Gateways/Corridors), key strategic guidance seeks to grow the population in the Hubs and cluster of Hubs (SFG 12) and to sustain rural communities living in smaller settlements and the countryside (SFG 13).

The RDS recognises that there are significant opportunities for new housing on suitable vacant and underutilised land, and sets a regional target of 60% of new housing to be located in appropriate 'brownfield' sites within the urban footprints of settlements greater than 5000 population (RG 8). This implies a sequential approach to the allocation of land for housing in cities and towns, focusing firstly on the re-use of previously developed land and buildings informed by capacity studies, and consideration of previously undeveloped land within the existing urban area, before deciding the location and scale of settlement

extensions.

The Borough had 4 Settlements with a population of 5000 or more in the 2011 Census (Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon Urban Area (CUA) and Dromore).

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

The SPPS's strategic objectives for housing in settlements are consistent with regional guidance in the RDS. It requires the facilitation of an adequate and available supply of quality housing to meet the needs of everyone; promote more sustainable housing development within existing urban areas; and the provision of mixed housing development with homes in a range of sizes and tenures. This is to help support the need to maximise the use of existing infrastructure and services, and the creation of more balanced sustainable communities.

The SPPS requires that in preparing LDPs, councils shall bring forward a strategy for housing, together with appropriate policies and proposals that reflect the SPPS approach, tailored to the specific circumstances of the plan area. Councils must deliver increased housing density without town cramming; sustainable forms of development; good design and balanced communities.

**Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS 7):
Quality Residential Environment**

PPS 7 sets out regional operational policies for achieving quality and sustainability in the design and layout of new urban residential development, that is in harmony with its setting and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of our settlements. Policy QD 1 identifies a range of criteria which proposed residential development should satisfy. Policy QD 2 promotes the comprehensive planning and development of residential areas through the requirement for Design Concept Statements and Concept Master Plans.

Addendum to PPS 7 (APPS 7): Residential Extensions and Alterations

This first Addendum provides an additional planning policy (EXT 1) for achieving quality in relation to proposals for residential extensions and alterations, both urban and rural.

**Addendum to PPS 7 (APPS 7):
Safeguarding the Character of Residential Areas**

This second Addendum provides additional planning policy on the protection of local character, environmental quality and residential amenity within established residential areas, villages, and smaller settlements. It also sets out policy on the conversion of existing buildings to flats or apartments, in addition to promoting the greater use of permeable paving within new residential schemes to help reduce the risk of flooding from surface water run-off.

Planning Policy Statement 8 (PPS 8): Open Space, Sport and Recreation

Policy OS 2 in PPS 8 sets assessment criteria for the provision of integral open space and equipped children's play provision in new residential development, including normal thresholds for provision based on scale and a variety of design considerations that seek to achieve a high standard of siting, design and landscaping.

**Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS 12):
Housing in Settlements**

PPS 12 provides operational policy in relation to housing in settlements. Its policies cover Living over the Shop (HS 1); Social Housing (HS 2), Travellers Accommodation (HS 3, as amended) and House Types and Sizes (HS 4).

The policy statement also contains 4 Planning Control Principles, which reflect the objectives of the statement. These should be taken into account in the preparation of development plans and are also material to decisions on planning applications. These encourage increased housing density without town cramming (PCP 1), good design (PCP 2), sustainable forms of development (PCP 3) and balanced communities (PCP 4).

The Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (PSRNI)

Policy DES 2 (Townscape) requires development proposals in towns and villages to make a positive contribution to townscape and be sensitive to the character of the area surrounding the site in terms of design, scale and use of materials. Policy DES 10 (Landscaping) seeks to protect existing trees and make provision for new planting in new developments.

Existing Development Plans

In addition to each identifying and safeguarding lands for housing, through zonings, the 4 existing Area Plans across the Borough contain various local policies, which are a material consideration in addition to regional operational policy in PPS 7, 8 and 12.

- The **Armagh Area Plan (AAP) 2004**, Section 20.0 provides local policy direction, including considerations around housing layout, house types, local character, landscaping standards, pedestrian links, open space and comprehensive development. The provisions of PPS 7, 8 and 12 would largely supersede these quality considerations.
- The **Banbridge / Newry and Mourne Area Plan (BNMAP) 2015** contains 2 additional policies. Policy HSG 2 sets out the allocation of social housing on housing and mixed-use zonings and Development Opportunity Sites (DOSs) through the imposition of Key Site Requirements. Policy HSG 3 protects designated Housing Areas in City and Town Centres.
- The **Craigavon Area Plan (CAP) 2010** contains 2 specific policies. Policy HOU 1 provides for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 housing zonings, while Policy HOU 2 allows for 'Residential Development on Derelict, Vacant or Under-Utilised Land within Settlement Limits' subject to criteria. The SPPS has done away with the need for Phase 2 housing.
- The **Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan (DSTAP) 2010** (which relates to the County Armagh portion of the former DST Borough Council area) contains 2 specific policies. Policy HOUS 1 provides for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 housing zonings. Policy HOUS 2 designated protected town centre housing areas protects designated Housing Areas in City and Town Centres.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 'Creating Places - Achieving Quality in Residential Developments' (DOE/ DfI) provides regional guidance on the design, character and layout of new housing in Northern Ireland to support the policies in PPS 7 and 8, with an emphasis on place, community and context. It sets out

the standards expected of developers in terms of design quality and sustainability.

- 'Living Places – An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland' (DOE/DfI) seeks to inform and inspire all those involved in the process of managing (stewardship) and making (designing) urban places, with a view to raising standards. It identifies 10 qualities which make good places.
- Development Control Advice Note (DCAN) 8 – Housing in Existing Urban Areas – advocates a design-led approach that promotes the

philosophy of working within context, and fitting development in with the prevailing neighbourhood character and appearance.

- Development Control Advice Note (DCAN) 11: Access for People with Disabilities (1991) and Draft DCAN 11: Access for All – Designing for an Accessible Environment (Aug 2003) provide guidance for those involved in the design process, aimed at creating a more accessible environment for all, in support of the Department's planning policies.

The Council's Community Plan 2017 – 2030, 'Connected'

The long term outcome of a 'Revitalised

Place' (1 of 9) acknowledges that innovative solutions to physical, economic and social urban and rural renewal are needed through more integrated investment, regeneration and planning policy and practice. The Borough's growing and ageing population poses challenges in terms of future service provision and settlement functionality. It wants people to live in well-designed, sustainable and connected communities, benefitting from quality, affordable housing and accessible services and amenities.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue SOC 1 (Supporting quality sustainable urban housing and balanced communities)

Option SOC 1A

An approach to new residential development in settlements in line with existing policies, tailored to reflect regional direction and to meet local circumstances

Justification

The SPPS requires the Council, in preparing the LDP, to bring forward a strategy for housing in settlements, together with appropriate policies and proposals that must reflect the aims, objectives and approach of the SPPS, tailored to the specific circumstances of the plan area.

The Council intends to bring forward a similar set of policies as contained in

the existing suite of operational policy but with some adjustment to reflect the Council's wider approach to the urban area under other key issues (eg. design and place-making; and open space) and to build on the regional direction contained in the SPPS to best reflect local circumstances, where appropriate. The existing policy suite, will be updated and consolidated into a coherent policy set in the LDP.

The current operational urban housing policies are contained in:

- Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS 7): Quality Residential Environments;
- Addendum to PPS 7: Safeguarding the Character of Residential Areas;
- Addendum to PPS 7: Residential Extensions and Alterations;
- Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS 12): Housing in Settlements

The key elements of the proposed approach, or key areas being considered for change, are dealt with under the headings below. These refer to a number of other Key Issues in this POP document where there are cross-cutting considerations and where a proposed change in the current policy approach would have an influence on the approach to urban housing or vice versa. The key elements of the proposed approach are:

(i) Housing Quality

The LDP aims to bring forward a similar set of design criteria as in Policy QD 1 of PPS 7 and the Addendum for 'Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas', which provide a good basis, but with a renewed focus on design quality in line with the LDP's wider approach to **supporting good design and positive place-making (Key Issue SOC 3)**. This acknowledges that good residential development proposals are key to creating successful and sustainable places to live. The two policy areas will be consistent.

The existing 'Creating Places' Supplementary Guidance, which promotes good design in residential development, will be reviewed as required in order to reflect the Council's new urban housing policies. This review will also determine whether the design criteria need firming up in certain areas, such as with more problematic issues such as garden depths and the treatment of refuse storage. We can learn so much from past completed developments, both good examples and bad.

(ii) Energy Efficiency

Climate change mitigation will be proactively promoted, in the main design criteria, with the developer required to demonstrate what energy efficiency measures have been incorporated and considered in all relevant development proposals.

(iii) Accessibility

Consideration will be given to the

inclusion of minimum standards of accessibility for certain scales of residential development, in amended design criteria, such as the suggestion by NIHE that 5% of 50+ unit schemes should be wheelchair accessible, in the interests of inclusivity and balanced communities. Further engagement with consultation bodies will better inform this.

(iv) Concepts and Master Plans

Separate to the legislative requirement for Design Assess Statements, consideration will be given to reducing the threshold for Master Plans on major residential developments downwards from 300 to at least 250, with a renewed focus for the requirement for a Design Concept Statement for all residential schemes and for a similar policy to Policy QD 2 (in PPS 7) that reflects the wider changes to local urban housing policy.

(v) Open Space

The approach to urban housing will reflect the finalised approach to **Facilitating open space / play provision in new largescale residential developments (Key Issue SOC 5)** which seeks to improve the level of provision of equipped childrens' play facilities in larger residential schemes (of 100 units or more, or for sites of 5ha or more) than currently required in Policy OS 2 and to broaden this provision to include Multi-use Games Areas (MUGAs). This is over and above the normal open space requirements to be set for housing layouts, in line with the broadly consistent regional direction in the SPPS and the existing Policy OS 2.

The approach to **protecting open space (Key Issue SOC 4)**, as confirmed at Plan Strategy stage, will also be reflected in the LDP's urban housing policy. The presumption against the loss of open space of public value would include that existing in residential developments, subject to exceptional criteria and the limited re-evaluation exercise proposed in Preferred Option SOC 4A.

(vi) Movement

In line with the wider approach in the LDP to **promoting active travel and sustainable transport (Key Issue ECN 17)** through a general policy for all new urban development, consideration will be given to a more stringent test than the existing Criterion e) in Policy QD 1 (PPS 7) in relation to sustainable movement patterns in housing layouts, with a greater onus to be placed on the developer to demonstrate the consideration given to promoting active travel within the scheme and in the surrounding area, including connectivity with adjoining lands (both developed and un-developed), as well as integration with public transport networks where possible.

(vii) Local Neighbourhood Facilities

Consideration will be given to including a threshold of scale of development as well as for those housing proposals that fall within a certain size of housing zoning or are part of a group of zonings, where the developer has to demonstrate that the provision of local neighbourhood facilities as part of a development, would not be required. This would go further than the current Criterion d) of Policy QD 1 which does not contain a clear needs test. This would help to ensure that adequate facilities and community infrastructure are provided and designed as part of new residential areas, and that the opportunity is not missed through a piecemeal approach. This will encourage more sustainable balanced communities. This approach would reflect and complement the LDP's approach to **Facilitating community and cultural facilities (Key Issue SOC 6)** both in terms of site selection and assessing proposals.

(viii) Town Centre Living

Town centre living will be promoted as far as possible in the LDP by protecting existing housing areas, similar to Policy HSG 3 and related designations in BNMAP 2015 (referred to earlier). Also, a similar policy to the current 'Living Over the Shop' Policy HS 1 (in PPS 12) will be brought forward, updated as necessary

to reflect the Council's wider approach to **protecting and strengthening town centres and supporting the evening and night-time economy**, as in **Key Issue ECN 6** and **ECN 7** respectively. Primary retail ground floor frontage shall be protected.

As supported by the SPPS, residential use above shops and other business premises can promote sustainability through utilising underused and vacant space, help maintain the fabric of buildings and contribute to the vitality, viability and security of our town centres. This could also help in terms of meeting the substantial need for small social housing units (with 73% of the waiting list for single households and small families - 1 and 2 bedrooms), as these may be more suited to inner urban locations (city and larger settlements), than suburban areas.

(ix) Drainage

Sustainable drainage will be included as a design consideration in the criteria, as a means to reducing surface water run-off and alleviating flood risk in line with the approach in **Key Issue ENV 8 (Encouraging Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS))** that covers a wider range of development. This would go much further than the current Policy LC 3 for Permeable Paving in New Residential Development (in PPS 7 Addendum), which gives only favourable consideration to this one type of SuDS.

The policy test would be broadened to all types of SuDS and strengthened to put the onus on the developer to demonstrate why certain types of SuDS would not be suitable, even where it is demonstrated that surface water flood risk can be effectively controlled and mitigated and not create greater potential for surface water flooding elsewhere. This is to reflect the economic, environmental and social benefits of SuDS. The approach taken will be made consistent with the LDP's overall approach to flood risk, specifically that covered by current Policy FLD 3 in PPS 15 (Development and Surface Water (Pluvial) Flood Risk Outside Flood Plains) which will be reviewed

ahead of the Plan Strategy. SuDS could be incorporated into certain open space provision.

(x) Affordable / Social Housing

Land for new social housing will be allocated appropriately across housing zonings (by Key Site Requirements) at Local Policies Plan stage, in consultation with NIHE. This will be informed by the latest Housing Needs Assessment (HNA). Proposals prior to the adoption of the LPP will be considered through the development management process, but with consideration to be given to any additional criteria needed than in the existing Policy HS 4 (PPS 12) to help consider the suitability of a particular site for the specific type and number of households.

The total projected social need for the Borough for the period **2017-2022** has been assessed at **327** units (NIHE Strategy, Feb 2018), with 82% of these earmarked for the 3 main Hubs (Armagh (99), Banbridge (56), Lurgan (86) and Portadown (30)). With the majority of the waiting list for small unit households (73 % for 1 and 2 bedroom) and more suited to inner urban locations, a pro-rata share of social housing units across all schemes of a certain size would not be worthwhile. Separately, affordable / social housing would be considered an exceptional and more sustainable use in response to **Key Issue SOC 4 (protecting open space)**, where there is an oversupply of NIHE open space lands.

(xi) Residential Mix

A mix of house types, across tenures, and sizes will be encouraged in line with the current Policy HS 4 (PPS 12). This will help generate a better sense of community, that can accommodate a broader range of age groups and household sizes. A range of properties will better enable residents to upsize and downsize without leaving the neighbourhood, thus encouraging stability. A better variety of sizes and densities can also create visual variety and interest within a large scheme, as

well as distinct areas within it.

(xii) Travellers

The approach to both allocating sites and assessing proposals for Travellers specific accommodation will remain in line with current Policy HS 3 (Amended) in PPS 12 (Housing in Settlements).

The LDP will identify suitable sites in the Local Policies Plan stage, to cater for any need for Travellers specific accommodation that is identified by NIHE through their local housing needs assessment. This could be a grouped housing scheme, a serviced site or a transit site. Traveller need is reviewed on a 5-year basis by NIHE, with the requirement for a serviced site in Craigavon in the 2013/2018 Needs Assessment already met. An urban first sequential approach to site selection will be employed, with a site located outside a settlement only considered in exceptional circumstances (in line with rural policy).

Any need identified for new accommodation prior to the Local Policies Plan being adopted will be dealt with through the Development Management process. A similar criteria-based policy as in Policy HS 3 (Amended) will be brought forward.

In summary, the proposed changes and further considerations detailed in **i)- xii)** should allow for a more locally tailored approach to urban housing, that is still in line with regional guidance in the RDS and regional policy direction in the SPPS.

Alternative Options

No alternative options are being put forward. The single Preferred Option SOC 1A wording is a general approach to the overall topic of urban housing, with the various elements (i-xii) designed to better respond to the Borough's local

circumstances than the current policy provisions, but remain in line with regional direction.

Notes:

Developer Contributions

As outlined in **Key Issue SOC 7**, the LDP will bring forward a new strategic policy on **Developer Contributions** at Plan Strategy stage. This will identify the

types of development, and possibly the thresholds, where it will be appropriate for developers to contribute towards new local community infrastructure and related works. Individual sites will also be identified at Local Policies Plan stage where Developer Contributions

are required. It is envisaged that urban housing development would mainly benefit from a developer contributions policy, but how and to what extent remains to be considered ahead of the Plan Strategy.

Question

7. Do you agree with our preferred approach to urban housing?



Rural Housing

Key Issue SOC 2 Supporting sustainable rural housing



Key Facts

- **24%** of the Borough's population live in the rural area (outside of settlements)
- The rural area sits with **66 Small Settlements** in the fourth and lowest tier of the Borough's Settlement Hierarchy (out of a total of 104 Settlements)
- **3,192** active farms in the Borough (2016 DAERA Agricultural Census)

Background

Our Borough's countryside is a precious resource made up of distinctive landscapes, rich in heritage, cultural and environmental assets, including internationally important and designated nature conservation sites. We have a special relationship with our countryside, with around a quarter of our population living there. It contributes to a unique sense of place and identity for our rural communities, and acts as an important recreational and tourism asset. It

supports our important agricultural and agri-food industries, with many rural dwellers employed in farming and local enterprises. Key to sustaining our rural communities is **supporting sustainable rural economic development and tourism development**, as dealt with in **Key Issues ECN 4** and **ECN 10** respectively.

The countryside, which is defined in the LDP as land lying outside of settlement limits, is seen as a desirable place in

which to live and work. This has resulted in significant development pressure in the countryside over a long period of years, in particular from single dwellings. Over-development in parts of the Borough has resulted in suburban sprawl, landscape deterioration and habitat loss. It can adversely affect water quality from the increased use of non-mains sewerage systems and it can impact on the sustainable growth of our towns and villages. It is important therefore

that the LDP facilitates appropriate rural development, which contributes to the character, economy and social fabric of the Borough but that also protects its natural resources and its environmental assets.

The role and function of the Borough's settlements, along with their location, has a significant bearing on the rural area in terms of access to services and infrastructure. Whilst the Borough has a large number of settlements (104), relative to other Council areas, a large number of these are classed as Small Settlements (66 in total) in the 4th (lowest) Tier in our Settlement Hierarchy, located in the outer rural area. A large number of these 'rural' Small Settlements are very small in size, with very limited services and infrastructure. Twenty five (25) of the Borough's 66 Small Settlements were below 50 in population or 20 households in size at the time of the 2011 Northern Ireland Census.

An indication of the level of rural remoteness in the Borough is the fact that 9 of the 100 most deprived areas (Super Output Areas, SOAs) across Northern Ireland in relation to the 'Access to Services' Domain are located in the Borough (NI Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017). This measures the extent to which people have poor physical and online access to key services. These 9 SOAs are all classified by NISRA as rural, in the more remote and peripheral parts of the Borough (including Derrynoose, Katesbridge and Gransha). This rural classification reflects the predominance of rural area, but these spatial areas (average 2100 population) do include villages and smaller settlements. Their poor ranking in terms of access to key services however does not clearly translate into other areas of deprivation (such as income or health) and the overall combined Multiple Deprivation Measure.

Local geography and transport links can also contribute to the remoteness of certain parts of the Borough, with the rural areas to the north and east/south-east of the Borough hindered somewhat by Lough Neagh and the

Mourne Mountain range respectively. The Republic of Ireland border also bounds the west and south-west edge of the Borough.

In the period 2010-2016 from the introduction of the current policy (PPS 21), the main categories of approvals have been for farm dwellings (43%), replacement dwellings (32%) and infill dwellings (20%). This means that the remaining policy provisions in PPS 21 only made up the other 5% of approvals during that period.

Based on our **Housing Allocation Strategy (Key Issue SGS 2)**, 25% of housing is to be located in the Small Settlements (currently 66 in total) and countryside – the 4th Tier in our Settlement Hierarchy – which amounts to **4962 units** over the plan period (from April 2015 to December 2030). The housing allocation (which is used as an indicator and not a target) is considered to reflect the wider breakdown of household distribution across the Borough and sufficient to help sustain rural communities. Of the 25% share of allocated housing in the 4th Tier, the Small Settlements have a yield of **2064 units** during the plan period (10.4%), based on the Council's Housing Monitor Study up to 31 March 2016. This would leave the countryside with a potential yield of **2898 units** over the plan period (14.6%), which would average at approximately **196 rural dwellings per year** net gain (over the 14 ¾ years period up to December 2030). Replacement dwellings are not included in this.

Further evidence gathering is required ahead of the Plan Strategy to ascertain how the past rural approval rates sit with the allocated yield over the plan period. This will have a bearing on how local policy is tailored, from the current provisions in the regional-wide Strategic Planning Policy Statement (see Policy Context). The rate of approval may change over the plan period depending on the content of the LDP's new rural policies.

In addition, the provision for permitting a dwelling on an active farm every

10 years has the potential to yield a significant number of additional rural dwellings over the plan period, subject to meeting relevant criteria. There were **3,192 active farms** in the Borough based on the 2016 DAERA Agricultural Census. If each of these farms received permission for a farm dwelling, this would have the potential to yield 3,192 units, which would translate into approximately **202 additional rural dwellings per year** over the plan period (15 ¾ years). It is assumed however that not all farm holdings will seek permission for a farm dwelling under this policy, nor indeed gain permission. Further evidence gathering ahead of the Plan Strategy will better inform an estimate of the potential yield of farm dwellings over the plan period.

The monitoring of approvals as part of a review of the new LDP, at least every 5 years, will help determine if its objectives are being achieved in the context of the overall growth strategy, and whether changes are required to the local policy.

Policy Context (Regional and Local)

Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035

The RDS sets strategic guidance to sustain rural communities living in smaller settlements and the open countryside (SFG13) and improve accessibility for rural communities (SFG14). This is balanced against guidance to conserve, protect and where possible enhance our natural environment as well as our built heritage (RG 11). This includes conserving, protecting and where possible enhancing areas recognised for their landscape quality and protecting designated areas of countryside from inappropriate development.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

The aim of the SPPS with regard to the countryside is to manage development in a manner which strikes a balance between protection of the environment from inappropriate development while supporting and sustaining rural communities, consistent with the Regional Development Strategy (RDS).

The SPPS has 4 Regional Strategic Objectives for rural development, to:

- manage growth to achieve appropriate and sustainable patterns of development which supports a vibrant rural community;
- conserve the landscape and natural resources of the rural area and to protect it from excessive, inappropriate or obtrusive development and from the actual or potential effects of pollution;
- facilitate development which contributes to a sustainable rural economy; and
- promote high standards in the design, siting and landscaping of development.

The SPPS recognises that there are wide variations across Northern Ireland in terms of economic, social and environmental characteristics and the policy approaches to new development should reflect these

differences. It sets out strategic policy for 9 types of residential development in the countryside, in line with current operational policy in Planning Policy Statement 21 (PPS 21), referred to next, which provide a range of opportunities for dwellings in addition to Social and Affordable Housing where a need has been identified. It sets certain requirements and criteria which the Council's local policy shall build upon. The common policy approach however is to cluster, consolidate and group new development with existing established buildings; promote the re-use of previously used buildings and the use of existing services; and to minimise visual impact.

Planning Policy Statement 21 (PPS 21): Sustainable Development in the Countryside

PPS 21 currently sets out operational planning policy for development in the countryside. It aims to manage development in a manner consistent with the strategic objectives of the RDS 2035, by striking a balance between the need to protect the countryside from unnecessary or inappropriate development, while supporting rural communities. The objectives of PPS 21 are carried over in the SPPS, in relation to rural development.

In PPS 21 (following on from the general provisions in the overarching Policy CTY 1), 9 of 16 detailed policies (from CTY 2 and 2a -16) provide opportunities for housing in the countryside subject to detailed criteria - 7 of these relate to single dwellings (within a cluster, a replacement, the conversion and re-use of an existing building, associated with a non-agricultural business, the infilling of a gap, on a farm and to cater for special personal or domestic circumstances) and 2 relate to small groups of housing (in a Dispersed Rural Community or for social and affordable housing). The temporary provision of caravans and mobile homes is also available. Of the 7 other policies, 4 apply to rural housing - relating to integration and design, rural

character, settlement setting and sewage considerations.

Addendum to Planning Policy Statement 7 (APPS 7): Residential Extensions and Alterations

The Addendum provides an additional planning policy for achieving quality in relation to proposals for residential extensions and alterations, both urban and rural.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

'Building on Tradition - A Sustainable Design Guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside' (DOE/DfI) promotes quality and sustainable building design in the countryside, as an accompaniment to the design criteria within Planning Policy Statement 21 (PPS 21).

Existing Development Plans

The existing statutory plans across the Borough (as referred to in Section 2, Policy Context) have been fully superseded by the regional-wide SPPS and PPS 21 in respect of rural housing policy (outside of the designated settlements). Following the re-drawing of council boundaries in April 2015, our new Borough currently has no Special Countryside Areas (SCAs) – therefore no longer any exceptions to PPS 21 policy apply. SCAs identify and protect areas of exceptional landscape or lough shore, and certain views or vistas, wherein the quality of the landscape and unique amenity is such that development should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, in line with the local plan policy.

The Borough also currently has no Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or Areas of High Scenic Value (AoHSV), which would have certain design requirements as set out in PPS 2 (Policy NH 6) or in local plan policy, where appropriate, to ensure that the special character and/or features of interest are respected.

The Council's Community Plan 2017-2030 'Connected'

The Council's Community Plan

seeks, under the cross-cutting theme of 'Sustainability', to improve everyone's quality of life economically, environmentally and socially, without compromising future generations' ability to develop, grow and flourish. The long term outcome of a 'Revitalised Place' seeks to ensure that our distinctive and vibrant urban and rural areas are at

the heart of community and economic life. The Borough's rural character must however be preserved and developed for everyone to enjoy. The long term outcome of an 'Enhanced Place', seeks to prioritise the protection, promotion and enhancement of the Borough's unique and diverse landscape, as one of our key natural assets.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue SOC 2 (Supporting sustainable rural housing)

Option SOC 2A

An approach to rural housing in line with existing policies and further regional direction, tailored to meet local circumstances

Justification

The SPPS requires the Council, in preparing the LDP, to bring forward a strategy for sustainable development in the countryside, together with appropriate policies and proposals that must reflect the aims, objectives and policy approach of the SPPS, tailored to the specific circumstances of the plan area. The Council intends to bring forward a similar set of operational policies as contained in the existing PPS 21 (Sustainable Development in the Countryside) and the Addendum to PPS 7 (Residential Extensions and Alterations) but with some adjustment to reflect the Council's wider approach to the rural area under other key issues (e.g. landscape designations and design) and to build on the regional direction contained in the SPPS to best reflect local circumstances, where appropriate. This approach will involve a number of amendments to the

current policy approach, or involve a number of further actions ahead of the Draft Plan Strategy to help determine the approach on some outstanding considerations, as set out in the following areas.

(i) To reflect the SPPS, the Council does not propose to take forward a policy in relation to Development in Dispersed Rural Communities, as currently covered by Policy CTY 2 of PPS 21. All other Policies CTY 1 and 2a-16 will be carried forward with amendment as appropriate.

(ii) Provision for rural housing within the LDP will cover the following categories:

- new dwellings in existing clusters
- replacement dwellings
- dwellings on farms
- dwellings for non-agricultural business enterprises

- infill development (ribbon development)
- the conversion and reuse of existing buildings
- a dwelling where there are personal and domestic circumstances for residential use
- temporary caravans or mobile homes
- social and affordable housing

Consistent with the existing policy framework and regional direction in the SPPS, these 9 categories are considered acceptable forms of development in the countryside in principle, that can meet the aims of sustainable development but also the needs of the rural community, both socially and economically.

(iii) The SPPS sets certain requirements in relation to the above categories of

development which the Council's local policy must build on. The Council's strategic rural policy will provide clarification on each individual policy provision as necessary. This includes the need to clarify, if not clearly define, what a 'small group' of social/affordable dwellings would involve in number terms.

Another example where clarification will be needed is in relation to in-fill development. The general wording in the SPPS leaves for local interpretation in the LDP, in terms of what shall constitute an infill-development within a 'small gap site in an otherwise substantial and continuously built frontage'.

All issues raised during statutory and non-statutory consultation and internal council engagement will be considered as part of a detailed policy review, prior to preparing the Draft Plan Strategy, to help determine what the LDP should address.

(iv) Further opportunities for new dwellings in the countryside will be explored within the 9 categories listed above (in **part (ii)**), where possible, including where clear evidence can be provided to demonstrate that a minor departure from regional direction in the SPPS would not cause a significant adverse impact nor be at odds with the sustainable objectives of the LDP. An exceptional example might be where there are no established group of buildings on the farm holding for a dwelling to be visually linked with or sited to cluster, but where suitable integration can be achieved elsewhere on the farm, in addition to meeting other environmental and planning requirements.

Further evidence gathering will be required ahead of the Plan Strategy to help determine any specific local needs and the capacity for any related policy change. In formulating local rural policy, careful consideration shall be given to the potential effect of any proposed new or amended policy provisions in terms of the level of development that could result from the changes and the wider environmental, economic and social impact that these may have. The final

policy set must meet the key objectives of sustainability, take account of the SPPS's regional direction and sit within the parameters of the Council's overall Growth Strategy (in the context of DfI's Housing Growth Indicator across the plan period) as considered in **Key Issue SGS 2 (Allocating housing)**.

(v) Clarification around policy will also seek to address some inconsistencies between the current policies in PPS 21, where similar provisions will be carried forward. The environmental criteria to be applied across various policy tests does not read consistently across some of the existing policies. Addressing this will aid the application and interpretation of policies in the determination of planning applications. Such matters will be highlighted as part of a detailed policy review, ahead of the Plan Strategy.

(vi) The Council's rural policy shall also take account of any new landscape designations brought forward at Plan Strategy stage, as referred to in **Key Issues ENV 4-6**. Consideration is given to identifying and protecting areas of **Sensitive Landscape** in Preferred Option ENV 4A either as Special Countryside Areas (SCA) or Areas of High Scenic Value (AoHSV). In addition, provision for the identification and protection of new **Local Landscape Policy Areas** (along with the review of existing) as well as **Rural Landscape Wedges**, where appropriate, are both the Council's preferred approaches as detailed in **Options ENV 5A and 6A** respectively.

In all cases, rural policy shall be tailored to reflect any of these new designations, and related local policies, to ensure the appropriate level of protection in relation to new development. A SCA would involve a much more strict level of control than the other designations, by only permitting development in exceptional circumstances. See **Key Issues ENV 4-6** for clarification.

(vii) The approach to rural policy will also complement the approach to **supporting good design and positive place-making (Key Issue SOC 3)**, whereby it has been

identified that rural areas may require more detailed criteria to support good design. The current supplementary design guidance within 'Building on Tradition: A Sustainable Design Guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside', which the SPPS requires to be taken into account in assessing all development proposals in the countryside, will be reviewed as required, in order to reflect the Council's new rural policies.

(viii) Current policy will be updated to include residential amenity considerations relating to all rural new build, where appropriate. The current policy provisions in PPS 21 do not consistently include an amenity test that covers all potential opportunities. A similar test as in Policy EXT 1 (Criterion b) of the existing Addendum to PPS 7 (APPS 7, Residential Extensions and Alterations) would address this inconsistency, to ensure that the privacy and amenity of neighbouring residents is not harmed by new development as a result of overshadowing/loss of light, dominance or loss of privacy. Such a test might be included as part of a strategic good design policy.

(ix) The detailed policy wording at Plan Strategy stage will otherwise seek to ensure that all development proposals in the countryside will be sited and designed to integrate sympathetically with their surroundings, not have an adverse impact on local rural character, and meet other planning and environmental considerations, including those for drainage, sewerage, access and road safety, as directed by the SPPS. Criteria will be updated and expanded on but remain broadly in line with the existing PPS 21. The common policy approach to cluster, consolidate and group new development with existing established buildings; promote the re-use of previously used buildings and the use of existing services; and to minimise visual impact will continue.

(x) The existing Policy CTY 16 (Development relying on Non-mains Sewerage) is an example where the existing approach may need to be

reviewed, in terms of how the planning application process works alongside the separate 'Consent to Discharge' application process, to the Environment Agency, under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order. Either of these application processes can currently precede the other, meaning that amendments required to satisfy one may then not be reflected in the other permission/consent.

In summary, the proposed measures and further actions detailed in (i)-(ix) should allow for a more locally tailored approach in line with regional direction in the SPPS. These should better reflect the Borough's circumstances than maintaining the status quo and the more constrained Alternative Options SOC 2B and 2C respectively, below. The 3 options are all founded on the same regional framework (SPPS), with provision for 9 categories of development (**part (ii)**), but differ in their interpretation on what is appropriate development.

It is intended that any changes to rural policy brought through in the LDP will remain compliant with the balanced approach of the SPPS between protecting the environment and our landscapes, particularly those considered to be of particular merit or sensitivity (as referred to in aforementioned separate key issues), and enabling appropriate development in the countryside in order to support rural communities.

Finally, it is also important to note that the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) is currently reviewing the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) in relation to 'Development in the Countryside', following a Call for Evidence, and the outcome of this could affect the Council's policy direction in due course.

Alternative Options

Option SOC 2B

An approach to rural housing in line with existing policies and further regional direction.

To maintain the status quo, as the existing policy which is based on the 9 categories of development listed in Option SOC 2A (part (iii)) is considered to be generally working well in terms of sustaining rural communities.

Option SOC 2C

A more restrictive approach to rural housing than in existing policies and further regional direction, in the interests of the environment.

This option proposes greater control of rural residential development. It recognises that parts of our countryside are under increasing development pressure and that significant damage has been caused in certain parts due to the cumulative impact of rural development, particularly single dwellings.

Given the current regional-wide provisions of the SPPS that are applicable across all 3 Options, in terms of the 9 development categories considered acceptable in the countryside (as referred to in Option SOC 2A, **part (ii)**), a more restrictive approach under this option would involve more stringent environmental criteria for proposals across the Borough than the current tests within PPS 21. This is in addition to any new landscape designations, as considered in Key Issues ENV 4-6 (and referred to in Option SOC 2A, **part (vi)**).

A general more restrictive approach could only affect the quantum of dwellings where the SPPS allows for local interpretation, such as restricting infill development to a single dwelling only. Otherwise, higher standards in relation to the siting, design and detailing of buildings and ancillary works, as well as landscaping, could be sought to better protect against environmental damage and impact on rural character.

Question

8. Do you agree with our preferred approach to rural housing?

Design and Place Making

Key Issue SOC 3 Supporting good design and positive place making

Background

Our Borough contains many attractive buildings and well-designed places that portray a positive image of the area and contribute to places where people want to live, work and take their leisure. These include historic demesnes, civic spaces, residential areas, urban parks and attractive villages. The Council wants to deliver more places like these and to raise the bar in terms of design. This is reflected in the fact that design and place-making is one of

the 5 overarching principles of the LDP.

Good design and planning go hand in hand. It is the means to achieving many of the objectives of the LDP. New development presents opportunities to improve the urban environment in particular and how it is occupied, used and perceived. The LDP's policies and proposals will aim to create new positive places, that work well for everyone, that look good, that make positive

use of heritage and environmental assets, where communities flourish and enjoy a shared sense of belonging, both now and into the future, and that enhance our overall quality of life and environment. Acknowledging the importance of good design and positive places to society, the economy and the environment, this Key Issue SOC 3 looks at how best this can be supported through the LDP, in the context of the current policy and guidance framework.



Policy Context (Regional and Local)

Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035

The RDS recognises that the right environment can help strengthen community cohesion (RG 6), foster a stronger community spirit and increase our sense of place. It supports urban and rural renaissance (RG 7), which involves the process of development and redevelopment in urban areas and revitalising the centres of small towns and villages. Redevelopment can include the reuse of both listed buildings and locally important buildings, particularly the reuse of vernacular buildings and industrial heritage.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

Supporting Good Design and Positive Place-making is 1 of the 5 core planning principles in the SPPS. It recognises the importance of good design and successful place-making to peoples' lifestyles and their wellbeing in terms of the quality of environment for living in, bringing communities together and attracting visitors and investment. Sustainability, quality, accessibility and inclusivity for all are central themes across the joint topics. The SPPS requires the Council to take account of the 'Living Places – Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland'; and planning guidance contained within 'Building on Tradition: a Sustainable Design Guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside', where relevant.

The Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (PSRNI)

Policy DES 2 (Townscape) requires development proposals in towns and villages to make a positive contribution to townscape and be sensitive to the character of the area surrounding the site in terms of design, scale and use of materials. Policy DES 10 (Landscaping) seeks to protect existing trees and make provision for new planting in new developments.

Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS 7): Quality Residential Environments

PPS 7 sets out policies for achieving quality and sustainability in the

design and layout of new residential developments, that is in harmony with its setting and that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of our settlements. It is accompanied by two Addendums – Residential Extension and Alterations; and Safeguarding the Character of Residential Areas.

Planning Policy Statement 8 (PPS 8): Open Space, Sport and Recreation

PPS 8 seeks to ensure that areas of open space are provided as an integral part of new residential development, and to achieve high standards of siting, design and landscaping for all new open space areas and sporting facilities. Assessment criteria for open space in new residential schemes include a variety of design considerations, as outlined in Policy OS 2.

Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS 6): Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage

PPS 6 policies seek to protect and conserve archaeological remains and built heritage. It makes reference to the importance of appropriate design considerations, primarily under Policies BH 8, BH 9, BH 11 and BH 12, in relation to listed buildings and conservation areas. An accompanying Addendum provides additional policies for the demolition of buildings, new development and the control of advertisements in Areas of Townscape Character.

Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS 12): Housing in Settlements

PPS 12 contains 4 Planning Control Principles, in addition to Policies HS 1-4, which should be taken into account in the preparation of development plans and are also material to decisions on planning applications. PCP 2 encourages good design in housing schemes.

Planning Policy Statement 21 (PPS 21): Development in the Countryside

PPS 21 requires new buildings in the countryside to be visually integrated into the landscape and of an appropriate design for the site and locality, under Policy CTY 10 (Integration and Design).

Planning Policy Statement 17 (PPS 17): Control of Outdoor Advertisements

Policy AD 1 (Amenity and Public Safety) identifies that consent to display an advertisement will only be granted where it respects amenity, when assessed in the context of the general characteristics of the locality and it does not prejudice public safety. The term amenity, here, is usually understood to mean its effect upon the appearance of the building or structure or the immediate neighbourhood where it is displayed, or its long distance impact.

Existing Development Plans

The policy context in the existing statutory Plans across the Borough relating to Design and Place Making is summarised as follows:

- The **Armagh Area Plan (AAP) 2004** and the **Alteration No 1 (Countryside Proposals)** do not contain policy specific to design nor place making. Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs) are designated in and adjoining 8 Small Settlements in Policy LLPA 1 of Plan Alteration No.1 (Countryside Proposals) to reflect their amenity value, landscape quality or local significance, which is worthy of protection from inappropriate development.
- The **Banbridge / Newry and Mourne Area Plan (BNMAP) 2015** acknowledges that existing regional policies provide an adequate framework for assessing design within the Plan area, but includes a policy on security grilles and shutters (Policy DGN 1). 12 Areas of Townscape Character (ATC) and 66 LLPAs are designated in BNMAP within the Borough, with many of the zoned sites having key site requirements relating to design and layout matters.
- The **Craigavon Area Plan (CAP) 2010** does not contain any specific design or place-making policies, with regional policies continuing to apply. ATCs are designated in Craigavon Urban Area (Lurgan and Portadown), Donaghcloney and Charlestown, with criteria-based protection under

Policy CON 5. LLPAs are designated in and adjacent to 12 Settlements, with protection under Plan Policy CON 3 and prevailing regional policy (PPS 6). Many zoned sites have key site requirements relating to design and layout matters.

- The **Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan (DSTAP) 2010** (which relates to the County Armagh portion of the former DST Borough Council area) does not contain any specific design or place-making policies, but high standards of design and layout are key requirements across the Plan policies and proposals as a whole. None of the Plan's Local Landscape Policy Areas and Areas of Townscape Character fall within our Borough.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Development Control Advice Note 8 (DCAN 8) – Housing in Existing Urban Areas – advocates a design-led approach that promotes the philosophy of working within context, and fitting development in with the prevailing neighbourhood character and appearance.
- 'Living Places – An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland' (DOE/DfI) – aims to clearly

establish the key principles behind good urban place making. It seeks to inform and inspire all those involved in the process of managing (stewardship) and making (designing) urban places, with a view to raising standards. It recognises the wider economic, cultural and community benefits of achieving excellence in the stewardship and design of these important places, be they existing or newly proposed. Living Places identifies 10 qualities which make good places – they are: visionary, collaborative, contextual, responsible, accessible, hospitable, vibrant and diverse, crafted, viable and enduring.

- Conservation Area Designation Booklets and Design Guides (Armagh, Dromore, Loughgall, Lurgan and Richhill) provide information on their planning context, historical development, character appraisal and guidelines for development proposals.
- 'Creating Places - Achieving Quality in Residential Developments' (DOE/DfI) provides structured guidance on the design, character and layout of new housing in Northern Ireland, with an emphasis on place, community and context. The guide describes

the contributions to quality and sustainability that developers will be expected to make through design.

- 'Building on Tradition - A Sustainable Design Guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside' (DOE/DfI) is supporting design guidance for PPS 21. It promotes quality and sustainable building design in the countryside, to help ensure that new buildings fit into the landscape.

The Council's Community Plan 2017-2030, 'Connected'

Good design and place-making play an important role in achieving 2 of the 9 long-term outcomes in the Community Plan. Under an 'Enhanced Place' we seek to ensure that our rich and varied built heritage and natural assets are protected, enhanced and expanded for current and future generations to enjoy. Under a 'Revitalised Place', it is acknowledged that innovative solutions to physical, economic and social urban and rural renewal are needed through more integrated investment, regeneration and planning policy and practice. People should be able to live in well-designed, sustainable and connected communities, benefiting from quality, affordable housing and accessible services and amenities.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue SOC 3 (Supporting good design and positive place-making)

Option SOC 3A

Support good design and positive place-making in both development and advertisement proposals through criteria-based policy, with provision for additional design criteria and supporting guidance for certain identified areas of acknowledged importance/value or types of development where appropriate

Justification

This approach would bring forward general policy for design and place-making across the Borough for all types of development and advertisement, but that allows for additional criteria and supporting guidance for particular areas of acknowledged importance or that warrant an additional level of control or care in design terms. It will develop the existing regional and local design policies and guidance (as summarised earlier), where appropriate, taking account of regional direction in the SPPS. The policy wording will tie in with the legislative requirements for Design and Access Statements, and the Council's approach to **urban housing (Key Issue SOC 1)** with regards to the requirements for concept statements and master plans (as currently set out in PPS 7). It will complement the Council's wider approach in the LDP under this and other key issues (some of which are referred to further below).

The key points relating to the preferred approach are as follows:

Advertisement proposals These are included in the option wording, in addition to development proposals, to reflect the significant impact that advertisement proposals can have on the appearance and character of buildings and places, both positive and negative. The LDP will bring forward its own 'control of outdoor advertisements' policies, in line with regional direction in the SPPS and current policy in PPS 17, but it would be remiss to not include it within the consideration of a strategic 'design and place-making' policy. Care must be taken to ensure that all proposals will not

detract from the place where advertising is to be displayed or its surroundings. In particular, it is important to prevent clutter, to adequately control signs involving illumination and to protect built heritage features such as listed buildings as well as designated areas from the potential adverse effects of advertising.

General criteria Design criteria will be used in the general policy to ensure a high standard of design and layout is achieved in all development and advertisement proposals across the Borough. This will provide a clear and consistent framework that covers a broad range of design issues, including compatibility with local character and context, treatment of heritage and environmental assets, landscaping and residential amenity.

The criteria will address the long term sustainability of development by promoting future proofing, energy efficiency, the re-use of materials and measures to enhance biodiversity and reduce surface run-off.

The criteria will also support the creation of well-designed places that are attractive and encourage community interaction as well as play and recreation, with an emphasis on good public space, inclusive access, active frontage, ease of movement, security from crime and anti-social behaviour, as well as the micro-climate.

Quality in design will be a key focus across the policy criteria, in terms of considering the appearance of new

development, with an emphasis on good frontage development, safeguarding character and local distinctiveness, attention to detail (e.g. materials), making the urban environment greener, and avoiding defensive architecture.

Regional Guidance As required by the SPPS, the LDP will take account of 'Living Places – Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland', which applies to all settlements; and the rural design guidance contained within 'Building on Tradition: a Sustainable Design Guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside'. These guides will be reviewed as needs be, in order to reflect the Council's wider policies. These should not lead to a rigid and formulaic approach to decision-taking, but rather encourage imaginative and innovative design.

Additional Criteria / Control The approach allows for additional criteria and guidance to be used to address the particular design requirements of certain types of development and to provide the necessary control and attention to detail within recognised local areas of heritage, townscape and landscape value. The additional criteria may be contained within the main policies in the LDP relating to these identified areas, where the reader is then referred to. The scope for additional design control and guidance in these areas will help development safeguard good character, respect local tradition and improve the overall quality of a place. Making best use of the assets of a place is key to maximising its future potential.

Further Consideration

Areas that may warrant additional design and place-making criteria and/or guidance include:

Heritage, Townscape and Landscape Assets:

Regional direction in the SPPS states that particular weight should be given to the impact of development on existing buildings, especially listed buildings, monuments and on the character of areas recognised for their landscape or townscape value.

Careful design treatment is needed in the Borough's areas of built heritage importance, including its 5 Conservation Areas and 16 Areas of Townscape Character, as well as any future designated areas, to ensure that their unique character and appearance is protected, conserved and where possible enhanced. The same applies to the protection of features identified in Local Landscape Policy Areas as well as the integrity and setting of archaeological sites and the character and appearance of distinct historic landscapes. A summary of the Borough's built heritage and archaeological assets can be found in Key Issue ENV 1.

Appropriate criteria shall be used to ensure good design and positive place-making within areas of heritage, townscape and landscape importance identified in the LDP, or that affect individual features that contribute to the character or environmental quality of an area. Existing Conservation Area design guidance produced by the Department will be reviewed as necessary, to ensure it adequately supports the LDP policy. Other design guidance will support the LDP policies and designations where needed.

When formulating policy, the approach to Design and Place-making will support and complement the approach to **Built Heritage and Archaeology (Key Issue ENV 1)**, as well as to environmental designations such as **Local Landscape Policy Areas (Key Issue ENV 5)**.

Residential Development (Urban):

A high quality of design, layout and landscaping in new residential development (including re-development schemes as well as extensions and alterations) is central to the existing policy framework, primarily in PPS 7 (Quality Residential Environments) and its Addendums. The long term sustainability of our residential areas depends on this. The existing 'Creating Places' Supplementary Planning Guidance, which promotes good design in residential development, will be reviewed as required in order to reflect the Council's new urban housing policies in the LDP.

The LDP's strategic policy will deal with the role and contribution of residential development in the design of successful place-making. The provision of suitable and adequate amenity space is an important element of good design in residential development, with the integration of well-designed public open space a key component of larger schemes. The policy will encourage linkages between 'good spaces' and positive ways to manage and maintain those spaces (stewardship). These linkages can help promote active travel and the use of public transport as well as encourage wildlife and improved biodiversity.

The approach to design and place-making will support and complement the approach in related LDP policies, including those relating to **Urban Housing, Open Space** and the promotion of **Active Travel, Greenways and Sustainable Drainage Systems (Key Issues SOC 1, 4, 5, ECN 17 and 18, and ENV 8)**.

Rural Development:

Good design is as important in rural areas as urban areas. The preferred approach in Option SOC 3A identifies that the rural area may require more detailed criteria to support good design. This could provide a consistent overarching framework for all types of rural proposals across the Borough, be it for housing, economic, tourism or other development (including minor works such as extensions and

alterations), that seeks to promote or reinforce quality, sustainability and local distinctiveness. The strategic design criteria may then be developed further across the various rural-related policies. The overarching design policy in the LDP Strategy will support and complement the local design and environmental policies affecting the rural area.

The SPPS requires the existing regional-wide 'Building on Tradition' Design Guide to be taken into account in assessing all development proposals in the countryside. As explained in **Key Issue SOC 2 (Rural Housing)**, this SPG will be reviewed as required in order to reflect the Council's new rural-related policies in the LDP. Whilst this design guidance was prepared to accompany PPS 21 (Sustainable Development in the Countryside), which mainly relates to rural housing, it provides a useful guide for all forms of rural development, in terms of common principles and appropriate design references.

Urban Areas / Town Centres:

The LDP shall develop and bring up-to-date the existing regional Policy DES 2 on 'Townscape' contained in the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland, in line with the SPPS, where applicable. It will seek to make a positive contribution to the townscape quality and character of the urban area as a whole through high standards of design and detailing - not just within a Conservation Area or Area of Townscape Character. Particular attention will be paid to shop fronts in our city, town and village centres, the entrances to our settlements, important landmarks, views, and spaces.

The existing local Policy DGN 1 (Security Grilles and Shutters in Non-Industrial Buildings) in the Banbridge / N&M Area Plan 2015 was introduced as an additional measure, over and above existing regional policy, to prevent the significant adverse impact of externally mounted security shutters in new development on the urban street scene. It requires more sympathetic alternatives. A similar policy

test should be brought forward in the LDP, in the interests of improving the vitality and appearance of our urban centres and shopping areas.

A strategic design and place-making policy would otherwise provide the framework for development proposals within zoned sites in the LDP, including designated **Development Opportunity Sites (DOSs)** as discussed in **Key Issue**

ECN 9. Many of the zoned sites in the LDP will have Key Site Requirements (KSRs) containing certain design rules and guidance on the layout of the site and the design, form and detailing of buildings.

A strategic policy will also guide wider urban master plans and large-scale regeneration projects. Public realm and shared space schemes should also benefit, along with re-imagining and

gate-way projects, as well as shop-front improvement and townscape enhancement schemes.



Alternative Options

No alternative options are being put forward. The single preferred option SOC 3A is considered the only reasonable approach to ensuring good design and positive place-making across all development and advertisement proposals, that reflects regional direction in the SPPS. It allows for the appropriate level of design control and attention to detail needed to respond to the Borough's

local circumstances. An alternative approach, such as one which does give the option for local design guidance, may not give sufficient protection to the local historic environment and areas of landscape and townscape importance, or adequately cover other identified areas from a design and place-making point of view.

Question

9. Do you agree with our preferred approach to design and place-making?

Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation

Key Issue SOC 4 Protecting open space
Key Issue SOC 5 Facilitating open space / play provision in new largescale residential developments

Background

Open space, which includes formal and informal active and passive open spaces of public value, can take many forms. The definition in Planning Policy Statement 8, as referenced later, includes outdoor sports facilities, parks and gardens, amenity green space in urban areas, children's play areas, green corridors, allotments and cemeteries. It includes not just land, but also inland bodies of water that offer important opportunities for sport and outdoor recreation and which can also act as a visual amenity.

Open space, with or without public access to it, can contribute positively to the character, appearance and quality of our urban areas and civic spaces. It offers places to play, relax, exercise and socialise, as well as venues for sport. It can encourage active travel, and healthier lifestyles (through physical activity and improved mental health), as well as

assist children's development. It can help attract business and tourism, as well as contribute to regeneration. It helps support sustainable development by providing 'green lungs', helping to improve air quality, as well as valuable areas for nature. It can act as a buffer between conflicting land uses, help reduce flood risk and offer visual breaks. The benefits of open space to our local communities, our economy and not least the environment are significant. It is therefore very important that this valuable resource is protected and enhanced.

The new LDP has a key role to play in protecting our existing open spaces and recreational facilities as well as identifying new opportunities. These may include the linking together of natural and man-made open spaces to create an interconnected network

that helps to improve connectivity within urban areas and access to the surrounding rural area, encourage safer active travel (off-road) and opportunities for physical activity, enhance amenity, provide wildlife corridors and support sustainable development. The potential for an improved green network is dealt with in **Key Issue ECN 18 (Promoting and Enhancing Access to Greenways)** under the Transportation Topic. Areas of existing open space within or adjoining settlements may also be designated as landscape wedges, in particular those larger areas which perform a strategic function, as considered in **Key Issue ENV 6 (Urban / Rural Landscape Wedges)**. In addition, some smaller open spaces may merit designation in the LDP as a **Local Landscape Policy Area**, as dealt with further in **Key Issue ENV 5**.

Categories of Open Space, Sport and Recreation

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough contains an extensive range of open space, sport and outdoor recreational facilities, some of the

finest available anywhere in Northern Ireland. Details of existing provision in the Borough are contained in Preparatory Paper 10 – Open Space, Recreation &

Leisure. This provision falls under two main categories as follows.



Outdoor Sport and Play Facilities

This is made up of two main components. The first is land provided for outdoor sport, principally for adults and youths. The second is playing space for children, which consists of casual play areas (including kick-about areas) and equipped playgrounds. The Borough's outdoor sport and play facilities include:

- **186ha** of outdoor recreation space in the 3 Main Hubs and 6 Locals Towns, including **62ha** of children's play space and **124ha** of outdoor play space;
- **173ha** of grass and synthetic pitches across the Borough;

- **224ha** of additional grass and synthetic pitches at educational facilities;
- **95** Council maintained equipped play parks; and
- **32** Multi-use Games Areas (MUGAs)

The Council's Preparatory Paper 10 highlights a shortfall of outdoor sports and children's play space in the Borough's 3 main Hubs and 5 of 6 of its Local Towns against the Fields in Trust (FIT) recommended overall provision of 2.4 hectares per 1000 population. This however is not raised as a specific key issue at this stage. Rather, as considered

in **Key Issue SOC 4**, overall provision across the Borough will be reviewed before preparing an Open Space Strategy as part of the LDP, in consultation with key stakeholders including the Council's Recreation and Leisure Department and SportNI. Whilst the FIT audit findings would suggest that there is a need for additional pitches and children's play areas, this should be considered further in the context of the age profile of the urban areas and access to other recreational and leisure facilities that fall outside the FIT guidelines but still offer opportunities for exercise, fitness and play – as found in the second main category below.

Other Existing Open Space

This includes an extensive range of formal and informal open space of amenity and recreational value, across the Borough, including:

- a large number of urban parks, including those with national 'Green Flag Award' Status eg. Lurgan Park (the largest urban park in Northern Ireland) and Dromore Town Park in addition to country parks, woodlands and other locations open to the public, such as Oxford Island Nature Reserve, Loughgall Country Park, Navan Fort and Clare Glen;

- general amenity areas including riverside walks and outdoor areas allowing sitting, walking, picnics and general leisure use, as well as other landscaped areas;
- a large part of Lough Neagh, including Kinnego Marina, as well as significant waterways including the River Bann, Blackwater and Lagan;
- 5 DAERA forests with public access (Drumbanagher, Fews, Gosford, Loughgall, Seagahan);
- 3 DAERA Nature Reserves with public access (Peatlands Park NR, Lough

- Neagh Islands NNR and Brackagh Bog (Moss) NR);
- RSPB Portmore Lough Nature Reserve;
- 3 National Trust properties with high quality parkland / landscape (The Argory, Ardress House and Coney Island);
- Ulster Way Network, Walking Route (part of);
- National Cycle Network (3 routes – Newry Canal, Loughshore Trail and Ulster Canal);
- Craigavon Black Path Network, linking Central Craigavon, Lurgan and Portadown

Policy Context (Regional and Local)

Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035

The RDS acknowledges the value of accessible green space as a fundamental component to achieving sustainable development within urban and rural areas. In supporting urban and rural renaissance (RG 7), the RDS places importance in promoting recreational space within cities, towns and neighbourhoods, and that new developments or plans should make provision for adequate green and blue infrastructure. Green infrastructure is also seen as a means of improving the health and well-being of communities, by encouraging walking and cycling, as well as improving connectivity and supporting biodiversity.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

The SPPS has 6 Regional Strategic Objectives for open space development, to:

- safeguard existing open space and sites identified for future such provision;
- ensure that areas of open space are provided as an integral part of new residential development and that appropriate arrangements are made for their management and maintenance in perpetuity;
- facilitate appropriate outdoor recreational activities in the countryside that do not negatively impact on the amenity of existing residents;
- ensure that new open space areas and sporting facilities are convenient and accessible for all sections of society, particularly children, older people and those with disabilities;
- achieve high standards of siting, design and landscaping for all new open space and sporting facilities; and
- ensure that the provision of new open space and sporting facilities is in keeping with the principles of environmental conservation and helps sustain and enhance biodiversity.

The SPPS sets out strategic policy to be taken into account in the preparation of LDPs, which broadly reflects the existing policy framework set out in PPS 8, referred to below. A key requirement for Councils is to bring forward an Open Space Strategy, as part of their LDP that reflects the aim, objectives and policy approach of the SPPS tailored to the circumstances of the Plan area. The LDP should make adequate provision for open space informed by an assessment of existing open space provision and future needs, and liaising with other interested bodies. Existing space of all kinds should be safeguarded.

Planning Policy Statement 8 (PPS 8): Open Space, Sport & Recreation

PPS 8 provides operational policy in relation to open space, sport and outdoor recreation uses. It embodies the Government's commitment to sustainable development, to the promotion of a more active and healthy lifestyle and to the conservation of biodiversity. Its policies cover the protection of existing open space (**OS 1**); the provision of public open space in new residential development (**OS 2**); the development of proposals for outdoor recreational use in the countryside (**OS 3**); intensive sports facilities (**OS 4**); noise generating sports and outdoor recreational activities (**OS 5**); development of facilities ancillary to water sports (**OS 6**); and the floodlighting of sports and outdoor recreational activities (**OS 7**). The statement provides a clear and broad definition of what constitutes open space (Annex A).

PPS 8 includes a clear presumption against the loss or removal of existing or zoned open space (OS 1). Also new residential schemes of 25 units or more, or on sites of 1 ha or more, are required to provide open space as an integral part of the development (OS 2), with a normal expectation of at least 10% of the total site area. For schemes of 300 units or more, or on sites of 15 ha or more, a normal expectation will be around 15% of the total site area. For schemes of 100 units or more, or 5 ha or more, an equipped children's play area

will be required as an integral part of the development. Exceptional criteria apply in these cases.

Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS 7): Quality Residential Environments

Policy QD 1 (Criterion c) in PPS 7 requires developers to make adequate provision for public open space and landscaped areas as an integral part of a residential development. The amplification refers to the requirements of PPS 8 (Policy OS 2).

Other Planning Policy Statements (PPSs)

PPS 2 – Natural Heritage,

Some open spaces and recreation areas are also protected by international, national and local nature conservation designations, for which PPS 2 provides operational policies.

PPS 6 – Planning Archaeology and the Built Heritage,

Some open spaces and recreation areas are also designated as Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs) and/or Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes and will also be subject to local plan policies relating to LLPAs and Policy BH 6 (PPS 6) respectively, to help maintain the intrinsic environmental value and character of such areas.

Existing Development Plans

The existing statutory Plans across the Borough address the issue of Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation as follows:

- The **Armagh Area Plan (AAP) 2004 and AAP Alteration No 1 (Countryside Proposals)**: in addition to identifying a number of active and open space zonings in Armagh City and the towns, the main document identifies a number of areas of high visual amenity or prominence, including 7 open space wedges in Armagh City, 1 in Keady Town and 1 in Richhill Village - designated to protect them from undesirable development. PPS 8 and 7 contains the operational policy context in addition to these specific local policies.

- The **Banbridge / Newry and Mourne Area Plan (BNMAP) 2015** does not contain any specific policies in relation to open space and recreation.
- The **Craigavon Area Plan (CAP) 2010** does not contain any specific policies in relation to open space and recreation, outside of designating 30 ha of open space and recreational use in CUA (ROS 1) and welcoming proposals for community woodlands (ROS 2).
- The **Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan (DSTAP) 2010** (which relates to the County Armagh portion of the former DST Borough Council area) does not contain any specific policies in relation to open space and recreation affecting our Borough area.
- PPS 8 and 7 contain the relevant operational policies for these 3 most recent Area Plans.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

'Creating Places - Achieving Quality in Residential Developments' (DOE/now DfI) provides guidance on the design, character and layout of new housing development in Northern Ireland to support the policies in PPS 7 and 8, with open space included as a key element. It sets out the standards expected of developers in terms of design quality and sustainability.

The Council Community Plan 2017-2030 'Connected'

The Community Plan has a 'Healthy Community' as 1 of its 9 long term outcomes. To achieve this, the Council will work collaboratively to address health inequalities throughout the Borough and across the generations. Provision of good, accessible open space is an important means to improving the health of the community.

Other Key Strategic Documents

A number of government strategies and other strategic documents, with priorities for sport and physical recreation, have informed the Council's Play Strategy 2017-2025, Sports Facility Framework and other key documents. These include the NI Executive's Programme for Government (2011-2021), Play and Leisure Policy Statement (2009) and Implementation Plan (2011), as well as 'Fitter Future for All' Framework 2012-2022 (by the former Dept. of Health, Social Services and Public Safety), 'Bridging The Gap' – Active Places Research 2009 and Update 2014 (SportNI) and 'Sports Matters – The NI Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2009-2019' (by SportNI and the former Dept. for Culture, Arts and Leisure). Account has also been taken of the Government's commitment to the 'UN Convention on the Rights of the Child', in particular those aspects that relate to the right to play.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue SOC 4 (Protecting Open Space)

Option SOC 4A

Protect existing open space (in addition to identifying and zoning land for new provision) in line with existing policy and regional direction, tailored to meet local circumstances

Justification

The Council is required to bring forward an Open Space Strategy as part of its LDP that reflects the aims, objectives and policy approach of the SPPS, but tailored to the specific circumstances of the plan area. The plan process allows for the review of both existing and zoned open space provision and policies, in addition to identifying and safeguarding land for new open space where needed through zoning. Key Issue SOC 4A deals with the protection of existing open space, as currently dealt with under Policy OS 1 (PPS 8).

A review could allow for some of our open space to be re-evaluated to assess its continued suitability for protection or whether there is scope to consider more sustainable uses. However given that the protection of existing open space is a fundamental objective of the LDP, in line with regional direction in the SPPS, this re-evaluation will be limited to the following category of open space.

Initial appraisal work suggests that in some of our main settlements, particularly in the Craigavon Urban Area, there may be an over-provision of informal green space in and around some of the long established public housing estates (built by the NI Housing

Executive in the 1960s-1980s). This land can take the form of larger strategic areas and smaller spaces, much of which is underused. The nature and scale of it can be difficult to manage. It can lack a positive connection with the surrounding neighbourhood and suffer from poor surveillance and anti-social problems. In some cases, the appearance of these spaces can detract from the area. There could therefore be substantial community benefit in appropriate redevelopment of these particular areas. This approach could help facilitate key community facilities and infrastructure, including sports or recreation, or specific local social housing need. It could offer improvements to the physical environment of these residential areas, making them safer and more manageable long term. Appropriate re-development would also reduce the need for green-field land elsewhere, thus contributing to wider sustainable development. This approach is consistent with NIHE's strategic thinking on the improvement of estates, as outlined in Annex C in PPS 8.

An assessment of the overall stock of open space in these areas of focus, in consultation with NIHE and any other landowners, could help identify any suitable lands. The development and

success of this preferred approach depends on this further engagement. The Council's consultations with key service providers, as referred to in **Key Issue SOC 6 (Facilitating community and cultural facilities)** could feed into this. The engagement with landowners will inform our overall Open Space Strategy and the final wording of related policy, as well as other potential zonings in the LDP. Any viable re-development opportunities should not result in a shortage of open space, or otherwise impact on the area's amenity, character or biodiversity, or contribute to flood risk.

Beyond the limited identified areas for further appraisal, there will be a presumption against the loss of open space, existing or zoned, subject to a review when preparing the LDP Open Space Strategy. This approach will be supported by a new strategic policy on the protection of open space to be brought forward in the Plan Strategy, which will be broadly in line with the existing Policy OS 1 (PPS 8), as well as the SPPS. This will include a clear definition of open space, to aid the interpretation of policy in the determination of planning applications.

Alternative Options

Option SOC 4B

Continue the current approach by protecting existing open space provision in line with existing policy (in addition to identifying and zoning land for new open space provision)

This option continues the existing approach, affording protection to existing open space as outlined in Policy OS 1

(PPS 8) and directed in the SPPS. It rules out the re-evaluation of open space as outlined in Preferred Option SOC 4A. Rather exceptional redevelopment proposals offering community benefit would be considered on their individual merits against a similar test to the existing Policy OS 1.



Preferred Option, for Key Issue SOC 5 (Facilitating open space / play provision in new largescale residential developments)

Background

- Over 22% of the Borough's population is aged under 16 – higher than NI average (20.9%)
- 8% projected increase in the under 16 age group in the Borough by 2030 – largest increase of all NI Councils
- 5.9% of Primary 1 children in the Borough are classed as obese (higher than NI average (5.2%))

This issue relates specifically to the provision of equipped play provision, over and above normal open space requirements as currently set out in Policy OS 2 (Public Open Space in New Residential Development) in PPS 8. There is a broader requirement within this policy for open space to be provided as an integral part of the development (of 25 units or 1ha or more), with a normal expectation of at least 10% of the total site area (extending to 15%

above 300 units or 15ha). Because a broadly similar requirement is contained in regional direction in the SPPS, the Council's strategic policy on open space at Plan Strategy stage is unlikely to be substantially amended from the existing Policy OS 2 insofar as it relates to general open space. It is therefore not considered necessary to consider this element as part of this key issue, or as a separate issue. The following options therefore focus on the additional element of equipped play provision within largescale residential schemes only.

Option SOC 5A

A locally tailored approach, with amendment to the existing criteria for play park provision in largescale residential developments to increase provision in larger schemes to more than one equipped play area (as currently required in existing policy), as well as provide the option for Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs), where appropriate, unless otherwise specified in LDP Key Site Requirements.

Justification

New largescale residential developments are an important opportunity to deliver equipped play areas, particularly in light of the projected increase in the population of children and young people across the Borough, over the plan period, as well as the growing problem of childhood obesity (see key facts above). Such facilities are best provided as an integral part of a development, where they are designed in a comprehensive and linked way with accessibility, safety and amenity considerations to the fore, rather than introducing new facilities to an established residential area afterwards. The Council's view is that the existing policy-led approach to on-site play park provision in residential developments, as set out in Policy OS 2 (PPS 8), should be carried forward but tailored to better meet specific local needs. This approach is considered in conjunction with the Council's own duty to provide recreational facilities within the Borough.

Current policy (OS 2 in PPS 8) states that for residential development of 100 units or more, or for sites of 5 hectares or more, an equipped children's play area [singular] will be required as an integral part of the development. In much larger developments, or equivalent housing zonings, a single play park may not be sufficient to cater for the scale of development and the needs of the area. This level of provision would become less and less suitable as the scale of the development increases. The Council therefore intends to amend this policy to ensure that additional provision is made on even larger schemes (well in excess of 100 units) that is proportionate to the scale of development. This could be addressed by introducing a pro rata figure into the policy wording, confirmed at Plan Strategy stage, whereby an additional play area is required for each set number of units. The provision should be well distributed around the development, rather than in a single location, to encourage use and ease of access by residents. Similar location and design criteria for open space as in the

existing Policy OS 2 shall be used in the new policy.

The policy wording could also be broadened to include the provision of Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) in certain residential schemes in addition to suitable equipped children's play space. Such facilities could be used to cater for older children, particularly in larger developments, where more than one play area is appropriate. These could help to improve the range of provision in the area. The Council may look to engage with a developer to help address a particular local deficiency. It could possibly agree or opt to take over the management and maintenance of the MUGA, where it fits in with its overall Play Strategy, providing it meets certain standards of size, layout and design as agreed at planning stage.

The preferred option would also allow for Key Site Requirements (KSRs) to be used on housing zonings, at the Local Policies Plan stage (second LDP stage), to set out site-specific requirements in terms of the level and nature of play provision needed, if any, including if developer contributions are required.

This approach will allow for the general policy provisions to be set aside in order for play provision to be assessed on a site by site basis, taking into account the Council's Play Strategy. The KSRs could also provide clear direction on larger zonings where a number of different developers/landowners may be involved. A KSR could specify the need for a financial contribution by the developer(s) towards the development or upgrade of nearby play park provision by the Council where this could be availed of by a new scheme (instead of integral provision, in line with the current provisions of Policy OS 2 carried forward as appropriate). The use of bespoke KSRs are deemed more appropriate than having a strategic policy for developer contributions insofar as it relates to play provision, as in Option SOC 7C, given the preference for play-

parks to be provided within largescale developments (rather than relying on Council facilities).

The carrying forward of a strategic policy, similar to the current Policy OS 2 (as amended), will ensure that there is no policy gap between the adoption of the Plan Strategy and the Local Policies Plan, and that opportunities for play provision are not lost between the two stages. This will ensure that play areas are facilitated outside housing zonings, where appropriate.

The proposed changes in approach, to allow for an improved and broader range of play space as well as the use of KSRs in housing zonings, are seen by the Council as a necessary and reasonable response to help improve provision in larger residential developments and to help better address specific local needs and deficiencies. The new strategic policy shall otherwise detail exceptions to the normal requirements, where an existing equipped play area exists within reasonable walking distance, similar to the current policy.

Alternative Options

Option SOC 5B

Continue the current approach, in line with existing policy (requiring a single equipped children's play area to be provided in residential schemes of 100 units or more, or 5 hectares or more, in addition to other open space).

The current policy wording only requires a single play park for a scheme over 100 units. The **Preferred Option SOC 5A** above makes the case for an improved level of equipped play provision in large-scale schemes than the existing policy, where appropriate, that is more in proportion to the scale of development, better distributed and more accessible to residents.

Option SOC 5C

A Council-led approach, with all play parks across the Borough provided and maintained by Council (in line with its overall Play Strategy) and a strategic policy requiring developer contributions from new largescale residential developments (100 units or more, or 5 hectares or more) towards this provision.

As outlined in **Key Issue SOC 7**, the LDP will bring forward a new strategic policy on **Developer Contributions** at Plan Strategy stage. This will identify the types and thresholds of development, where it will be appropriate for developers to contribute towards new local community infrastructure and related works. This Alternative Option 5C would include largescale residential developments within the Developer Contributions Policy (based on its wording), whereby

developers would be required to contribute financially towards the Council's strategic programme of play park provision. This would be designed to meet the specific needs of particular areas as informed by the Council's Play Strategy. The developer-led approach in **Preferred Option SOC 5A** is considered the best means to delivering accessible play facilities in new residential areas, rather than a wider Council-led approach that developers would contribute financially towards.

Notes:

Management and Maintenance Arrangements

The issue of management and maintenance arrangements for areas of public open space in new residential development, as currently dealt with in Policy OS 2 (PPS 8). Recent experience within the Borough shows that a number of residential developments that are now occupied have unmaintained communal open spaces, as a result of management and maintenance

programmes having either ceased, or agreements having either broken down over time, or most likely never to have been implemented. This is often to the detriment of local residents and to the visual amenity of the area. A more robust mechanism is needed to secure successful long term management and maintenance arrangements across all new developments, where applicable, to prevent similar failings happening again. The Council is to take further

advice ahead of the LDP Strategy on how this issue can be addressed effectively in detailed policy, as part of the Council's overall approach to open space and play park provision in new residential developments.

Question

10. Do you agree with our preferred approach to protecting open space?

11. Do you agree with our preferred approach to facilitating open space / play provision in new largescale residential developments?

Community and Cultural Facilities

Key Issue SOC 6 Facilitating community and cultural facilities to meet the needs of the Borough

Background

Community and cultural facilities include a wide range of essential and valuable facilities and services required by any local community. These include, for example, schools, nurseries, health and social care facilities, libraries and community / meeting halls.

Further to the Borough Profile (Section 3), the population of the Borough is growing at above average rate, with the numbers of young people, working age and older people all set to increase over the LDP period. This will have an impact on education, health and social care needs and other service provision. The ageing population is a significant local challenge that has implications for land-use planning, in terms of such things as residential home provision. Access

to services for everyone is central to improving health and wellbeing across the Borough, as well improving social cohesion, educational attainment and tackling deprivation.

Medical and health care are mainly provided by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust, in addition to a growing private sector. Education, youth and public library services are mainly the responsibility of the Education Authority, with Further Education governed by the Department for Economy. The Council has a key role in promoting health and well-being and providing community and leisure facilities. It also contributes to the local cultural and arts scene and helps support an extensive community and voluntary sector.



Summary of Community and Cultural Facilities in the Borough:

- **12** Nursery Schools
- **92** Primary Schools consisting of: 47 Controlled, 39 Catholic Maintained, 1 Voluntary, 3 Grant Maintained Integrated and 2 Other Maintained
- **3** Special Needs Schools
- **23** Post-primary Schools consisting of: 9 Controlled, 1 Controlled Integrated, 5 Catholic Maintained, 1 Grant Maintained Integrated College, 1 Controlled Senior High (Non Grammar), 2 Controlled Senior High (Grammar), 1 Controlled and 3 Voluntary Grammar
- Further Education at Southern Regional College, with campuses at Armagh, Banbridge, Lurgan and Portadown
- **4** Hospitals: Craigavon Area (Acute), Lurgan, Armagh Community (Tower Hill) and St. Luke's (Armagh) which provides a range of other services
- **36** GP Practices
- **3** Council Civic Buildings (Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon) and 4 Town Halls
- **16** community centres operated by Council
- **18** Council-run recreation/leisure facilities operated by Council
- **11** Libraries operated by Libraries NI
- a number of museums, theatres, galleries and other culture and arts facilities
- a large range of other community facilities, which hold group activities, clubs and events.



Policy Context (Regional and Local)

Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035

One of the 8 aims of the RDS is to promote development which improves the health and wellbeing of communities. One of the regional objectives is to strengthen community cohesion (RG 6), to ensure that everyone has similar life opportunities and a sense of belonging. Developing integrated services and facilities is one way this can be achieved.

The RDS identifies Craigavon Urban Area, Armagh City and Banbridge as main Hubs where the greatest level of growth and services should be provided. These Hubs have also been identified as having the ability to cluster and work together to create a critical mass to attract economic development and deliver services that can be shared, rather than duplicated. In terms of culture, the RDS identifies Armagh City as a rich heritage and tourism destination with an abundance of cultural product. Its tourism potential however relies on strategic transport improvements around the city.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

Local Councils have an important role in helping to better the lives of people and communities and supporting the Executive's key priority of improving health and well-being – which is a core planning principle in the SPPS. Where appropriate, councils may bring forward local policies that contribute to this priority as well as those which promote social cohesion and the development of social capital, the provision of community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities. LDPs should allocate sufficient land to meet anticipated needs. Services and facilities should be easily accessible to the community.

The SPPS states that councils must adopt a town centre first approach for retail and main town centre uses, including community and cultural facilities. LDPs should include a strategy to reflect this through a sequential approach to the identification of these uses.

The Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (PSRNI)

Policy PSU 1 (Community Needs) seeks to ensure there is sufficient land to meet the anticipated needs of the community, in terms of health, education and other public facilities, with an emphasis on making the best possible use of existing sites. Should circumstances require that new sites are needed, land will be identified by individual site assessment or through the process of preparing a development plan.

Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS 7):

Quality Residential Environments

Policy QD 1 (Criterion d) in PPS 7 requires developers to make adequate provision for necessary local neighbourhood facilities as an integral part of largescale housing schemes.

Planning Policy Statement 8 (PPS 8):

Open Space, Sport & Recreation

Indoor leisure and recreation facilities, such as swimming pools and sports halls, are currently considered as 'intensive sports facilities' under Policy OS 4 of PPS 8 (Open Space, Sport and Recreation). The policy acknowledges that in addition to facilitating sport, these facilities often serve as a focus for the community.

Existing Development Plans

The existing Statutory Plans across the Borough address the issue of Community and Cultural Facilities as follows:

- Within the **Armagh Area Plan (AAP) 2004** and **AAP Alteration No 1 (Countryside Proposals)** there are no specific policies relating to community and cultural uses, nor any zonings. Cultural facilities are not expressly referred to. The settlement proposals are deemed flexible enough to cater for any need that emerges over the plan period.
- The **Banbridge / Newry and Mourne Area Plan (BNMAP) 2015** contains Policy ECU 1 (Education, Health, Community and Cultural Uses) which sets out a number of criteria against

which applications within settlement limits will be assessed. The Plan identifies Banbridge Town as a major centre for housing, employment, retail and professional services, education and health care, and for cultural activities including sport and leisure. Development Opportunity Sites (DOSs) have been identified in Banbridge and Dromore which would be suitable for community and cultural use, either individually or part of a mixed use scheme. Specific education zonings are also identified.

- The **Craigavon Area Plan (CAP) 2010** contains Policy COM 1 (Community Uses) which contains a number of criteria against which applications within settlement limits will be assessed. The Plan includes a number of zonings, where favourable consideration would be given to community-related or cultural uses, including some of the DOSs in Lurgan and Portadown.
- The **Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan (DSTAP) 2010** contains a similar criteria-based policy for development proposals in COM 1 (Community Uses) as in CAP 2010.

The Council's Community Plan 2017-2030 'Connected'

The Community Plan contains a number of long term outcomes, under the strategic theme of 'Community' that are focussed on the health and well-being of citizens, improved use and access to local services and facilities, and improved opportunity for communities coming together (through Healthy, Confident and Welcoming Communities).

Preferred Option, for Key Issue SOC 6 (Facilitating community and cultural facilities to meet the needs of the Borough)

Option SOC 6A

Identify and protect specific sites where a firm proposal is in place; and bring forward a criteria based policy for development proposals to be assessed against, to facilitate new community and cultural facilities (including extensions to existing facilities).

Justification

This option is two-fold in purpose. It deals with the allocation of lands for future community and cultural provision as well as providing an adequate framework for assessing related development proposals.

The remit of the option is broader than the current PSRNI Policy PSU 1 (Community Needs) so as to include cultural facilities. Beyond health and education, the term 'public facilities' was not clearly defined in the existing policy wording.

Class D1 of the Planning (Use Classes) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 identifies a range of Community and Cultural Uses, including the provision of medical or health services, as a community centre, as a crèche / day nursery, for the provision of education and for the display of works of art. There however are certain uses that do not fall within this Scheduled Use Class (that either fall within another Use Class or are unclassified (*sui generis*)), but may still be considered as community facilities. Examples include churches, and residential care homes. The new LDP will clearly define what 'community and cultural facilities' are, taking account of

'Use Classes' legislation and the current policy framework.

The Council's intended approach allows for specific sites to be identified and safeguarded in the LDP for community and cultural facilities and associated infrastructure, through zoning, that are planned for with some certainty by service providers. This may include firm proposals from funding bodies, as well as by the Council. This would include projects listed in capital works programmes. There would be a presumption against the loss of the zoned sites to other uses.

The 'take up' of zoned sites, for community and cultural facilities, would be monitored through the LDP process. These could potentially be re-zoned for alternative use(s) if they were to become surplus to requirements. This would ensure the best possible use of sites, in the public interest. This approach also offers greater certainty to interested parties and local communities in terms of the future development of their area. Alternative Option SOC 6B (no zoned land) would not give this certainty. Also, Alternative Option SOC 6C (long term

reserve of potential sites) may not make for the efficient use of land. It could well leave a collection of lands within the settlement which have no reasonable prospect of being developed, and which would be better used for other purposes. Both alternative options are therefore ruled out.

The second part of the Preferred Option seeks to provide a clear criteria-based policy framework for all proposals across the Borough to be assessed against. This will reflect the town centres first approach within the SPPS regional direction (Pages 101-105), as referred to earlier in the Policy Context, but as an exception allow for the sequential approach to be set aside where it can be clearly demonstrated that a particular site would better meet the needs of the local community and bring with it more benefit (than a sequentially preferable site). The existing regional Policy PSU 1 does not have specific tests for assessing proposals.

Over and above the locational considerations in the SPPS (town centre first approach), the criteria for assessing development proposals will address a

broad range of other issues, including access/movement, road safety, parking, design, amenity and biodiversity. This approach would also address the current inconsistency across the existing Area Plans – 3 of 4 include a criteria based framework for assessing proposals but

these differ somewhat. The new policy to be brought forward in the LDP should consolidate and expand on the existing local policies, to reflect the sustainable development objectives of the SPPS, in particular the promotion of active travel. A new facility should be of suitable size,

function, adaptability and accessibility, to best serve the local community. An alternative to a criteria based policy would be inconsistent with the 3 more recent Area Plans and considered a backward step in terms of good planning.

Alternative Options

Option SOC 6B

Remove provision in the LDP to zone lands for community and cultural facilities; but bring forward a criteria based policy for such development proposals to be assessed against.

To allow for individual site assessment whereby lands are not restricted to particular uses by the LDP.

Option SOC 6C

Retain a long term reserve of potential sites for community and cultural facilities through the LDP, in addition to bringing forward a criteria based policy for such development proposals to be assessed against.

To identify a generous supply of land to meet long term needs that may arise in the future.

Notes:

Indoor leisure / recreation centres

Indoor recreation facilities, such as swimming pools and leisure centres, serve as a community focal point, but are considered as 'intensive sports facilities' in the current PPS 8 Open Space, Sport and Recreation, under Policy OS 4. The new LDP policy, at Plan Strategy stage, will clearly define what 'community and cultural facilities' are, taking account of 'Use Classes' legislation and the current policy framework. There are currently 18 recreation/leisure facilities operated by the Council across the Borough.

Cemeteries

Cemeteries do not fall within a Scheduled Use Class (sui generis). The LDP will confirm the policy approach to such facilities at Plan Strategy stage. The majority of cemeteries and burial grounds in the Borough are provided and maintained by churches. The Council

however also currently operates and maintains 15 cemeteries, as part of its statutory duty to provide sufficient public cemetery space. Should a need for a new cemetery or an extension to an existing cemetery be identified, the LDP will take account of this and zone land where appropriate.

Key Site Requirements

In addition to bringing forward appropriate policy to facilitate the provision of local community and cultural infrastructure, the LDP will include key site requirements in land-use zonings that require facilities as part of or alongside a new development. This approach would likely only affect very large housing zonings, similar to the current approach in Policy QD 1 (Criterion I, local neighbourhood facilities). Similar KSRs may also be applied to mixed-use zonings and to Development Opportunity

Sites (DOSs). The approach to Community and Cultural Facilities will reflect the wider approach across other key issues, including Urban Housing (Key Issue SOC 1) and Development Opportunity Sites (Key Issue ECN 9).

Developer Contributions

As outlined in Key Issue SOC 7, the LDP will bring forward a new strategic policy on Developer Contributions at Plan Strategy stage. This will identify the types of development where it will be appropriate for developers to contribute towards new local community infrastructure and related works. Individual sites will also be identified at Local Policies Plan stage where Developer Contributions are required. To what extent Developer Contributions would be applied in relation to community and cultural facilities remains to be determined.

Question

12. Do you agree with our preferred approach to facilitating community and cultural facilities within our Borough?

Developer Contributions

Key Issue SOC 7 Facilitating development through Developer Contributions

Background

New development can put pressure upon existing infrastructure and services. In order to offset the impact of new development, developers may be required to bear the reasonable or proportionate costs of works required to facilitate their development proposals through the provision of developer contributions. Developer contributions enable development to take place whilst mitigating the impacts through the provision of necessary infrastructure and services which will be required to support the local community and future residents. The provision of necessary infrastructure may include sewerage or road works over and beyond those programmed to facilitate the development. It could also include community facilities or the provision of blue/green infrastructure depending on the location and scale of the development. Developer contributions are intended to ensure

that developers address any impact on infrastructure created by the new development and are secured through a legally binding agreement between the relevant authority (usually Council) and the landowner and/or developer.

The Department for Infrastructure's (DfI) Development Management Practice Note 21 'Section 76 Planning Agreements' advises that the LDP should be the point at which consideration of the potential need for and use of planning agreements begins. As such it is recommended that the LDP includes policies on the use of planning agreements, so as to clarify the expected nature, scope and levels of contributions that may be sought from developers, so as to provide certainty at an early stage.

Policy Context (Regional and Local)

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

The SPPS sets out examples of circumstances where developer contributions may be required, including:

- where a proposed development requires the provision or improvement of infrastructural works over and above those programmed in a LDP;

- where earlier than planned implementation of a programmed scheme is required;
- where a proposed development is dependent upon the carrying out of works outside the site; and
- where archaeological investigation or mitigation is required.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue SOC 7 (Facilitating development through Developer Contributions)

Option SOC 7A

Provide strategic policy on developer contributions and identify sites where developer contributions would be appropriate in the Local Policies Plan.

This approach would bring forward policy which would clarify the types and thresholds for which developer contributions are required and the level of contribution.

Justification

Developer Contributions may contribute towards achieving sustainable communities, by enabling development whilst providing mitigation for any potential impacts. As such, policy formulation for developer contributions would require careful consideration to ensure that the policy test is robust; to ensure that it is necessary, reasonable and relates to the proposed development

as either a direct consequence of the development or as a cumulative impact of development in the area. Careful consideration will also be given to the level of developer contributions so that it does not deter investment. Developer contributions would not be sought for all development proposals, and as such the Strategic Policy would seek to clarify when developer contributions are

required, including the anticipated level of contribution and any exemptions if necessary. The LDP would also identify sites in the Local Policies Plan where developer contributions would be appropriate. As such this would provide a high level of certainty for developers and other stakeholders involved in the development process at an early stage.

Alternative Options

Option SOC 7B

Identify sites within the Local Policies Plan where developer contributions would be appropriate.

Whilst this approach would help mitigate against the impacts of new development where appropriate it does not provide certainty or clarify at an early stage and could deter investment in certain areas of the Borough.

Option SOC 7C

Assess the requirement for developer contributions on an application-by-application basis.

Whilst this is a more flexible approach it is considered that it does not provide clarity for all those involved in the development process.

Question

13. Do you agree with the preferred approach to mitigating the impacts of new development though developer contributions?



7. Economic Theme

This theme is derived from the Strategic Objectives set out in Section 4:

- To facilitate the creation and maintenance of conditions that provide for a dynamic, diverse and robust economy to encourage existing and new businesses to invest.
- To facilitate the growth of the economy by ensuring an adequate provision of accessible land for a range of employment uses which offers a choice of sites at a range of locations.
- To support, regenerate and promote vibrant town centres.
- To support tourism development by creating and identifying opportunities for sustainable tourism development and by safeguarding key tourism assets from inappropriate development.
- To promote Armagh City as a major tourist destination while respecting its unique built heritage assets, cultural product and unique setting through sensitive development.
- To facilitate economic development of an appropriate nature, scale and location in the countryside; including employment in the primary sector (agriculture, forestry and mining); while recognising the growing importance of self-employment, homeworking and farm diversification.
- To facilitate economic regeneration and support the connectivity of disadvantaged and deprived areas.
- To facilitate investment in power, water, sewerage infrastructure and waste management, particularly in the interests of public health.
- To facilitate physical and digital connectivity which meets the needs of businesses and private households.
- To protect strategically important transportation and public utilities infrastructure and where possible enhance connectivity within the Borough and with other centres.

The Key Issues set out in this section have been informed by the Strategic Objectives detailed above, the Policy Context set out in Section 2 and our evidence base.

Key Issues

Economic Development - Urban

Key Issue ECN 1: Zoning for economic development

Key Issue ECN 2: Locating Class B1 Business Uses

Key Issue ECN 3: Supporting start-up and grow-on businesses

Economic Development - Rural

Key Issue ECN 4: Supporting sustainable rural economic development

Town Centres and Retailing

Key Issue ECN 5: Defining a hierarchy of centres

Key Issue ECN 6: Protecting and strengthening town centres

Key Issue ECN 7: Supporting the evening and night-time economy

Key Issue ECN 8: Facilitating office development (Class A2 Uses)

Key Issue ECN 9: Identifying Development Opportunity Sites (DOSs)

Tourism

Key Issue ECN 10: Supporting sustainable tourism development

Minerals Development

Key Issue ECN 11: Supporting sustainable minerals development

Infrastructure, Telecommunications and Utilities

Key issue ECN 12: Facilitating sustainable infrastructure, telecommunications and utilities development to meet the needs of the Borough

Transportation

Key Issue ECN 13: Protecting the Borough's Protected Routes

Key Issue ECN 14: Protecting proposed strategic road improvement schemes

Key Issue ECN 15: Protecting the Borough's Disused Transport Routes

Key Issue ECN 16: Protecting key Park and Ride Sites

Key Issue ECN 17: Promoting active travel and sustainable transport

Key Issue ECN 18: Promoting and enhancing access to greenways

Economic Development (Urban)

Key Issue ECN 1 Zoning for Economic Development

Key Issue ECN 2 Locating Class B1 Business Uses

Key Issue ECN 3 Supporting start-up and grow-on Businesses

Background

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council is committed to ensuring that each city, town, village, small settlement and rural area in the Borough realises its full potential as a 'Place of Choice' for living, working, visiting and investing and that this is achieved in a sustainable and equitable manner.

The Council's Regeneration and Development Strategy (R&DS) 2015-

2020 is driven by the ambition to be the foremost local authority with respect to economic regeneration, business creation and development. This is underpinned by the fact that the Council is the largest local authority outside of Belfast with a proud rich history of manufacturing excellence. The Council seeks to build upon this ambition through 3 interconnected themes which will facilitate the development of our city, towns and villages within the local area,

develop and promote start-up business growth seeking to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and enhance the skills of local residents. We will also seek to grow our local economy by building on existing strengths in the manufacturing, logistics, agri-food, pharmaceutical and agriculture sectors and through facilitating growth of our town centres and tourism sectors to fulfil their economic potential.



The Borough has a diverse employment base containing a significant amount of public sector jobs in health, education and central / local government as well as wholesale and retail employment. This reflects the importance of our three Hubs (Craigavon Urban Area, Armagh City and Banbridge Town) as major administrative,

cultural and service centres for their catchments. Craigavon Urban Area which is located off the M1, within 30 minutes of Greater Belfast, has a strong manufacturing and logistics base. Armagh has traditionally had a strong agriculture, education and health/social offering with significant potential for growth in

the tourism sector. Banbridge is located on the A1 transport corridor between Belfast and Dublin and is considered an attractive location to live with a strong retail base.

Policy Context (Regional and Local)

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035

As previously outlined in the **Spatial Growth Strategy Key Issue SGS 3**, The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035 directs that Councils should 'ensure an adequate supply of land to facilitate sustainable economic growth' to offer a range and choice of sites in terms of size and location to promote flexibility and provide for the varying needs of different types of economic activity (RG1).

To ensure that Northern Ireland is well placed to accommodate growth in jobs and businesses, there should be an adequate and available supply of employment land. It should be accessible and located to make best use of available services. The focus will be on larger urban centres and regional gateways taking advantage of their locations on the regional transport network. To enable Councils to identify robust and defensible portfolios of both strategic and locally important employment sites in their development plans, the policy suggests the use of The Employment Land Evaluation Framework.

Strategic Guidance RG1 of the RDS has 4 key objectives. These are to assess the quality and viability of sites zoned for economic development uses in area plans; to protect zoned land, to promote economic development opportunities across the region focused on the Hubs as the main centres for employment and services, and finally to provide a network of economic development opportunities.

Strategic Guidance SFG11 of the RDS states we should 'promote economic development opportunities at Hubs'. It recognises that inward investment needs to be attracted and local firms encouraged to grow. It also seeks to promote and exploit the potential for economic development and to consider Hubs and Clusters of Hubs first when new development is being considered. This includes small businesses and service sector offices.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)

As previously outlined in the Spatial Growth Strategy (Section 5), the SPPS does not introduce any significant changes to economic development policy as set out in PPS 4 'Planning and Economic Development'. Supporting sustainable economic growth is one of the core planning principles of the SPPS, and it states that a modern, efficient and effective planning system is essential to supporting the Executive and wider government policy, in its efforts to promote long term economic growth in the interests of all people in this region.

The SPPS identifies 5 Regional Strategic Objectives for economic development which are as follows:

- promote sustainable economic development in an environmentally sensitive manner;
- tackle disadvantage and facilitate job creation by ensuring the provision of a generous supply of land suitable for economic development and a choice and range in terms of quality;
- support the re-use of previously

developed economic development sites and buildings where they meet the needs of particular economic sectors;

- promote mixed use development and improve integration between transportation, economic development and other land uses, including housing; and
- ensure a high standard of quality and design for new economic development.

For urban areas, the SPPS identifies strategic policy which must be taken into account when preparing LDPs. Firstly, within larger settlements planning decisions must be informed by the provision made for economic development lands through the LDP and secondly, within villages and small settlements, the LDP will not normally zone land for economic development as this would inhibit flexibility.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 4: Planning and Economic Development

PPS 4 sets out the current operational planning policies for economic development uses and indicates how growth associated with such uses can be accommodated and promoted in development plans.

PPS 4 seeks to promote sustainable economic development through supportive planning policies, zoning land for development, identifying and protecting development opportunities and integrating employment generation with essential supporting provision in terms of housing and infrastructure. The

key aim of this PPS is to facilitate the economic development needs of the region in ways consistent with protection of the environment and the principles of sustainable development.

Amongst the policies in PPS 4, Policy PED 1 of PPS 4 considers Economic Development in Settlements and details where Use Class Order (UCO) Class B1 to B4 (Business) uses will be acceptable in settlements; Policy PED 7 considers the Retention of Zoned Land and Economic Development Uses; Policy PED 8 considers Development Incompatible with Economic Development Uses; and Policy PED 9 considers General Criteria for Economic Development.

Existing Development Plans

The existing Statutory Plans for the Borough are the: Armagh Area Plan (AAP) 2004, Armagh Area Plan 2004 Alteration No 1, Craigavon Area Plan (CAP) 2010, Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan (BNMAP) 2015 and the Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan (DSTAP) 2010.

At 2015, it was estimated that there was approximately 226ha of remaining undeveloped zoned employment lands within the Borough of which 17ha was

located in the former Armagh District, 49ha within the former Banbridge District and 160ha in the former Craigavon Borough. No zoned employment lands in the DSTAP area transferred to our Borough. The allocation of economic development lands is considered under **Key Issue SGS 3.**

The Council's Regeneration and Development Strategy 2015-2020 (R&DS)

The Regeneration and Development Strategy implements the Council's Corporate Plan, Place commitments through 4 thematic action areas:

- Supporting Business Enterprise, Business Growth and Innovation;
- Creating Places of Choice;
- Developing strong Business Networks across the Borough and using these to drive supply chain initiatives and business growth; and
- Employability and Skills.

The Prosperous Place Action Plan identifies 15 specific action points with accompanying time frames, lead responsibilities, key partners, necessary resources and indicative costs that will address the 4 thematic action areas identified above.

The Council's Community Plan 2017-2030, 'Connected'

'Economy' is one of the three strategic themes set out in the Community Plan together with 'Community' and 'Place.' The strategic theme of Economy has three long-term outcomes relating to 'Enterprising Economy', 'Skilled Economy' and the 'Tourism Economy'.

With regard to the 'Enterprising Economy', the long-term outcome is that "Our Borough is a centre of excellence for entrepreneurship, innovation and investment." With regard to the 'Skilled Economy', the long term outcome is that "People are better equipped to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by our dynamic economy." With regard to the 'Tourism Economy', the long-term outcome is that "Our Borough is the destination of choice for international visitors."



Preferred Option, for Key Issue ECN 1 (Zoning for Economic Development)

Option ECN 1A

Evaluate existing economic development zonings and identify new sustainably located sites to meet projected needs.

Justification

The preferred option is in line with current Policies PED 1 and PED 7 in PPS 4 and regional direction in the SPPS which allow for a comprehensive review of all current economic development land zonings within the Borough. This approach supports the **Spatial Growth Strategy (Section 5)** as outlined in detail in **Key Issue SGS 3 (allocating economic development lands)**. It would allow for

economic development land zonings to be re-evaluated to assess their continued suitability for economic development. It would facilitate the consideration of more sustainable sites such as those adjacent to key transportation networks, digital connectivity and population centres. In addition, this option would also allow the LDP to identify new economic development sites in areas of social

deprivation. This would ensure an ample supply of suitable land in terms of type, size and location to meet the economic development needs of the Borough. Furthermore, this would also support the re-use of previously developed economic development sites and buildings as set out in the SPPS Regional Strategic objectives.

Alternative Options

Option ECN 1B

Retain existing economic development zonings along with additional sustainably located sites to meet projected needs.

This option would have a degree of flexibility but would not involve a comprehensive review of all current lands zoned for economic development, retaining all existing zonings irrespective of constraints such as flood risk, availability or location. However this option would allow for some new economic development sites to be identified in areas of deprivation, adjacent to population centres and existing infrastructure. Whilst this option

would assist in supporting the Council's ambition to develop a thriving and prosperous economy for the Borough that is underpinned by the skills base of local people, it is considered that this approach would not support our Spatial Growth Strategy in respect of the allocation of economic development land as detailed in Section 5, **Key Issue SGS 3**.

Option ECN 1C

Retain existing economic development zonings as currently identified in the extant Plans.

This option is in effect retain a 'status quo' approach and therefore it may

be considered as too inflexible. It would retain existing zoned economic development lands which may be no longer suitable due to constraints such as flood risk. Furthermore this option would not allow new zonings across the Borough or new sites to help address areas of deprivation and would therefore not support the overall Spatial Growth Strategy of the Council. It could result in a portfolio of sites which are not supported by the necessary infrastructure required by businesses.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue ECN 2 (Locating Class B1 Business Uses)

Option ECN 2A

Allow UCO Class B1* Business Uses in Town Centres, District Centres or Local Centres and within economic development zonings (as identified in the LDP) as part of a sequential approach.

Justification

The preferred option is in line with current Policy PED 1 in PPS 4 and regional direction in the SPPS which facilitates Use Class B1 Business Uses*

For B1 office use this option promotes town centres first, or district / local centres where identified in the LDP. This option would also promote the vitality and viability of existing town centres within the Borough. New B1 office use proposals would have to demonstrate that there is no appropriate site within the existing town centre before such proposals were considered in the other locations, taking account of the

potential impacts and the likely economic benefits. In addition this option would facilitate call centres and research and development proposals within existing or proposed economic development areas, where identified in the LDP and would also allow for the LDP to identify areas within larger settlements for B1 Office Use which will support economic growth in areas such as the digital sector.

*Class B1: Business Use in The Planning (Use Classes) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 includes:
(a) as an office other than a use within Class A2 (Financial, professional and other services);
(b) as a call centre; or
(c) for research and development which can be carried out without detriment to amenity by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit.

Alternative Options

Option ECN 2B

Restrict UCO Class B1 Business uses to Town Centres only.

This alternative option would offer no flexibility and would restrict Use Class B1 Business Uses including offices (other

than UCO Class A2: financial, professional and other services), call centres and research and development uses to town centres only. Furthermore such uses would not be allowed in local / district centres, lands zoned for economic development or other sites beyond town

centres. Whilst this may improve the vitality and viability of our town centres it could discourage investors as these town centre locations may not meet the specific infrastructural needs of the businesses.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue ECN 3 (Supporting start-up and grow-on businesses)

Option ECN 3A

Identify sites within economic development zonings specifically for start-up and grow-on business space and also use redundant buildings or lands on existing economic sites for start-up and grow-on business space.

Justification

The preferred option is in line with current Policies PED 1 and PED 7 in PPS 4 and regional direction in the SPPS which allow new economic development lands suitable for start-up and grow-on businesses to be identified within existing settlements as well as vacant or redundant buildings and lands where the last use was an economic development use. These sites would be identified in the LDP as being suitable for start-up and grow-on businesses and would help stimulate local investment and enterprise. The preferred approach would ensure that a variety of sites / land will be specifically zoned for

start-up and grow-on businesses as well as supporting the re-use of lands and buildings previously used for economic development. New sites identified in the LDP would normally be located adjacent to key transportation corridors which would help promote integration between transportation, economic development and other land uses which is a key regional strategic objective of the SPPS. This would also help make employment lands more accessible and support the Community Plan outcomes under 'Enterprising Economy.'

Alternative Options

Option ECN 3B

Only use redundant buildings or lands which were previously used for economic development for start-up and grow-on business space.

This option seeks to utilise only existing redundant buildings or lands which were previously used for economic development as the location for start-up and grow-on businesses. This option would be less flexible and would focus new start-up and grow-on businesses

into previously used buildings or sites. It would not allow them to locate to existing or new economic development zonings, which could hinder economic growth.

Option ECN 3C

Consider start-up and grow on business space on a case by case basis.

This option, although it recognises the importance of the start-up and grow-on business sector, does not direct businesses to economic development

zoned land or land previously used for economic development as directed by regional policy.

Question

13. Do you agree with our preferred approach to zoning for economic development?

14. Do you agree with our preferred approach to locating Class B1 Business Uses?

15. Do you agree with our preferred approach to supporting start-up and grow-on businesses?



Economic Development (Rural)

Key Issue ECN 4 Supporting sustainable rural economic development

Background

Our Borough's countryside is a precious resource made up of distinctive landscapes, rich in heritage, cultural and environmental assets, including internationally important and designated nature conservation sites. We have a special relationship with our countryside, with approximately 24% of our population

living there. The uniqueness and diversity of our countryside is one of our greatest assets. It acts as an important resource by supporting rural business development, growth and entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector, agri-food industries and tourism sector, with many rural dwellers employed in farming and local

enterprises. Key to sustaining our rural communities is supporting rural economic development of an appropriate nature and scale, in appropriate locations.



Policy Context (Regional and Local)

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035

One of the aims of the RDS is to 'Support our towns, villages and rural communities to maximise their potential.' The RDS identifies that 'Our rural areas including our towns and villages have a key role in supporting economic growth. They offer opportunities in terms of their potential for growth in new sectors, the provision of rural recreation and

tourism, their attractiveness as places to invest, live and work, and their role as a reservoir of natural resources and highly valued landscapes.' Furthermore the RDS identifies that in order to sustain rural communities, new development and employment opportunities which respect local, social and environmental circumstances are required.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (2015)

Supporting sustainable economic growth is a core planning principle of the SPPS, identifying that 'a modern, efficient and effective planning system is essential to supporting the Executive and wider government policy, in its efforts to promote long term economic growth in the interests of all people in this region.'

One of the economic development Regional Strategic Objectives of the SPSS is to 'promote sustainable economic development in an environmentally sensitive manner' and to 'sustain a vibrant rural community by supporting rural economic development of an appropriate nature and scale.'

The SPSS recognises that the guiding principle for policies and proposals for economic development in the countryside is to facilitate proposals likely to benefit the rural economy and support rural communities, while protecting or enhancing rural character and the environment.

Farm diversification, the reuse of rural buildings and appropriate redevelopment and expansion proposals for industrial and business purposes are highlighted as sustainable economic development in the countryside.

The SPSS also acknowledges that such proposals may occasionally involve the construction of new buildings, where they can be integrated in a satisfactory manner. The SPSS identifies, that in the interests of rural amenity and wider sustainability objectives, the level of new building for economic development purposes outside settlements must however be restricted.

Exceptions to this general principles may be justified in the following circumstances, such as:

- A small scale new build economic development project may be permissible outside a village or small settlement where there is no suitable site within the settlement. An edge of settlement location will be favoured over a location elsewhere in the rural area, subject to normal planning considerations;
- A proposal for major or regionally significant economic development, where a countryside location is necessary because of size or site specific requirements. Such proposals will be required to demonstrate a significant contribution to the regional economy and be otherwise

acceptable, particularly in terms of their environmental and transport impacts.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 4: Planning and Economic Development

PPS 4 sets out operational planning policies for economic development uses and indicates how growth associated with such uses can be accommodated and promoted in development plans. The SPSS broadly reflects the direction of PPS 4.

The objectives of PPS 4, include "to promote sustainable economic development in an environmentally sensitive manner; and to sustain a vibrant rural community by supporting rural economic development of an appropriate nature and scale. Policy PED 2 of PPS 4 'Economic Development Use in the Countryside' identifies that "Proposals for economic development uses in the countryside will be permitted in accordance with the provisions of the following policies:

- The Expansion of an Established Economic Development Use – Policy PED 3 ;
- The Redevelopment of an Established Economic Development Use – Policy PED 4;
- Major Industrial Development – Policy PED 5; and
- Small Rural Projects – Policy PED 6.

Policy PED 3 identifies that the expansion of an established economic development use in the countryside will be permitted subject to meeting specified criteria.

Policy PED 4 identifies that a proposal for the redevelopment of an established economic development use in the countryside will be permitted subject to meeting criteria. Proposals for redevelopment of sites for tourism, outdoor sport and recreation or local community facilities will be viewed sympathetically where all criteria can be met.

Policy PED 5 identifies that 'major industrial proposals, which make a significant contribution to the regional economy will be permitted in the

countryside where it is demonstrated that, the proposal due to its size or site specific requirements needs a countryside location', and it meets other criteria.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside

One of the objectives of PPS 21 is to "facilitate development necessary to achieve a sustainable rural economy including appropriate farm diversification and other economic activity.'

Policy CTY: 4 The Conversion and Reuse of Existing Buildings identifies that planning permission will be granted to proposals for the sympathetic conversion, with adaption if necessary, of a suitable building for a variety of alternative uses. Paragraph 5.21 of CTY 4 identifies the potential to reuse buildings for a variety of non-residential uses, including appropriate economic tourism.

Policy CTY 11: Farm Diversification identifies that 'Planning permission will be granted for a farm or forestry diversification proposal where it has been demonstrated that it is to be run in conjunction with the agricultural operations on the farm,' and four specified criteria are met. The specified Criteria includes impact on character and appearance of the surrounding area and impact upon amenity of nearby residential dwellings. In cases where a new building is proposed, the applicant is required to provide information to satisfactorily demonstrate why existing buildings cannot be used.

Policy CTY 8 – Ribbon Development, permits, in certain circumstances, the infilling of a small gap with an appropriate economic development proposal, where this is of a scale in keeping with adjoining development is of a high standard of design and would not adversely impact on the amenities of neighbouring residents.

Policy CTY 1 permits development in the countryside, where there are overriding reasons why the development is essential and could not be located in a settlement.

Existing Development Plans

The Armagh Area Plan (AAP) 2004 and AAP Alteration 1 (Countryside Proposals), Banbridge /Newry and Mourne Area Plan (BNMAP) 2015, Craigavon Area Plan 2010, and Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan (DSTAP) 2010 are the 4 existing statutory plans across the Borough.

These existing Statutory Plans (following the re-drawing of the council boundaries in 2015) have been fully superseded by the SPPS and PPS 21 in respect of special designations and as such our Borough currently has no Special Countryside Areas (SCAs). SCAs identify and protect areas of exceptional landscape such as lough shores, certain views or vistas, where the quality of landscape and unique amenity is such that development should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, in line with the Local Policy Plan. The plan policy direction in relation to economic development is also considered under **Key Issue ECN 10 Supporting sustainable tourism development** and **ECN 11 Supporting sustainable minerals development**.

The Council's Community Plan 2017-2030 'Connected'

'Economy' is one of the 3 strategic themes set out in the Community Plan together with 'Community' and 'Place.' The strategic

theme of Economy has three long-term outcomes relating to the 'Enterprising Economy', the 'Skilled Economy' and the 'Tourism Economy.' The Community Plan recognises that we should be mindful of our large rural population, and ensure that rurality is not an obstacle to participation and provision, stating that we must also deliver sustainable business start-ups and growth in rural areas. The Community Plan is underpinned by three cross cutting themes of Connectivity, Equality and Sustainability.

The Council's Regeneration and Development Strategy (R&DS) 2015 - 2020

The Regeneration and Development Strategy implements the Corporate Plan commitments through 4 thematic action areas:

- Supporting Business Enterprise, Business Growth and Innovation;
- Creating Places of Choice;
- Developing strong Business Networks across the Borough and using these to drive supply chain initiatives and business growth; and
- Employability and Skills.

A fundamental commitment to prosperous places as set out in the R&DS is to encourage existing businesses to grow and new businesses to be formed

and expand to ensure that the Council's economy has a rich and diverse stock of businesses. This can offer the best possible range of employment opportunities. It recognises opportunities in the tourism sector where there is potential for growth of employment and investment by development in new tourism based businesses.

Transform: A Tourism Strategy 2017 - 2022

Transform: A Tourism Strategy for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough (2017 - 2022) adopts a tiered approach in relation to tourism development within the Borough. Within Tier 1 of the approach, one objective is to develop the apple orchard/cider industry into an international visitor experience through investment in the orchards and the curation of food trails and tours. The potential future growth of the Tourism industry is further considered under **Key Issue ECN 10: Supporting sustainable tourism development**.



Preferred Option, for Key Issue ECN 4 (Supporting Sustainable Rural Economic Development)

Option ECN 4A

Support a sustainable approach to rural economic development in line with existing policies and regional direction, tailored to meet local circumstances, including in relation to facilitating the apple orchard / cider tourism experience.

Justification

The preferred option would be in line with the existing policy-led approach, but tailored to meet local circumstances. The relevant operational rural economic policies are contained within PPS 4: Planning and Economic Development, policies – PED 3, PED 4, PED 5, PED 6 and PPS 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside, policies - CTY 1, CTY 4, CTY 8 and CTY 11.

This approach would offer similar levels of protection to the countryside, whilst reflecting the specific identified needs of the Borough, for example, in relation to the apple orchard / cider tourism experience, as promoted within Transform: A Tourism Strategy for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2017 - 2022. It also considers the regional objective of ensuring that any proposed economic development in the countryside would benefit the rural economy, support rural communities and protect or enhance rural character and the environment.

This preferred option would retain a controlled approach to economic development in the countryside, but it would identify instances where development of an appropriate nature and scale would be considered

acceptable in the countryside, subject to appropriate policy criteria.

The preferred option would also provide clarification on some aspects of current policy, this includes, for example, Policy PED 3 of PPS 4, which allows for the Expansion of an Established Economic Development Use in the Countryside and restricts the expansion to where 'there is no major increase in the site area of the enterprise'. Clarification would be provided as to what constitutes 'major expansion' in current policy.

Further opportunities for rural economic development in the countryside will be explored within Policies PPS CTY 4 and CTY 11 of PPS 21, including where clear evidence can be provided to demonstrate that a minor departure from regional direction in the SPPS would not cause a significant adverse impact nor be at odds with the sustainable objectives of the LDP. An example might be where a proposal for economic development, in which a countryside location is necessary because of site specific requirements.

In PPS 21, Policy CTY 11 Farm Diversification, allows, in exceptional cases, for a new building to be permitted where there is no existing building

available to accommodate the proposed use, either because they are essential for the maintenance of the existing farm enterprise, are clearly unsuitable for adaptation and reuse or cannot be adapted to meet the requirements of other statutory agencies. However, the new building must be satisfactorily integrated with the existing group of buildings on the farm. Some proposed economic developments may require a particularly contaminant free environment, and as such may be incompatible with the farm enterprise already operating in the existing buildings and may require an alternative site away from the existing farm buildings.

The LDP will however, ensure that the need for the development is balanced against environmental and amenity considerations, and ensure that the existing tourism asset is protected. In considering the position of the Borough within the 'Orchard County' and to fully support the Council's Tier 1 priority of its Tourism Strategy, regarding the apple orchard/ cider tourism experience, it is considered appropriate that planning policy is tailored to accommodate the specific local needs, for rural economic development.

Adopting this sustainable tailored approach to local circumstances would ensure that tourism assets are protected, whilst facilitating appropriate development which may otherwise not be permissible under current policy.

This option would also complement the Council's approach to tourism as detailed under **Key Issue ECN 10: Supporting sustainable tourism development.**

Alternative Options

Option ECN 4B

Retain existing policy which facilitates sustainable economic development in the countryside.

Alternative option ECN 4B would retain the current regional approach to rural economic development and would not

allow for a tailored approach to meet local circumstances which may stifle sustainable economic growth, particularly in relation to the apple orchard / cider tourism experience in the Borough.

Question

16. Do you agree with our preferred approach for addressing economic development in the rural countryside?

Town Centres and Retailing

Key Issue ECN 5 Defining a Hierarchy of Centres

Key Issue ECN 6 Protecting and strengthening town centres

Key Issue ECN 7 Supporting the evening and night time economy

Key Issue ECN 8 Facilitating Office Development (Class A2 Uses)

Key Issue ECN 9 Identifying Development Opportunity Sites (DOSS)

Background

Town centres are important hubs for our local economy and assist in supporting growth and investment within our Borough by meeting our retail, employment and leisure needs. Due to the complexity of their role and function, town centres have a key role in contributing towards sustainable development and therefore it is vital that the Council, through the LDP, pursues policies to support and enhance their vitality, viability and sustainability. In recent years our town centres have been presented with a number of challenges including evolving consumer and lifestyle trends, fluctuations in the economy and the increasing popularity of online shopping, which has placed pressure upon our retail sector and has

influenced town centre vacancy rate levels. In order to develop economically competitive and vibrant town centres, address vacancy rates and ensure their position as the appropriate first choice locations for retailing and other complementary functions it is essential that diversification of appropriate town centre uses is promoted. Therefore it is necessary to bring forward a strategy for town centres and retailing which will contain appropriate policies and proposals to promote town centre first for retail and other main town centre uses and recognise the importance of a mix of uses within town centres, in addition to ensuring that our town centres are well connected and accessible.

Furthermore it is essential that our town centres are promoted as destinations that provide an experience beyond that of a regular shopping trip, so as to influence consumer spending, lifestyle trends and improve footfall within our centres. The promotion of diversification to provide a mixture of retailing and related facilities, including employment, leisure and cultural uses will serve to enhance the vitality, viability and sustainability of our town centres. The challenge for the LDP is to promote competitive and sustainable centres that provide customer choice and a diverse offer that reflects the individuality and specific circumstances of our centres, and our Borough as a whole.

Local Context

Within our Borough, there are five main City / Town Centres; Armagh City Centre and also Banbridge, Portadown, Lurgan and Central Craigavon Town Centres. The centres vary in size, with Portadown the largest (56 ha), followed by Armagh (52

ha), Craigavon (47 ha), Lurgan (36 ha) and Banbridge (32ha), the smallest in area. The five centres have a diverse range of shops, retail services, offices, housing and other business, reflecting that the function and role of town centres extends

beyond retailing and includes a variety of uses:

- Armagh City has a strategic role as a centre of employment and services, providing a range of administrative,

employment, health, education, shopping, tourism and recreational services whilst also being recognised for its rich historical and ecclesiastical heritage.

- Central Craigavon Town Centre includes a number of civic and office uses, with Rushmere Shopping Centre and its associated retail park containing the entire retail offer in Central Craigavon's primary retail core.
- Portadown Town Centre benefits from a modern functional public realm and is comprised of a number of shopping centres, independent retailers, services and a number of cafes / restaurants.
- Lurgan Town Centre is characterised by its attractive townscape, now a Conservation Area, and a predominance of local independent retailers.
- Banbridge Town Centre has a multi-functional role being a focus for commercial activity along with educational, health, administrative, community and recreational facilities.

Although there is no single indicator that can effectively measure the health of a Town Centre, vacancy rate levels are useful indicators of the performance of a town centre and offer a framework for assessing vitality and viability. Whilst the five main City / Town Centres

accommodate a variety of uses, the town centre vacancy rates indicate mixed levels of performance; Armagh City Centre 23.1%, Banbridge Town Centre 23.2%, Central Craigavon 8.5%, Lurgan Town Centre 23.6% and Portadown Town Centre 25.9% with an average vacancy rate of 20.86% across the five centres (2016 Town Centre Vacancy Rates- Department for Communities Town Centre Database).

The retail sector is constantly evolving and adapting in response to consumer and lifestyle trends and other market influences. Such trends and influences will continue to transform traditional high street retailing and our town centres, impacting upon their performance, resilience and vacancy rate levels. As such it is vital that our centres retain a diverse mix of uses, with an offering that is desirable and inclusive to everyone, in addition to being adaptable to future lifestyle and retail trends. To support our centres, it is also vital that they are safe and accessible, with adequate public transport infrastructure and sufficient parking provision (including spaces for people with disabilities, and parent and child parking spaces). The Council, through the LDP, would also seek to capitalise on the strategic location of Armagh City, Banbridge Town and Craigavon Urban Area in relation to the regional transport network, as well as the rail links to Belfast and Dublin, so as to

attract investment and promote economic growth of our Borough.

Development Opportunity Sites (DOSs) are zoned where lands in city and town centres are under-utilised or vacant and where development of the site could promote the vitality and viability of the centre, or improve the townscape, for example, by closing frontage gaps or by replacing unattractive features. The uptake and redevelopment of such sites is a good framework against which the regeneration of our town centres can be measured. Whilst there are no DOSs identified in Armagh or Central Craigavon, there has been significant development of designated opportunity sites in Lurgan, with a lesser uptake of DOSs in Portadown and Banbridge. To support our town centres it is vital that the LDP ensures that there is adequate opportunities for regeneration by identifying suitable DOSs that would have a positive impact upon our centres and that also have a reasonable prospect of being developed.



Policy Context (Regional and Local)

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035

The RDS 2035 acknowledges the importance of accessible, vibrant city and town centres which offer people greater local choice for shopping, social activity and recreation. The RDS aims to promote economic development in hubs, specifically to promote and exploit the potential for economic development, with hubs and clusters being considered first (SFG 11). The RDS also makes specific reference to the retailing sector in the District, recognising that Central Craigavon has a well-established retail function, in addition to a strong manufacturing and industry base and in Banbridge there is a strong employment base in retail, manufacturing and construction due to its strategic location on the Belfast Dublin Corridor. Although the RDS makes no specific reference to retailing in Armagh City, it does acknowledge Armagh as a rich heritage and tourism destination with an abundance of cultural product.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)

The aim of the SPPS is to support and sustain vibrant town centres across Northern Ireland through the promotion of established town centres as the appropriate first choice location of retailing and other complementary functions, consistent with the RDS. The regional strategic objectives in relation to town centres and retailing include:

- secure a town centres first approach for the location of future retailing and other main town centre uses;
- adopt a sequential approach to the identification of retail and main town centre uses in Local Development Plans (LDPs) and when decision-taking;
- ensure LDPs and decisions are informed by robust and up-to-date evidence in relation to need and capacity;
- protect and enhance diversity in the range of town centre uses appropriate to their role and function, such as leisure, cultural and community

- facilities, housing and business;
- promote high-quality design to ensure that town centres provide sustainable, attractive, accessible and safe environments; and
- maintain and improve accessibility to and within the town centre.

In order for the LDP to deliver the objectives above, the SPPS sets out a range of actions that should be implemented:

- define a network and hierarchy of centres – town, district and local centres, acknowledging the role and function of rural centres;
- define the spatial extent of town centres and the primary retail core;
- set out appropriate policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in the hierarchy of centres and other locations, and the factors that will be taken into account for decision taking;
- provide for a diverse offer and mix of uses, which reflect local circumstances; and
- allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and form of retail, and other town centre uses.

In regards to office development, the SPPS states that the Plan may also set out restrictions as to where particular types of economic development should be located in order to meet particular Plan objectives. For example, office uses may be restricted to town or district centres in order to promote the vitality and viability of the centre. Furthermore, appropriate proposals for UCO Class B1 business uses (such as offices and call centres) should be permitted if located within city or town centres, and in other locations that may be specified for such use in a LDP, such as a district centres. The Councils preferred approach for Class B1 business use is considered under **Key Issue ECN 2**.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 4: Planning and Economic Development

PPS 4 sets out the planning policies for economic development uses and indicates how growth associated with

such uses can be accommodated. In relation to office provision this policy aims:

- to tackle disadvantage and facilitate job creation by ensuring the provision of a generous supply of land suitable for economic development.

Existing Development Plans

Due to the varying ages of the current Statutory Plans, there is a clear variation in the approach to town centres and retailing across the Borough. For example, the existing Area Plans designate Town Centre boundaries and Primary Retail Cores (PRC) within Central Craigavon, Portadown, Lurgan and Banbridge, whilst the Armagh Area Plan 2004 designates a Central Area Limit for Armagh along with a Commercial Area. It has been established through Planning Appeal Commission decisions that Armagh's Central Area Limit equates to the Town Centre Boundary and the Commercial Area equates to the Primary Retail Core.

There are no DOS identified within the Armagh Area Plan, whilst there are a number identified for the main towns and local towns in the CAP 2010 and the BNMAP 2015. Also, the CAP is the only statutory plan that has designated a district centre. Therefore the LDP provides an opportunity to address the inconsistencies in our statutory plans approach to Town Centres and Retailing, and tailor to the specific circumstances of our Borough in line with the regional strategic direction.

Town Centre Masterplans and Development Strategies

Whilst the Area Plans provide the statutory planning framework for land use proposals, Town Centre Masterplans are non-statutory documents which focus on regeneration initiatives and public realm improvements in our town centres. Town Centre Masterplans set out a vision for a particular Town Centre and identify key proposals for realising that vision over a set period of time.

Armagh has a City Centre Masterplan in place, whilst Regeneration strategies for Craigavon, Portadown and Lurgan are contained within the Craigavon Integrated Development Framework (CIDF). The Banbridge Town Centre Masterplan 2016 sets out the regeneration objectives for Banbridge.

A common thread that runs through the various Masterplans is that our centres lack life, particularly in the evenings, and by invigorating our evening economy we can enrich the town centre experience. The Masterplans acknowledge that the provision and development of an evening economy, that is welcoming to all, should be promoted which would add to the liveliness and vitality of our centres. The various Town Centre Masterplans and Development Strategies for our Borough will inform the LDP process, including the development of planning policy for town centres and retailing.

The Council's Community Plan 2017-2030 'Connected'

The Community Plan includes a number of Long Term and Short Term outcomes that are considered directly relevant to town centres and retailing, including:

- Our Borough is a safe, respectful and peaceful environment – provision of safe and welcoming town centres for people of all walks of life; and
- Our distinctive and vibrant urban and rural areas are at the heart of community and economic life - reflected by City and town centre vacancy rates.

Economy, Community and Place are the three Strategic themes set out in the 'Connected' Community Plan. 'Connected' identifies sustainability as being integral to our quality of life, and as such it is one of the 3 cross cutting themes of Connectivity, Equality and Sustainability that underpins the Community Plan.

The LDP, as the spatial reflection of the Community Plan, will have a pivotal role in the delivery of inclusive, diverse, distinctive and sustainable town centres for our Borough through the provision of appropriate policies and proposals

to secure a town centres first approach to retailing and other main town centre uses.

The Council's Regeneration and Development Strategy (R & DS) 2015-2020

The R&DS builds upon the 3 Strategic priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan: to Prosper the Place, Serve the People and Strengthen our Position; acknowledging that regeneration and development of the Borough is the Council's number 1 priority. The Strategy sets out the Council's framework for achieving very specific goals including:

- becoming the most business orientated council area in Northern Ireland; and
- increasing average tourism spend to equal the highest in Northern Ireland.

Critically, the R&DS identifies a need to review town centre designations for Craigavon Urban Area, Armagh and Banbridge to ensure compact retail centres, in addition to acknowledging the changing role of town centres from retail led to multi-functional.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue ECN 5 (Defining a Hierarchy of Centres)

Option ECN 5A

Identifying a new hierarchy of centres, within settlements based upon the current role and function of our centres, and identify new centres where appropriate.

Justification

Our main City / Town Centres of Armagh City, Banbridge, Central Craigavon, Portadown and Lurgan, represent those shopping and commercial areas that play a significant socio-economic role within our Borough, as important focal points for retail, leisure and business and as transport hubs they provide access to services and facilities.

Also within our Borough there are a number of Local Town centres and other undesignated centres, in addition to a District Centre designated in Legahory, Craigavon, that have a variety of important roles in serving their local communities and a role that is complementary to the functions of our hubs. Our centres vary greatly in terms of their role, function, offering and size due to the different approaches and age of the various extant plans. An example

highlighting the inconsistency across the existing statutory plans is that the AAP 2004 did not designate any Local Town Centres and the CAP 2010 was the only Plan that designated a District Centre. As such, it is considered that the existing Hierarchy of Centres, set out in **Table 7.1** overleaf, does not accurately reflect the role and function of our centres in terms of the retail provision and services that they provide. Therefore these current designations should be reviewed and new ones identified where appropriate.

Table 7.1: Existing Hierarchy of Centres

Hubs: Main City/Towns	The following main City / Towns have designated Town Centres: Armagh City Banbridge Central Craigavon Lurgan Portadown
Local Towns	Currently no Town Centres have been designated for the following Local Towns in the Armagh Area Plan 2004: Keady Markethill Tandragee The following Town Centres have been designated in the Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015: Dromore Gilford Rathfriland Craigavon Area Plan 2010 did not designate any Local Towns.
Villages	There are currently no village centres designated in the Borough.
District/Local Centres	Legahory District Centre is the only District / Local Centre that is designated in the Borough through the Craigavon Area Plan 2010.

Further Consideration

The preferred approach seeks to align with strategic regional direction which requires that the LDP defines a network and hierarchy of centres, in which centres are classified according to their role and function, including City / town centres, district and local centres, in addition to acknowledging the role and function of rural centres. This Hierarchy of Centres should acknowledge the role and function of each of the centres whilst promoting town centres first for retail and other main town centre uses. As such the preferred approach will enable the Council to review our existing Hierarchy

of Centres, and identify new centres where necessary, or make adjustments to existing centres classification to accurately reflect their role and function. The proposed classification for the Hierarchy of Centres is set out in **Table 7.2**. Appropriate thresholds for each tier within the Hierarchy will be clearly set out at Plan Strategy stage.

Furthermore, the preferred approach will assist in defining the purpose and vision of our centres based upon their role, unique characteristics and appropriate growth potential. These will be supported

by policies that identify what types of development are acceptable whilst ensuring that there is a diverse mix of uses on offer. In addition to making adjustments to the classifications of existing centres the preferred approach seeks to identify new Village / District / Local Centres, in appropriate locations, where there is an existing level of service and/or shopping provision which would benefit from being centre designations to serve our local communities and the centre catchment.

Table 7.2 Proposed Classification for the Hierarchy of Centres

Tier	Classification	Example of Role
1	Main Town Centre	May involve such role as: Provides (or has the potential to provide) a broad range of shops, businesses, facilities and services to serve a significant hinterland. It is both the focus for the community and public transport networks.
2	District Centre	May involve such role as: Provides (or has the potential to provide) a range of shops and non-retail service uses (e.g. banks, building societies, restaurants) to serve a hinterland which may include neighbouring villages.
3	Local Centre	May involve such role as: Provides (or has the potential to provide) a small grouping of shops, typically comprising a general grocery store, a sub post office, occasionally a pharmacy and other small shops of a local nature.
4	Village Centre	May involve such role as: Provides (or has the potential to provide) a limited number of shops to serve local needs within a village hinterland.

Alternative Options

Option ECN 5B

Retain the existing Hierarchy of Centres.

By retaining the existing Hierarchy of Centres there would be no opportunity to review the existing centre classifications, which may not reflect the role and function that they provide. Furthermore

by retaining the existing Hierarchy of Centres there would be no opportunity to identify new centres or introduce a consistent approach to centre designation across the Borough.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue ECN 6 (Protecting and Strengthening town centres)

Option ECN 6A

Review and Identify Town Centre Boundaries and Primary Retail Cores, where appropriate, accompanied by policy to protect and strengthen town centres.

Justification

The regional strategic direction in respect of town centres and retailing is to promote town centres as the appropriate first choice locations for retailing and other complementary town centre uses in order to provide a diverse offering and mix of uses to reflect local circumstances. As such the LDP must secure an appropriate balance between the promotion of retail development and enhancing diversity in the range of town centre uses such as employment, residential, cultural and leisure uses.

As previously stated, the existing Statutory Plans are inconsistent in their approach to Town Centre Boundaries and Primary Retail Cores. Therefore the preferred approach will enable the Council to introduce a consistent approach across the Borough. Furthermore, the preferred approach will enable the Council to review the existing Town Centre Boundaries, Primary Retail

Cores and Primary Retail Frontages for our centres and amend where necessary. The Primary Retail Core is the central shopping area within a town centre, designated to control the scale and nature of new development and ensure the continuance of a compact, lively and attractive shopping environment. As such, Primary Retail Cores are generally protected from loss to other functions/uses, with proposals for retail development in city and town centres directed towards the primary retail core in the first instance.

As a result of evolving consumer and lifestyle trends, policy restrictions within the Primary Retail Core may be considered inflexible in certain locations and may result in high levels of vacancy, thereby affecting the vitality and viability of our town centres. By assessing and reviewing the spatial extent and function of our existing Town Centre

Boundaries and Primary Retail Cores, and amending boundaries where necessary, it will ensure that our town centres are equipped to deliver a diverse range of land uses, without prejudicing the core shopping areas or the availability of sufficient land to meet future demand. By providing policy aimed at protecting and strengthening core retail areas, it will not only provide an opportunity to reinforce a town centres first approach for the location of future retailing and other main town centre uses. A retail capacity study of the town centres will inform the extent of the town centre and primary retail core boundaries to determine their need and capacity and will also enable the Council to deliver the correct balance of land use to reflect the unique circumstances of our centres and their vision for the future. The Council's preferred approach to DOSs is considered under Key Issue **ECN 9: Identifying Development Opportunity Sites.**

Alternative Options

Option ECN 6B

Retain existing Town Centre Boundaries and Primary Retail Cores and accompanying policy to protect and strengthen town centres.

By retaining existing Town Centre Boundaries and Primary Retail Cores

(including primary retail frontages) it would not enable any adjustments to be made to the existing boundaries, to reflect the specific circumstances and requirements of our town centres. Furthermore the alternative option would not provide an opportunity to introduce a consistent approach across the Borough

in respect of Town Centre Boundaries and Primary Retail Cores which vary in the extant plans. This option would not allow amendments or a tailored approach to reflect the unique circumstances of each of our Town Centres and Primary Retail Cores.



Preferred Option, for Key Issue ECN 7 (Supporting the evening and night time economy)

Option ECN 7A

Promote town centres as first choice locations for a variety of complementary town centre uses to facilitate growth of the evening and night time economy.

Justification

The prosperity of our town centres are being increasingly driven by customer experience and expectations, however by enticing people to visit for the day, evening and beyond, it will make an invaluable contribution towards our local economy and growth of our Borough. The Council has placed the regeneration and development of the Borough as its number one priority, with 'Tourism Economy' being one of the 9 outcomes of the Councils 'Connected' Community Plan. The Councils Tourism Strategy 'Transform: A Tourism Strategy 2017 -2022' identifies tourism as one of the key sectors which can drive economic growth in Northern Ireland and as such the Vision of the Strategy is for the Borough to be a market leading cultural tourism destination in Ireland by 2022.

How the LDP can support this vision is considered further under **Key Issue ECN 10: Supporting sustainable tourism development**. In response to the challenges faced by the retail sector and with a view to promoting our town centres as spaces offering a wide range of retail, commercial, leisure and social functions it is vital that the evening economy of our town centres is promoted and enhanced. By integrating our town centres day time, evening and night time economies it will better reflect the world around us, which now operates on a 24 hour basis. As such, the LDP has an important role in protecting and enhancing our town centres, so that they are inclusive, distinctive and vibrant; through the promotion of town centres as the appropriate first choice locations for retailing and other complementary uses.

Evidently the extent and nature of the evening and night time economy that is appropriate will vary across our town centres. This offering should capitalise on the centres unique characteristics and customer demand and may include restaurants, bars and hotels in addition to cultural or entertainment venues. The LDP will provide a framework that will enable the Council to develop the evening and night time economy by promoting our town centres as first choice locations for a range of cultural and community facilities, retail, leisure, entertainment and business uses and supports the preferred approach to **Key Issue ECN 10: Supporting Sustainable Tourism Development**.

Alternative Options

No alternative option is being put forward. The Preferred Option ECN 7A is considered the only reasonable approach to supporting the evening economy.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue ECN 8 (Facilitating Office Development (Class A2 Uses))

Option ECN 8A

Bring forward a sequential approach towards Office Development (UCO Use Class A2: Financial, professional and other services) in town centres.

Justification

The LDP has an important role in facilitating and sustaining employment in our Borough, which includes ensuring that there is adequate provision of office accommodation in appropriate locations. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough is strategically located in relation to the regional transport network and benefits from easy rail links to Belfast and Dublin. As such it is considered that the promotion of office space in our town centres, which are at the heart of our transportation networks and are therefore accessible to everyone, is key to establishing thriving and vibrant town

centres and generating employment opportunities. Furthermore, by retaining and enabling office accommodation in our City / town centres, it will contribute towards diversity and the variety of uses on offer, which will encourage additional footfall, therefore assisting growth and resilience of our retail sector and our local economy.

By adopting a sequential approach towards office use (UCO A2: Financial, professional and other services) within our centres, which would require applications for office use to be

considered in order of preference (town centre first, followed by edge of centre and then out of centre locations) it will ensure that the diversity of our town centres is promoted reflecting strategic direction. However as opposed to restricting office development to town centres only, the preferred approach is flexible to ensure that opportunities for office development in circumstances where there is no appropriate site in the town centre, which is reflective of the SPPS.

Alternative Options

Option ECN 8B

Restrict office development (UCO Use Class A2: Financial, Professional and other services) to town centres only.

Adopting this more restrictive approach towards the location of office development may discourage investment

and growth of our economy as this approach would inhibit proposals, when there are no appropriate sites in the town centre but may be satisfactorily accommodated in an edge of town centre location. An overly restrictive approach could compromise the vitality and diversity of our town centres.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue ECN 9 (Identifying Development Opportunity Sites (DOSs))

Option ECN 9A

Review existing Development Opportunity Sites as designated, and identify new DOSs, where appropriate.

Justification

Development Opportunity Sites are designated with a view to promoting and regenerating our town centres, by improving our streetscapes through the closure of frontage gaps, redevelopment of vacant sites and the replacement of unattractive features. The SPPS states that LDPs should also allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and form of retail and other town centre uses (SPPS Para 6.277). It is considered that the successful development of such sites can strengthen the local economy and contribute towards commercial growth of the Borough.

As previously stated, the existing statutory plans are inconsistent in their approach to Development Opportunity Sites; with a number of suitable locations identified in Banbridge, Lurgan and Portadown town centres and none identified in Central Craigavon or Armagh City Centre. In respect of the Development Opportunity Sites that have

been identified by our extant plans there has been varying degrees of uptake, with significant development of designated sites in Lurgan and a lesser uptake of sites in Portadown and Banbridge. The preferred approach will seek to evaluate and review the current Development Opportunity Site designations and also identify additional sites, where appropriate, which are currently under-utilised or vacant that would benefit from redevelopment. It will also enable the Council to adopt a consistent approach towards Development Opportunity Sites across the Borough, by also considering sites within Central Craigavon, Armagh City and the Local Towns.

The preferred approach will also support the Council in establishing a vision for our centres, based upon their unique character, which may assist in determining how specific Development Opportunity Sites may best be used, helping to support the protection

and strengthening of town centres, as considered under **Key Issue ECN 6**. In instances where specific potential uses are identified, the LDP would detail Key Site Requirements to assist and guide developers and ensure the efficient use of land.

Whilst it may be unrealistic to expect that development proposals will come forward for all identified sites, Development Opportunity Sites can contribute towards the regeneration of our town centres and therefore it is essential that deliverable sites are selected. Therefore, in evaluating potential Development Opportunity Sites, the Council will be required to consider a number of factors including accessibility of the site, infrastructure requirements, compatibility with adjacent land uses, constraints (such as flood risk) and whether there is a realistic prospect of development during the Plan period.

Alternative Options

Option ECN 9B

Retain existing Development Opportunity Site (DOSs) as designated.

By retaining existing Development Opportunity Site designations there would be no opportunity to review the sustainability of existing sites

and consider why a number have not been redeveloped. Also, there would be no scope to designate new or alternative sites, with a better prospect of redevelopment. Furthermore, the alternative option would not provide an opportunity to consider potential sites in Armagh City, the Armagh Local Towns and

Central Craigavon, for which there are no current Development Opportunity Site designations.

Questions

17. Do you agree with our proposed classifications for our Hierarchy of Centres?

18. Do you agree with our preferred approach towards Town Centre Boundaries and Primary Retail Cores?

19. Do you consider that the promotion the evening and night time economies will assist in enhancing our town centres?

20. Do you agree that a sequential approach should be taken towards Office Development (Use Class A2: Financial, professional and other services) in our Town Centres?

21. Do you agree our preferred approach to Development Opportunity Sites will assist in the regeneration of our Centres?





Section 7

Economic Theme

Tourism

Key Issue ECN 10 Supporting sustainable tourism development

Background

Tourism is a significant economic driver for Northern Ireland, it generates wealth, jobs, exports, a sense of civic pride and innovation. In 2013, tourism contributed 6.6% to the Northern Ireland economy, equating to £722.1m and supporting

61,000 jobs. (NISRA 2014). The Draft Tourism Strategy 2020 (DfE) document identified nine tourism destinations within Northern Ireland, two of which lie within the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council area, Armagh and

Lough Neagh. Despite this, the tourism industry in the Borough seems to lag behind many other areas within Northern Ireland.



Key Facts

- In 2016, the Borough had the lowest number of overnight trips, 145,000, secured and the lowest expenditure at £26m, on overnight trips of all the NI Local Councils;
- In 2016, the Borough attracted the lowest proportion of overnight stays for holiday/pleasure/leisure purposes and the highest proportion of overnight stays for the purposes of visiting friends and relatives than all the other NI Local Councils;
- In 2016, the Borough had the lowest number of hotel bed spaces and the third lowest number of guest house/bed and breakfast bed spaces in all of the NI Local Councils;
- In 2013, the Borough had 4182 tourism jobs- 6% of the total employee jobs.

Policy Context (Regional and Local)

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035

Promoting a sustainable approach to the provision of tourism infrastructure (RG4) is one of the five elements of regional guidance set out in the RDS aimed at underpinning sustainable economic growth in Northern Ireland. RG4 is aimed at:

- promoting a balanced approach that safeguards tourism infrastructure while benefiting society and the economy;
- improving facilities for tourists in support of Tourist Signature Destinations; and
- encouraging environmentally sustainable tourism development.

The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)

The aim of the SPPS is to manage the provision of sustainable and high quality tourism developments in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment. The Regional Strategic Objectives for tourism are to:

- facilitate sustainable tourism development in an environmentally sensitive manner;
- contribute to the growth of the regional economy by facilitating tourism growth;
- safeguard tourism assets from inappropriate development;
- utilise and develop the tourism potential of settlements by facilitating tourism development of an appropriate nature, location and scale;
- sustain a vibrant rural community by supporting tourism development of an appropriate nature, location and scale in rural areas; and
- ensure a high standard of quality and design for all tourism development.

The SPPS also states that Council's in preparing the LDP should bring forward a tourism strategy, together with appropriate policies and proposals in line with the SPPS, tailored to the specific circumstances of the plan area.

The Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 16 Tourism

PPS 16 sets out the planning policy for tourism development, including the main forms of tourist accommodation and tourist amenities. These tourism policies are complemented by other tourism related planning policies contained within Planning Policy Statement 21 'Sustainable Development in the Countryside' for example Policy CTY 4 (conversion and re-use of an existing building) and CTY 11 (farm diversification) and Planning Policy Statement 4 'Economic Development' for example, Policy PED 4 (redevelopment of an established economic use in the countryside).

The aim of the Planning Policy Statements is to manage the provision of sustainable and high quality tourism developments in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment.

Existing Development Plans

The existing statutory plans relevant to the Borough address tourism as follows:

- The **Armagh Area Plan 2004** and **Armagh Area Plan Alteration No.1 Countryside Proposals** contain no specific policies relating to tourism however reference is made to the Council's Tourism Development Plan, acknowledging that 'Sympathetic consideration will be given to suitably located and designed tourism projects that enhance the tourism potential of the district.' In addition the physical regeneration of the centre of Armagh was identified by the Armagh Area Plan as being essential in developing Armagh tourism potential.
- The **Craigavon Area Plan 2010**, designates the South Lake Zone, which is supported by Policy TOU 1, where favourable consideration will be given to a variety of uses, including proposals for tourism, subject to key site requirements.
- The overall strategy of the **Banbridge / Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015**

(BNMAP) includes the promotion of the development of sustainable tourism. The Plan offers no specific plan policies but acknowledges that towns such as Banbridge and Dromore offer the best locations for new accommodation and facilities to serve signature tourism projects. Development Opportunity Sites have also been identified within towns where tourism and leisure development may be accommodated.

- The **Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan (2010)** refers to the economic and social benefits of tourism, and contains two policies in relation to tourism development:
 - Plan Policy TM1 Tourism Opportunity Zones; and
 - Plan Policy TM2 Design of Tourism Development.

There are however no tourism opportunity zones designated within the area transferred to Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council.

The Council's Community Plan 2017-2030 'Connected'

The 'Tourism Economy' is one of the nine outcomes of our Community Plan. It is the aspiration that we capitalise on the Borough's unique assets and events to become internationally renowned as a destination within NI. The long term outcome of the Community Plan is that:

- Our Borough is the destination of choice for international visitors.

The two short term outcomes are:

- We know and understand our visitors and have established a distinct identity and proposition which we are communicating to international markets; and
- We provide high quality, memorable and unique visitor experiences.

By facilitating appropriate tourism development through specific and appropriate policy these long and short term outcomes can be achieved, thereby benefiting the economy, local wellbeing

and protection of sites of natural and built heritage value.

The Council's Regeneration and Development Strategy (R&DS) 2015-2020

The Council has placed the regeneration and development of the Borough as its number one priority recognising that there is a significant opportunity to develop tourism and identifying that the challenge will be to increase the Borough's tourism sector average spend per visit to equal the highest in NI. The strategy identifies that the Borough needs to offer visitors memorable experiences and outcomes based on an innovative and holistic approach and should link the strong visitor experience to distinctive destinations such as Armagh and Lough Neagh.

Transform: A Tourism Strategy 2017 -2022

In preparing LDPs, the SPPS states that Councils shall bring forward a tourism strategy, together with appropriate policies and proposals. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

published 'Transform, a Tourism Strategy 2017-2022' for the Borough in July 2017. The Tourism Strategy aims to address the underperforming tourism industry in the Borough and identifies tourism as one of the key sectors which can drive economic growth within the Borough. The Strategy also outlines a vision for the Borough with the target of increasing the Borough's tourism economy by 10% annually.

The Strategy contains a series of principles to guide the tourism development of the Borough as it moves towards a growing tourism economy by 2022. A tiered approach to the strategic priorities has been used. Below is the list of Tier 1 initiatives.

- Establish Armagh City as the centrepiece of the destination;
- Develop the apple orchards/cider into an international visitor experience, through investment in the orchards and the creation of food trails and tours;

- Actively pursue appropriate accommodation development opportunities with the private sector;
- Invest in gateway projects of scale at the FE McWilliams Gallery & Studio;
- Package visitor experiences based on the destination's unique stories;
- Focus on the destination's events programme and develop frameworks for Signature events; and
- Ensure a professional approach to marketing, sales and communications

The Tier 2 and Tier 3 initiatives are longer term projects aimed at supporting the Tier 1 priorities and broaden the overall appeal of the Borough including Genealogy and Ancestry, Screen Tourism, Discretionary Business Tourism, Activity Tourism and Gosford Forest Park. The Tier 3 priorities will focus on the research and development of initiatives that may be supported in the longer term.



Preferred Option, for Key Issue ECN 10 (Supporting sustainable tourism development)

Option ECN 10A

Carry forward an approach in line with existing policy and further regional direction to support and facilitate appropriate sustainable tourism development in both settlements and the countryside, with additions that are tailored to meet specific local tourism needs and protect tourism assets within the Borough.

Justification

The SPSS requires the Council, in preparing the LDP, to bring forward a strategy for tourism, together with appropriate policies and proposals that must reflect the aims, objectives and policy approach of the SPSS, tailored to the specific circumstances of the plan area.

The Council intends to bring forward policies in line with the current Policies TSM 1 - TSM 8 within PPS 16 and the tourism related policies contained in PPS 21 (Policies CTY 4, conversion and re-use of an existing building; and CTY 11, farm diversification) and PPS 4 (Policies PED 2, economic development in the countryside; PED 3, expansion of an established economic development use in the countryside; PED 4, redevelopment of an established economic use in the countryside) and regional direction in the SPSS, but with some adjustment to reflect the Council's wider approach to the rural area under other key issues (e.g. rural economic development and design) and to build on the regional direction contained in the SPSS to best reflect local circumstances, where appropriate. The current policy framework has a presumption in favour of tourism development within settlements, subject to meeting general planning requirements.

With the preferred approach, the opportunity to tailor policy to meet an identified local need will be explored. This includes the potential for tourism development beyond the periphery of a settlement limit in exceptional circumstances, where a unique niche attraction has been identified. An example of this is the apple orchards / cider tourism experience as promoted within 'Transform: A Tourism Strategy for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2017 – 2022'.

Such proposals would be required to demonstrate the exceptional benefit to the tourism industry as well as being required to submit a business case to demonstrate that it would result in a sustainable, viable and appropriate form of tourism development. This option would allow for tourism development (outside of farm diversification under Policy CTY 11) which requires a countryside location due to its unique site specific or functional requirements. In these exceptional cases the proposal would also have to be of an appropriate design quality to ensure its sustainability. The opportunity to tailor policy in this way would not only support local tourism but would also ensure the protection of the integrity and viability of our tourism assets through appropriate design,

protection of environmental and historic features and facilitating sustainable growth.

The Council recognises the importance of the tourism sector and the opportunity it provides for economic growth. The LDP is a key tool in facilitating growth of sustainable tourism through the protection of important assets, the creation of attractive accessible places, and supporting good design in tourism schemes. This approach will ensure that development is sustainable, without damaging those assets which are of acknowledged public value upon which tourism depends.

This approach will tie in with Supporting **Sustainable Rural Economic Development (Key Issue ECN 4)** which also supports tourism development especially in relation to the apple orchards / cider tourism experience as set out under rural economic development. It is considered that this approach will support the Council's Tourism Strategy and target of a 10% annual growth in the Borough's tourism economy.

Alternative Options

Option ECN 10B

Retain an approach in line with existing policy in relation to tourism development.

This alternative option would carry forward the existing policies in PPS 16 (TSM 1 – TSM 8) and the tourism-related policies in PPS 21 (Policies CTY 4 and 11) and regional direction in the SPPS. This approach would not provide the

opportunity to tailor tourism policy in relation to local need and facilitate associated sustainable tourism projects. This therefore may stifle growth in the tourism sector within the Borough.

Question

22. Do you agree with our preferred option in relation to sustainable tourism development?



Minerals Development

Key Issue ECN 11 Supporting sustainable minerals development

Background

Minerals are naturally occurring solid and inorganic substances in or under the land, which are ordinarily worked for removal. In planning, the term is used more broadly to include any substance which can be extracted from the ground, except for turf cut for personal use. It includes valuable and precious metals, common rocks, sand and gravel, 'energy minerals' such as lignite and peat, and hydrocarbons that include oil and gas.

Minerals are an important natural resource for the Borough. The main raw materials (crushed rock, sand and gravel) we produce are essential to many forms of development. Other resources such as peat are used in agriculture, as well as providing fuel. The sector makes a significant contribution to the local and wider economy – generating the highest annual value from quarrying of all NI Councils. It is an important employer, with many

more jobs indirectly dependent on the supply of our minerals products, in particular construction and engineering. Securing a steady supply is essential to sustaining economic growth. Some council areas may not have sufficient resources to meet their local needs and so will be dependent on other council areas to achieve this.

Key Facts

- **16** active quarrying sites and **2** other operating sites associated with sand and gravel extraction in Lough Neagh (outside the Borough boundary)¹
- **3.2 million** tonnes (approx.) of aggregates produced each year (13.2% of NI total)²
- **£14.5 million** annual value of quarrying - the highest of all 11 NI Council areas²
- **250** jobs in the quarry industry (5.8% of NI total, 389 NI Council average)²
- **2** Areas of Constraint on Minerals Development (Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Ramsar (Wetland of International Importance) and Montiagh's Moss Nature Reserve (bogland – part Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI))
- Sandstone, limestone, sand and gravel are mainly extracted by the Borough's operators³
- high quality gritstone is a significant local export product, used for road-surfacing²
- a widespread peat resource in raised bogs overlies the Lough Neagh clay geology and glacial tills across northern Co. Armagh³
- a potential gold concentration has been identified across mid-west Co. Armagh, with 2 operators (licensed by DfE) actively prospecting, southwards from Armagh City³
- **55** known abandoned mine workings, associated with historic lead extraction. These are generally small scale and shallow, with the largest concentrations south of Keady Town.³

Sources:

1 Council Local Development Plan Team, October 2017 Consultation Exercise and Desk Study

2 Quarry Products Association Northern Ireland (QPANI);

3 Department for Economy (DfE): Minerals and Petroleum Branch/Geological Survey of Northern Ireland

The restricted location of minerals can present significant challenges. Extraction operations can cause significant adverse impact on wildlife, habitats, overall biodiversity, the water and historic environment. Extraction and related processing can also affect the safety and amenity of those living and working locally, mainly in terms of noise, vibration and dust, with heavy vehicle traffic a significant impact. Increased travel distances brought about by the remote location of some quarries can add significantly to the environmental impact, as well as to road safety concerns. The scale of some extraction can also

result in significant visual intrusion and degradation of landscape. Other problems may result from mining operations such as land instability and subsidence, causing serious risk to life, damage to property and wasteful expenditure of finances and resources on remedial works. The mineral exploration process has much less of an impact than more focussed extraction.

It is important that the LDP recognises the need for minerals extraction and processing, for both the local and wider economy, but not at the expense of the environment and other interests of

acknowledged importance such as public safety and residential amenity. The LDP has a key role to play in facilitating responsible exploitation of these finite natural resources, to secure their long-term conservation. This approach is supported by the NI Executive in its Sustainable Development Strategy (July 2010).



Policy Context (Regional and Local)

Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035

The RDS does not provide specific policy aims and objectives for minerals but does recognise the importance of the rural area in offering opportunities for rural industries and enterprises at appropriate locations where their impact on the environment and important landscapes

are kept to a minimum (SFG 13). The need to conserve, protect and, where possible, enhance built heritage and the natural environment however is a key guiding principle within the RDS (RG 11). This includes distinct and high quality landscape, special areas of protection for wildlife (e.g. Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Ramsar) and important geological and

geomorphological features.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

The essential thrust of the policies in the Planning Strategy for Northern Ireland (PSRNI), referred to next, is reflected in the SPPS i.e. one of balance between the need for mineral resources and the need

to protect and conserve the environment. The main difference between the two documents is the stipulation within the SPPS that there is a presumption against unconventional extraction of hydrocarbon across Northern Ireland until there is sufficient and robust evidence on all environmental impacts. This includes hydraulic fracturing (fracking).

The SPPS has 3 Regional Strategic Objectives for minerals development, to:

- facilitate sustainable minerals development through balancing the need for specific minerals development proposals against the need to safeguard the environment;
- minimise the impacts of minerals development on local communities, landscape quality, built and natural heritage, and the water environment; and
- secure the sustainable and safe restoration, including the appropriate re-use of mineral sites, at the earliest opportunity.

To meet these objectives, the SPPS specifies a number of actions to be applied through LDPs. These are, to:

- ensure that sufficient local supplies of construction aggregates can be made available within the local, and where appropriate, the regional market area and beyond, to meet likely future development needs over the plan period;
- safeguard mineral resources which are of economic or conservation value, and seek to ensure that workable resources are not sterilised by other surface development which would prejudice future exploitation; and
- identify areas which should be protected from minerals development because of their intrinsic landscape, amenity, scientific or heritage value (natural, built or archaeological), where there should be a general presumption against minerals development.

In addition, LDPs may also identify areas most suitable for minerals development within the plan area. Such areas will normally include areas of mineral

reserves where exploitation is likely to have the least impact.

The SPPS does not specifically refer to the issue of land instability in relation to minerals, more so safety and residential amenity considerations particularly associated with blasting operations. The issue is only referred to in relation to Coastal Development (Para. 6.42), where it advises that development will not be permitted in areas known to be at risk of flooding, coastal erosion or land instability.

The Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (PSRNI)

In the absence of a Planning Policy Statement, the PSRNI provides the current operational planning policies for the control of minerals development. It recognises the need to facilitate minerals development while also affording protection to the environment and other interests. The policies cover Environmental Protection (MIN 1); Visual Implications (MIN 2); Areas of Constraint (MIN 3); Valuable Minerals (MIN 4); Mineral Reserves (MIN 5); Safety and Amenity (MIN 6); Traffic (MIN 7); and Restoration (MIN 8).

PSRNI Policy PSU 10 addresses the wider issue of Development at Risk – including that affected by land instability. It places a presumption against development in areas known to be at serious risk from instability or that would as a result of a proposed development present a risk elsewhere and where concerns associated with this cannot be overcome. Whilst not expressly referred to in the policy, this could include subsidence or landslides caused by abandoned mines or current mining operations. Policy PSU 10 has been superseded by Revised PPS 15 (Planning and Flood Risk) insofar as it relates to flooding.

Minerals developments also currently need to respect the environmental policies contained in Planning Policy Statement 2 (Natural Heritage) and 6 (Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage) where appropriate.

Existing Development Plans

The existing Statutory Plans across the Borough address the issue of Minerals Development as follows:

The **Armagh Area Plan (AAP) 2004** and **AAP Alteration 1 (Countryside Proposals)** do not designate any Areas of Constraint on Mineral Development (ACMDs), but provide direction for minerals development applications in relation to the protection of the environment including protected areas (Nature Reserves, Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs) and archaeology), residential amenity, traffic generation, protection of mineral reserves and the rehabilitation of sites. The Borough's only Area of Significant Archaeological Interest (ASAI) is located at Navan, west of Armagh.

The **Banbridge / Newry and Mourne Area Plan (BNMAP) 2015** does not contain any mineral policies or designate any ACMDs – the PSRNI policies and SPPS direction apply.

The **Craigavon Area Plan (CAP) 2010** designates 2 ACMDs in Policy MIN 1 around the Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Ramsar area (Internationally Important Wetland) and Montiagh's Moss Nature Reserve (part SAC and ASSI) but does not contain any specific mineral policies – PSRNI policies and SPPS direction continue to apply. CAP 2010 also contains a policy on Hydrocarbon Exploration (MIN 2), for oil or gas, which allows each case to be treated on its merits. However the provisions of the SPPS in relation to hydrocarbon exploitation now take precedence over this plan policy. See SPPS Section.

The **Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan (DSTAP) 2010** (which relates to the County Armagh portion of the former DST Borough Council area) designates 1 ACMD in our Borough (Policy MN 1), south-west of Lough Neagh (within the boundary of the Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Ramsar area as in CAP 2010). DSTAP also has a Hydrocarbon Exploration Policy (MN 3), for oil and gas. Again, the provisions of the SPPS, in relation to hydrocarbon exploitation, now take precedence over this plan policy.

ACMDs are designated in order to safeguard the most valuable and vulnerable areas and features of the environment from the detrimental effects of mineral extraction. Their designation

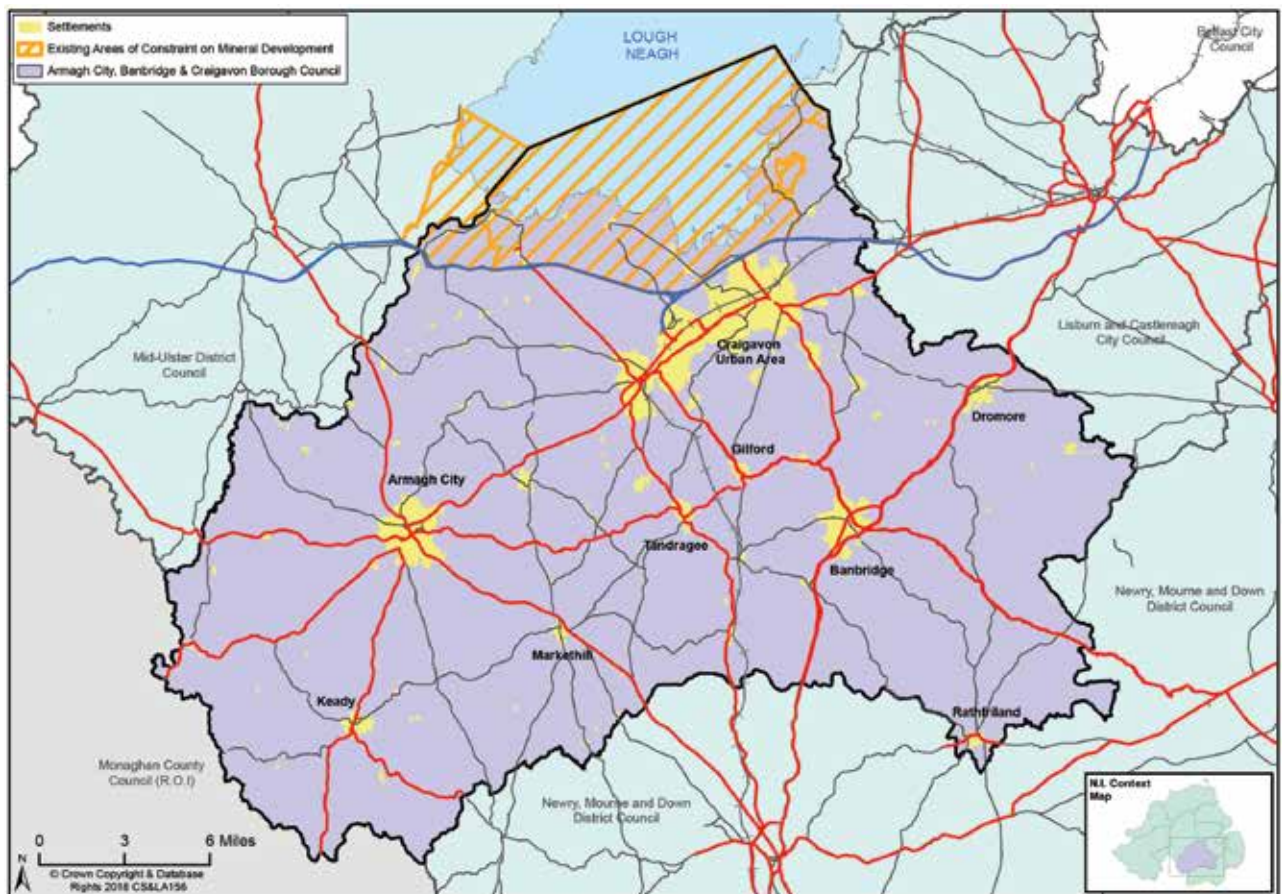
takes account of nature conservation and earth science interest, archaeological and built heritage, landscape quality and character and visual prominence.

Our existing 2 ACMDs relate to important Ramsar (International), European (SAC) and National (ASSI) Natural Heritage Designations within and south of Lough Neagh. The Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Ramsar ACMD is across 2 Plans but counted as 1). These are shown in **Map 7.4** below.

The Council's Community Plan 2017-2030, 'Connected'

The Community Plan makes no specific mention of minerals development, however under the cross-cutting theme of 'Sustainability' it seeks to improve everyone's quality of life economically, environmentally and socially, without compromising future generations' ability to develop, grow and flourish. Under 1 of the Plan's 9 long term outcomes, a 'Revitalised Place', it is acknowledged that the rural character across the Borough must be preserved and developed for everyone to enjoy.

Map 7.4 Existing Areas of Constraint on Mineral Development (ACMDs)



Preferred Option, for Key Issue ECN 11 (Supporting sustainable minerals development)

Option ECN 11A

Support a balanced approach between the need for mineral resources and the need to protect the environment and other interests of acknowledged importance, in line with existing policies and further regional direction, by designating Mineral Safeguarding Zones (MSZs) and Areas of Constraint on Minerals Development (ACMDs) where appropriate.

Justification

This preferred approach is in line with existing policies (PSRNI, MIN 1-8 and PSU 10) and, of all 3 options, it best reflects regional direction in the SPPS, in terms of striking an appropriate balance between the need for minerals extraction and the need to protect and conserve the environment. It encourages a locally tailored approach that supports the local supply chain long-term, but in a manner that is sustainable and that minimises negative impact on local communities. It allows for mineral reserves to be identified for exploitation; valuable resources to be safeguarded within designated **Mineral Safeguarding Zones**; and the Borough's most sensitive environments to be protected in designated **Areas of Constraint on Minerals Development**. It sets a criteria-based framework to manage development across the different areas, which will be in-line with the existing policy framework but updated to reflect the SPPS, the Borough's particular resources, constraints and circumstances.

The 3 elements of the preferred approach (referred to in the Justification) are explained further as follows:

Mineral Safeguarding Zones (MSZs) would be used, in this option, to protect mineral resources of economic or conservation value. These could be designated around certain mineral deposits to ensure their long-term conservation. These could also be used to ensure that workable mineral resources are not sterilised by other surface development.

Regional direction in the SPPS introduces a conservation value element, in terms of the safeguarding of mineral resources, which goes further than the existing PSRNI Policy MIN 5 which controls surface development which would prejudice future exploitation of valuable mineral reserves i.e. those of particular value to the economy e.g. lignite (as listed). The need to identify MSZs would be informed by a review of minerals workings as well as more detailed information on mineral resources to be made available by Geological Survey (GSNI) and Minerals Petroleum Branch (MPB). The new policy wording relating to MSZs should broadly set out what types of mineral resources,

or deposits areas, would likely warrant protection.

Areas of Constraint on Minerals Development (ACMDs), as currently covered by Policy MIN 3 (PSRNI) and supported in the SPPS, are used in 2 of the 4 existing Area Plans (as shown earlier in **Map 7.4**). Similar designations could be introduced in the LDP to give added protection in areas of special landscape, environmental, amenity, scientific or heritage value (including natural, archaeological and built assets). These areas can also be of particular tourism value.

There would be a presumption against the granting of permission for the extraction and/or processing of minerals in ACMDs, however exceptions may be made for short-term extraction (as conditioned in planning permissions) where there is a specific need and where the environmental implications are not significant. On-site processing of the excavated material is unlikely to be acceptable. The policy however could be tailored to take account of existing enterprises and extraction workings in the area, as appropriate.

The existing 2 ACMDs would be reviewed and new areas could be designated in the LDP, with evidence-based justification. This review would include consideration of mineral reserves. It would also take account of any **sensitive landscapes** (including any new proposed designations as considered in **Key Issue ENV 4**) or other sites in need of safeguarding, as well as Priority Habitats and Species for conservation action. Certain areas might be considered at particular risk from minerals development. A review of the current ACMDs could also help address any inconsistency in approach across the existing Area Plans.

Development Management: Suitable policies would be adopted to manage development in both ACMDs and MSZs. Development proposals would otherwise be considered against set criteria, to ensure that permitted operations do not have an unacceptable impact. These would cover a broad range of issues including the impact on the natural environment and on built heritage, visual impact, road safety, public safety, residential amenity as well as restoration proposals. These will be

in line with the existing PSRNI Policies MIN 1-8 but updated to reflect the provisions of the SPPS and the Borough's particular resources, constraints and circumstances. New evidence and further engagement with consultation bodies and stakeholders will also be taken into account.

The criteria for applications would be broadened to include land stability and subsidence issues. This would reflect a similar approach to the existing Policy PSU 10 (Development at Risk), which employs a presumption against development either known to be at serious risk of instability or that would itself cause risk to neighbouring areas. The Borough has 55 known abandoned mine workings, the majority of which have vertical shafts. The underground voids can create land instability. This is an important safety issue (over and above PSRNI Policy MIN 6 – Safety and Amenity) and it therefore makes sense to carry forward a similar approach as in PSU 10, but better tied in with minerals development. A suitable policy test would ensure that development over affected areas would only be carried out

after adequate assessments have been completed to ensure public safety.

The new policy would ensure a broad examination of proposals, with greater consideration to be given to the locational impact of operations, in particular from transport, as well as to phasing, the management of extractive waste and after use, and the cumulative effects of multiple impacts from individual and/or a number of local sites. High standards of restoration should be sought at the earliest opportunity, for the benefit of the environment and local communities.

Alternative Options

Option ECN 11B

Continue an approach whereby minerals development proposals are considered on their merits against criteria based policy in line with existing policies and further regional direction – with review of the Borough's existing 2 Areas of Constraint on Minerals Development (ACMDs). This approach will identify new Mineral Safeguarding Zones (MSZs) where appropriate.

The proposed difference with Preferred Option ECN 11A is that the Borough's existing 2 Areas of Constraint on Mineral Developments (ACMDs) would be reviewed only – with no new ACMDs to be introduced. This would limit the blanket presumption against minerals development across the Borough somewhat, thus maximising new growth opportunities and consequently the wider economic benefits, where proposals meet

set criteria (as in Preferred Option ECN 11A).

Review of the existing 2 ACMDs (with revision of their boundaries where appropriate) would give flexibility to consider potential new growth opportunities within these areas, that may be identified as a result of new information made available by GSNI / MPB (DfE) on local mineral resources. It however would not allow for new ACMDs to be identified elsewhere, where evidence would support them. General criteria for development proposals alone may not offer the same level of protection to certain sensitive areas as an ACMD designation would. Reviewing the existing ACMDs, without identifying new ones, may therefore not be reflective of the Borough's updated minerals resource picture. This would not be in keeping with the SPPS direction and would not

help address any previous inconsistency in approach across the existing Area Plans.

Option ECN 11C

Constrain further minerals development and growth opportunities, through a more restrictive approach than the existing policies and further regional direction, in the interests of the environment.

This option proposes greater control of minerals development. It recognises the significant detrimental impact the industry can have on the environment. Our countryside (including Lough Neagh) contains many distinctive landscapes and areas of significant environmental quality and conservation value including those protected by international, national / regional and local environmental designations (as listed in **Key Issues ENV 1-3**), as well as other vulnerable habitats

and species. This includes areas of peatland. It is important that natural resources are protected from excessive, inappropriate or obtrusive development and from the actual or potential effects of pollution, as directed by the SPPS.

Initial evidence gathering suggests that there are no active quarries (excluding any peat extraction) in the Borough's existing Areas of Constraint on Minerals Development (ACMDs) – only 2 processing/storage sites associated with sand and gravel extraction on Lough

Neagh. A more restrictive approach suggested by this alternative option, either through more areas of constraint or more stringent policy tests, may therefore impact on growth opportunities and the Borough's ability to maintain a long term supply of construction aggregates to the local market as directed by the SPPS. This could have a negative economic impact overall.

Notes:

Evidence Gathering

Further evidence gathering and engagement with consultation bodies and key stakeholders is required through the LDP-making process, to ensure that future policies and proposals are informed by as an accurate and up-to-date picture of the Borough's mineral resources as possible, in addition to mineral workings (active, inactive and abandoned), related industries, constraints and any other relevant considerations.

Groundwater Abstraction

Groundwater is a valuable natural resource that requires careful protection, but it is also an important water source to support economic development and growth. Groundwater is currently abstracted from a number of aquifers within the Borough by a range of industries, businesses, farms and isolated properties not served by mains water,

as well as for some public water supply. This is regulated by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), with all abstractions of groundwater over 20 cubic metres per day requiring an abstraction licence. Extracting water for the purposes of agriculture, by engineering operation, can be permitted development (without the need for planning permission).

The Department for Economy (DfE) indicates that our Borough contains the most regionally significant aquifers in Northern Ireland, and the overall prospects for further groundwater abstraction within the Borough are significant. It is important however that it is used sustainably. From a planning point of view, it is important that land remains available for groundwater abstraction to ensure the resource remains accessible. Some aquifers are understood to lie below current zoned

economic development land.

Issues around groundwater abstraction will be considered further ahead of the Draft Plan Strategy (and further on at Local Policies Plan Stage), in consultation with relevant consultation bodies, to help determine the appropriate approach in the LDP, both in terms of detailed policy and related land-use proposals.

Question

23. Do you agree with our preferred approach to minerals development?

Infrastructure, Telecommunications and Utilities

Key Issue ECN 12 Facilitating sustainable infrastructure, telecommunications and utilities development to meet the needs of the Borough

This section will consider the Council's preferred approach to telecommunications, sewerage treatment works, water sources and supply, electricity and gas generation/provisions.

Background

In 2016, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council area had **99.7%** compliance with water quality standards at customer taps (which met the overall 2016 Northern Ireland compliance target of 99.7%).

Source: NI Water, Drinking Water Quality Annual Report 2016

79% of households have Home Internet Access (2016).

Source: NISRA

Within the Borough there are:

- **4** Natural Water Sources
- **28** Service Reservoirs
- **4** Water Treatment Works
- **59** Waste Water Treatment Works



The provision of modern and reliable infrastructure is essential for supporting all aspects of contemporary life and is integral to the sustainable growth of our Borough. Not only is it critical to the quality of life of our citizens, but it is also necessary for creating and maintaining networks and connectivity to support development and encourage investment in our Borough.

Telecommunications

Telecommunication enables the exchange of information and as such is an essential component of everyday life, whether working, living or visiting the Borough. Therefore it is essential that the Borough maintains and improves upon its existing telecommunication infrastructure to allow all its citizens to stay connected on a local, regional and global scale.

Whilst 4G broadband connectivity is the fastest mobile connection available, 3G coverage remains the most common broadband connection throughout our Borough. In order to ensure that our economy is competitive and attractive to investment, it is vital that reliable access to high speed digital infrastructure is available, so that local businesses can grow to achieve their market potential. Furthermore, access to reliable broadband is important for social inclusion and well-being, given the increasing reliance on the internet to access information and services. Our Borough benefits from having direct access to Project Kelvin, with two points of presence (POPs) located within Armagh City and Portadown. This project provides our Borough with a direct international link to the fastest data transfer between North America and Mainland Europe.

Electricity

Our power lines, overhead cables and their associated structures provide our Borough with essential power to allow the day to day running of our homes and businesses. The provision of resilient and efficient electricity provision is therefore essential for growth of our economy and is vital for attracting investment. The current Cross-Border electricity network Interconnection is the main North-South interconnector between Tandragee and

Louth, which is being used to trade electricity between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. However, to limit the occurrence of widespread power failure, the capacity of the North-South interconnector is restricted, to a level that is below demand. The proposed new North South interconnector, a second higher capacity interconnector which involves the addition of a new 400 kV overhead line, is aimed at improving the efficiency and capacity of the electricity distribution network.

Gas

Natural gas is an efficient, clean and reliable source of energy for which there is growing demand. The Borough benefits from the provision of natural gas due to the roll out of the gas distribution network to Armagh City, Banbridge Town and the Craigavon Urban Area. Firmus, a subsidiary of Bord Gáis Éireann (BGE), is engaged in work to develop the gas market outside Greater Belfast along the routes of the North-West gas transmission pipeline, which was completed in November 2004, and the South-North gas transmission pipeline, which was completed in October 2006. A new scheme entitled 'Gas to the West' was approved in April 2017, which extends the existing North/South pipeline from Portadown (Derryhale Gas Spur) to Dungannon and beyond.

The availability of this energy source within our Borough, will enable growth of our Borough by addressing the competitive advantage which natural gas has provided to other areas. Furthermore, the provision of natural gas will assist in delivering a more diverse and secure energy supply for our Borough.

Water and Sewerage

The provision and ongoing maintenance of adequate and reliable water and sewerage infrastructure and treatment facilities is essential for our health and wellbeing, quality of life, protection of our environment and also our economy, by facilitating growth and new development. The provision of water supply and sewage treatment facilities are the responsibility of Northern Ireland Water (NI Water) which supply over 99% of the Northern

Ireland population, with the remainder being sourced privately. The Borough's water supply is derived from a variety of sources and the existing installations are forecast to be sufficient to supply the Borough throughout the plan period. Whilst it is envisaged that there is sufficient water supply within our Borough, there are a number of rural Waste Water Treatment Works (WwTWs) affected by capacity constraints, which may have implications for potential settlement growth.

In considering the Borough's allocation of 19,850 dwellings over the plan period (2015-2030) as referred to within the **Spatial Growth Strategy (Section 5)**, it will be important to consider the capacity of the existing sewage network. In this regard, the LDP will be informed through consultation with NI Water, in order to determine locations where new / upgraded Waste Water Treatment Works may be needed and ensure that there is adequate provision and / or capacity to facilitate sustainable development economic and housing growth. The LDP has an important role in facilitating our utilities infrastructure so that it is efficient and resilient and also capable of accommodating current and future demand, but not to the detriment of our environment or amenity.

Policy Context (Regional and Local)

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035

The RDS establishes a clear vision, aim and objectives regarding telecommunications, infrastructure and utilities which are summarised as follows:

In respect of telecommunications, the RDS seeks a balanced approach to telecommunication infrastructure that will give a competitive edge (RG3), acknowledging that due to the nature of the fast moving market it is important to continually improve international and internal connectivity. The RDS also recognises in its Spatial Framework Guidance (SFG) that rural areas can be disadvantaged by their remote location and it is essential that they have access to services and important information technologies (SFG14). One of the key aims in respect of telecommunications is to improve services in rural areas to minimise rural/ urban imbalance.

In respect to infrastructure and utilities, the RDS aims to deliver a sustainable and secure energy supply through the provision of new gas infrastructure and storage provision which will both enhance the diversity of energy supply and improve the security and reliability of future gas supply (RG5). Furthermore, the RDS aims to promote a more sustainable approach to the provision of water and sewerage services, acknowledging that changes in population distribution, household formation, urban development, and lifestyle changes has resulted in increasing pressure on our water resources (RG12). The RDS also requires that due consideration is given to the future capacity of water, sewerage and waste treatment infrastructure to ensure that they are capable of accommodating future growth. The key aims regarding water and sewerage include the integration of water and land-use planning, management of future water demand and sustainable surface water management.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)

The SPPS acknowledges that the provision of a modern telecommunications network

is an essential and beneficial element of everyday living and is vital for sustainable economic growth. As such the aim of the SPPS in regards to telecommunications and other utilities is to facilitate the development of infrastructure in an efficient and effective manner whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. The SPPS acknowledges that planning has an important role in addressing existing or potential barriers to sustainable development, including the growth capacity of our water and sewerage infrastructure.

The Regional Strategic Objectives for telecommunications and other utilities are to:

- ensure that where appropriate new telecommunications development is accommodated by mast and site sharing;
- ensure that the visual and environmental impact of telecommunications is kept to a minimum;
- minimise, as far as practicable, undue interference that may be caused to radio spectrum users (for example mobile phone services, media broadcasting and wireless broadband services) by new telecommunications development; and
- encourage appropriate provision for telecommunications systems in the design of other forms of development.

In seeking to meet these objectives, the SPPS specifies that the LDP should bring forward policies which set out detailed criteria for consideration of new telecommunications development in its area including siting, design and impact upon visual amenity. Furthermore, the SPPS also directs that in certain circumstances, the LDP may allocate specific sites for major new telecommunications development, subject to technical limitations on location and siting. In specific regard to power lines, the SPPS directs that proposals for the development of new power lines should comply with the 1998 International Commission on Non-

Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), the main objective of which is to minimise the exposure to electric, magnetic and electromagnetic fields in order to provide protection against known adverse health impacts. Additionally, such proposals will be considered with regard to potential impact on amenity and should, where appropriate, avoid areas of high landscape sensitivity.

'Sustainable Water – A Long Term Water Strategy for Northern Ireland' 2015 – 2040 (DfI)

'Sustainable Water – A Long Term Water Strategy for Northern Ireland' acknowledges that water is essential to life, but can cause widespread damage if not managed appropriately. As the responsibility for the water sector is spread across a number of Government Departments, the strategy seeks to deliver a more joined up approach, setting out a range of initiatives to deliver the Executives long term goal of a sustainable water sector in Northern Ireland. The Strategy intends to achieve this by encouraging a sustainable and integrated approach to managing all our different water needs in a way which promotes regional development, without compromising the environment or increasing flood risk.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 10: Telecommunications

PPS 10 sets out a range of policies in relation to telecommunications. It embodies the Government's commitment to facilitate the growth of new and existing telecommunications systems whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. It also addresses health issues associated with telecommunications development.

The policy objectives of PPS 10 are to:

- facilitate the continuing development of telecommunications infrastructure in an efficient and effective manner;
- ensure that where appropriate new telecommunications development is accommodated by mast and site sharing;
- ensure that the visual and

environmental impact of telecommunications development is kept to a minimum;

- minimise, as far as practicable, undue interference that may be caused to terrestrial television broadcasting services by new development; and encourage appropriate provision for telecommunications systems in the design of other forms of development.

It is important to note that Policy TEL 2 'Development and Interference with Television Broadcasting Services' of PPS 10 is no longer an operational policy due to the switch over from terrestrial television to digital television.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 11:

Planning and Waste Management

PPS 11 sets out a range of policies for the development of waste management facilities, including Waste Water Treatment Works (WwTWs), acknowledging that such facilities have the potential to have a significant impact on the environment and on the amenity of local communities due to their nature and scale.

The policy objectives of PPS 11 are to:

- promote the development, in appropriate locations, of waste management facilities that offer the BPEO* in meeting need as identified by the relevant WMP, or as demonstrated to the Department's satisfaction in the case of waste water treatment works (WwTWs);
- ensure that detrimental effects on people, the environment, and local amenity associated with waste management facilities are avoided or minimised; and
- secure appropriate restoration of proposed waste management sites for agreed after-uses.

* the Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) is no longer treated as a material consideration in the waste planning process following the recommendations of the Revised Waste Management Strategy 'Delivering Resource Efficiency' (2013).



Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside

PPS 21 sets out a range of planning policies for development in the countryside, acknowledging that over-development in the open countryside would have the potential to bring with it significant environmental, financial and social costs. In particular PPS 21, recognises that water is one of our most vital resources as it is essential to sustain life, economic development and our social well-being.

Furthermore PPS 21 acknowledges that our water resource is vulnerable to pollution if not managed in a sustainable way, recognising that new development relying on non-mains sewerage may increase the risk of groundwater pollution and adversely affect the ecology and chemical quality of the water environment. As such, PPS 21 directs that development relying on non-mains sewerage will only be acceptable were it does not create or add to a pollution problem (Policy CTY 16: Development relying on non-mains sewerage).

The Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (PSRNI)

The PSRNI acknowledges that roads,

and electricity generation can all be of vital importance not only to industry and commerce but to the quality of life of society as a whole. However, due to their scale and nature many such projects can have a significant impact on the environment and on the amenity of local communities.

Policy PSU 8 'New Infrastructure' addresses the need for new infrastructure, including extensions to existing facilities, and includes criteria against which such proposals will be considered.

PSU 11 'Overhead Cables' sets out the planning policy for overhead cables development and embodies the Government's commitment to facilitate the development of such infrastructure in an efficient and effective manner whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. As such, PSU 11 aims to control the siting of electricity power lines and other overhead cables, focusing on the visual impact that they may have on the environment and in particular on designated areas of landscape and townscape value.

Existing Development Plans

The existing Plans in our Borough are

Armagh Area Plan (AAP) 2004, Craigavon Area Plan (CAP) 2010, Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan (BNMAP) 2015 and Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan (DSTAP) 2010. Whilst the statutory plans do not include any specific policies in relation to this topic, both the Craigavon and the Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plans refer to Planning Policy Statement 10 for further direction and guidance in respect of telecommunication proposals.

The Council's Community Plan 2017- 2030, 'Connected'

'Connected' identifies connectivity as being integral to improving our quality of life, and as such it is one of the three cross cutting themes of Connectivity, Equality and Sustainability that underpins the Community Plan. In order to reflect this, the Community Plan seeks to *'transform and connect all areas of our Borough physically, digitally and socially through shared collaborative approaches.'* The Connectivity outcome aims to connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure.

The Community Plan also acknowledges the need to identify solutions for our infrastructure requirements to attract higher levels of investment and ensure that the Borough is an enticing, collaborative and supportive environment for business start-ups, growth and innovation. Sustainability is also recognised as a cross cutting theme within the Community Plan, which recognises the importance of protecting the environment alongside providing adequate infrastructure to support the economy, our community and to provide an appealing place to live and work.

The LDP, as the spatial reflection of the Community Plan, will have a pivotal role in balancing protection of the environment with enabling the delivery of a modern, reliable telecommunications, infrastructure and utilities network to improve connectivity, encourage economic growth and improve our quality of life.

The Council's Regeneration and Development Strategy (R&DS) 2015-2020

The R&DS builds upon the three Strategic priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan: to Prosper the Place, Serve the People and Strengthen our Position; acknowledging that regeneration and development of the Borough is the Council's number 1 priority. The Strategy recognises the importance of establishing a clear, strategic direction for the Borough in supporting and developing the local economy and is driven by the ambition of the new Council to be the foremost local authority with respect to economic regeneration, business creation and development. The strategy also makes specific reference to the challenges of poor physical and broadband connectivity in rural areas of our Borough. The LDP has an important role in assisting the Council in the delivery of the R&DS, by providing the planning policy framework against which infrastructure, telecommunication and utility development is considered to encourage sustainable development in our Borough.

'Physical infrastructure for high-speed communications networks' Building Control Regulations (NI) 2012 - Technical Booklet M (Jan 2017)

Following the publication of new building control requirements (Part

M of new NI Building Regs: 77(a) and 77(b)), there is a requirement that all new development should be provided with physical infrastructure (holes and ducts) to accommodate a high-speed electronic communications network. This requirement will ensure that all new development has necessary infrastructure in place to allow supply of high speed broadband, when it is commercially viable to do so.

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council – Research on Rural Broadband Provision

Whilst broadband connectivity is a critical requirement for economic development and social inclusion, it has long been recognised as an issue that can negatively impact upon rural communities, including growth of local businesses. As such research, commissioned by the Council, has been undertaken across four rural areas in the Borough to identify current levels of broadband provision and identify potential solutions that could be implemented to improve rural broadband provision.

Preferred Option, for Key issue ECN 12: Facilitating sustainable infrastructure, telecommunications and utilities development to meet the needs of the Borough

Option ECN 12A

Providing a criteria based policy in-line with existing policies and regional direction.

Justification

The provision of a reliable and modern infrastructure, telecommunications and utilities network is not only crucial to everyday living and our quality of life, but it is also essential to support sustainable growth and encourage investment in our Borough. As this sector continues to grow, so shall the requirements and demand for further, high quality infrastructure to meet our social and economic needs. The LDP has an important role in facilitating the provision of modern and efficient infrastructure, telecommunications and utilities network whilst managing any potential negative impacts on **sensitive landscapes** (including any new proposed designations as considered in **Key Issue ENV 4**) or other built heritage and environmental assets in need of safeguarding (as referred to in **Key Issues ENV 1, ENV 2, ENV 3, ENV 5 and ENV 6**).

This preferred option would seek to bring forward a criteria based approach towards infrastructure, telecommunications and utilities development that is in line with the existing planning policies in PPS 10 (Telecommunications), PPS 11 (Waste Management), PPS 21 (re. non-mains sewerage) and PSRNI (PSU 8 and 11). However the policy wording would be

updated to reflect regional direction in the SPPS and ensure that such infrastructure is developed in an efficient and effective manner, whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum.

In respect of **telecommunications**, policy wording would be updated to ensure that undue interference that may be caused to mobile phone services, media broadcasting and wireless broadband services by new telecommunications development is minimised as far as practicable, so to align with regional direction of the SPPS. Furthermore the preferred approach would provide an opportunity to ensure that our telecommunications policy reflects modern technologies, particularly following the switch over from terrestrial television to digital television, and that it is capable of adapting to future technologies as they emerge.

In respect of **infrastructure and utilities**, the preferred approach would seek to update policy wording to ensure that the development of new power lines comply with the 1998 International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) to minimise the exposure to electric, magnetic and electromagnetic

fields in order to provide protection against known adverse health impacts. Also any references towards Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) would be removed from policy wording in accordance with the recommendations of the Revised Waste Management Strategy 'Delivering Resource Efficiency' (2013). The preferred approach would also seek to tailor the LDP to meet the specific needs of the Borough through allocating specific sites for major new telecommunications development, subject to criteria, which may be required over the plan period. By identifying such sites, it will both align with regional direction in the SPPS and assist in the delivery of the Council's commitment to identifying solutions for our infrastructure requirements in order to ensure that the Borough is an enticing environment for investment. Furthermore, due consideration will also be given to the future capacity of water, sewerage and waste treatment infrastructure when zoning land for development to ensure that they are capable of accommodating future growth.

The issues experienced in our Borough in respect of limited rural broadband connectivity, as identified by both the

Council's Rural Broadband Research and Regeneration and Development Strategy, is an issue that is increasingly impacting upon our economic and social well-being. The preferred approach will seek to provide a clear and robust policy framework that will support investment in our telecommunications infrastructure, so

that our rural broadband deficiencies can be addressed as viable solutions become available.

The preferred approach will enable the Council to bring forward and update the existing relevant policies and guidance to create a criteria based policy which will

balance amenity and environment issues with facilitating sustainable development to meet the Borough's present and future needs.

Alternative Options

No alternative options are being put forward. By reflecting the updated regional direction in the SPPS in relation to infrastructure, telecommunications and utilities development the Preferred Option 12A is considered the only reasonable approach in the LDP.

Question

24. Do you agree with our preferred approach to facilitate sustainable infrastructure, telecommunications and utilities development within our Borough?

Transportation

Key Issue ECN 13 Protecting the Borough's Protected Routes

Key Issue ECN 14 Protecting proposed Strategic Road Improvement Schemes

Key Issue ECN 15 Protecting the Borough's Disused Transport Routes

Key Issue ECN 16 Protecting Key Park and Ride Sites

Key Issue ECN 17 Promoting Active Travel and Sustainable Transport

Key Issue ECN 18 Promoting and enhancing access to greenways



Note:

Although Car Parking has not been identified as a Key Issue, it remains the responsibility of the Council to ensure that there is adequate and sufficient off-street car parking provision (including spaces for people with disabilities, and parent and child parking spaces) within our town centres. An Off-Street Car Parking Study is currently being undertaken by the Council which will make recommendations based on the current car parking provision within our Borough. The findings of the Off-Street Car Parking Study will inform the LDP process, including the development of planning policy for transportation.

Background

Transportation makes a vital contribution towards sustainable development; enabling the movement of people, providing access to services and facilities and also allowing the efficient distribution of goods. As such the provision of an adequate, well connected transportation system and associated infrastructure is essential to the daily functioning of our Borough. Although there are more travel options than ever before, society remains highly dependent on the private car as our main mode of transport. Within our Borough approximately 24% of the population reside in the rural area, parts of which are

remote and therefore convenient access to public transport is not always readily available. As such the private car will remain the primary form of transport for a significant proportion of rural dwellers and complementary measures aimed at reducing the need to travel long distances to access services and facilities may be required. Therefore the Council has an important role, supported by government policy, in improving connectivity and promoting more sustainable patterns of transport and travel.

In order to deliver an accessible and equitable sustainable transportation

network for our Borough, and to enable a modal shift from private car usage to public transport, cycling and walking, improved integration between transportation and land use is essential.

The challenge of the LDP process in respect of transportation is to deliver a modern transportation system that meets wider economic and social needs, while limiting environmental impacts and reducing our consumption of fossil fuels but not to the detriment of the rural population.

Policy Context (Regional and Local)

The Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)

The vision of the RDS in respect of regional transportation is 'to have a modern, sustainable and safe transportation system which benefits society, the economy and the environment and which actively contributes to social inclusion and everyone's quality of life.'

Regional Guidance 2 (RG2) 'Deliver a balanced approach to transport Infrastructure' acknowledges that to remain competitive in the global market, it is important to continue to promote transport which balances the needs of our environment, society and economy. Examples of how this may be achieved includes improving connectivity, maximising the potential of the Regional Strategic Transport Network, utilising road space and railways more efficiently and improving access to our cities and towns. The RDS acknowledges that the way existing transport is used needs to be addressed in order to favour modes of transport that allow reduction of Northern Ireland's carbon footprint.

The Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) 2002-2012

The purpose of the Regional Transportation Strategy is to support the RDS by identifying strategic

transportation investment priorities in addition to considering the affordability of planned initiatives. The RTS signalled a move away from a transport system that is dominated by car use towards a more balanced and integrated system that promotes walking, cycling and public transport. A review of the RTS led to the publication of 'Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future- A New Approach to Regional Transportation', a document that sets out how the Department for Regional Development (now the Department for Infrastructure) aims to develop regional transportation and in particular future decisions on investment.

Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (RSTN TP) 2015

The purpose of the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan is to plan the maintenance, management and development of the NI Strategic Transport Network up to the end of 2015. It comprises the complete rail network, 5 Key Transport Corridors (2 of which travel through the Borough), 4 link corridors, Belfast Metropolitan Transport Corridors and the remainder of the trunk road networks. It also identifies a cross border route between Armagh and Monaghan and takes a realistic view of possible investment.

Sub Regional Transport Plan (SRTTP) 2015

In line with the strategic initiatives of the Regional Transportation Strategy, the Sub Regional Transport Plan identifies a wide range of public transport improvements for the whole of Northern Ireland.

Measures that are identified in the Plan include walking and cycling networks, improvements to public transport, traffic and congestion management schemes and Transport Programme for People with Disabilities (TPPD), which funds door-to-door accessible transport services for people with disabilities or for those who find mainstream public transport either difficult or impossible to use.

Northern Ireland Changing Gear- a Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland 2015

The high level strategy is set within the context of the Executive's Programme for Government priorities of growing a sustainable economy, improving health and well-being while building communities and protecting the environment. The vision of the strategy is to transform cycling over the next 25 years towards a 'community where people have the freedom and confidence to travel by bicycle for everyday journeys.'

Exercise- Explore- Enjoy: A Strategic Plan for Greenways 2016

With a view to promoting active travel

across the region, the Strategic Plan for Greenways seeks to develop a network of greenways across all 11 council areas which will serve to connect towns and cities to the villages and countryside. The aim of the document is to give people access to a safe traffic free environment for health, active travel and leisure.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)

The SPPS acknowledges that successful integration of transport and land use is fundamental to the objective of furthering sustainable development. As such the aim of the SPPS with regards to transportation is to secure improved integration with land-use planning and to facilitate safe and efficient access, movement and parking. The SPPS recognises that our transportation networks are important in achieving the Executive's goal of rebuilding and rebalancing the economy. The Regional Strategic Objectives for transportation and land use planning are to:

- promote sustainable patterns of development which reduce the need for motorised transport, encourage active travel and facilitate travel by public transport in preference to the private car;
- ensure accessibility for all, with the needs of people with disabilities and others whose mobility is impaired given particular consideration;
- promote the provision of adequate facilities for cyclists in new development;
- promote parking policies that will assist in reducing reliance on the private car and help tackle growing congestion;
- protect routes required for new transport schemes including disused transport routes with potential for future reuse;
- restrict the number of new accesses and control the level of use of existing accesses onto Protected Routes; and
- promote road safety, in particular, for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users.

The SPPS states that the preparation of the LDP provides the opportunity to

assess the transport needs, problems and opportunities within the plan area and to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to transportation issues in the allocation of land for future development.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3: Access Movement and Parking

PPS 3 sets out the policies for vehicular and pedestrian access, transport assessment, the protection of transport routes and parking. It forms an important element in the integration of transport and land use planning. The policy objectives of PPS 3 include the promotion of road safety, the restriction of new accesses and control of existing accesses onto protected routes, the promotion of a modal shift towards sustainable forms of transport, reduced reliance on the private car and the protection of routes required for new transport schemes.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7: Quality Residential Environments

Policy QD 1 (Criterion e) of 'Quality in New Residential Development' in PPS 7 requires developers to make adequate provision for access to walking, cycling and public transport.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 13: Transportation and Land Use

PPS 13 guides the integration of transportation and land use, particularly through the preparation of development plans and transport plans. The primary objective of PPS 13 is to integrate land use planning and transport by promoting sustainable transport choices, promoting accessibility for all and reducing the need to travel, especially by private car.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside

Annex 1 of PPS 21 provides a consequential amendment to Policy AMP 3 'Access to Protected Routes' of PPS 3. The revision takes precedence over the policy provisions of Policy AMP 3 insofar as they relate to proposals seeking access to the category of roads highlighted as 'Other Protected Routes – Outside Settlement Limits.'

Existing Development Plans

The following statutory plans provide the policy framework against which development proposals in our Borough are considered: Armagh Area Plan 2004, Armagh Area Plan 2004 Alteration No.1 Countryside Proposals, Craigavon Area Plan 2010, Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 and Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan 2010. The four plans identify the Protected Route Networks across the Borough, minor road improvements, traffic management measures to deal with localised problems and new road proposals such as the Armagh East Link (Newry to Portadown Road) and Armagh City North and West Link (Portadown to Monaghan Road) in the Armagh Area Plan and Gilford Town Centre Relief Road in the Banbridge Newry and Mourne Area Plan.

The Craigavon Area Plan identifies protected road lines such as the M12 Central Way, the New River Bann Bridge Link and the Central Craigavon Rail Halt and also protects and safeguards rail track beds for the construction of active transport schemes and future potential public transport options. The Banbridge Newry and Mourne Plan also protects disused transport routes, however there is no provision for such protection in the Armagh or Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plans.

The Craigavon Area Plan also identifies development related roads schemes and The Banbridge Newry and Mourne Plan identifies Roads Proposals. The LDP provides an opportunity to address inconsistencies and streamline the approach towards transportation issues, in response to the specific needs of the Borough and in line with the regional strategic direction of the SPPS.

The Council's Community Plan 2017-2030 'Connected'

'Connected' identifies connectivity as being integral to improving our quality of life, and as such it is one of the three cross cutting themes of connectivity, equality and sustainability that underpins the Community Plan. In order to reflect this, the Community Plan seeks to *'transform and connect all areas of our*

Borough physically, digitally and socially through shared collaborative approaches.'

The Community Plan also acknowledges the need to identify solutions for our physical connectivity and infrastructure requirements to attract higher levels of investment and ensure that the Borough is an enticing, collaborative and supportive environment for business start-ups, growth and innovation. The Community Plan includes a number of Long Term and Short Term outcomes that are considered relevant to transportation including:

- **Healthy Community:** People are making positive lifestyle choices. They are more resilient and better equipped to cope with life's challenges;
- **Healthy Community:** People have a greater understanding of the benefits of adopting healthy lifestyle choices and how to protect, manage and improve their physical health;
- **Confident Community:** We have improved the promotion, accessibility and use of local assets, services and facilities through combining skills, knowledge and connection and
- **Enhanced Place:** Our physical and

environmental assets are accessible. Everyone appreciates and takes responsibility for their protection, preservation and enhancement.

The LDP, as the spatial reflection of the Community Plan, will have a pivotal role in enabling the delivery of an accessible and well connected sustainable transportation network for our Borough. Through encouraging a modal shift from private car usage to public transport and active travel, it will improve the physical health of our citizens, connectivity and reduce the impact upon our environmental assets.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue ECN 13 (Protecting the Borough's Protected Routes)

The Borough's Protected Route Network includes the M1 Motorway, M12 / A3 Ballynacor – Kernan Loop, A3 (Moira – Lurgan – Craigavon Centre – Armagh (via Central Way and Northway) A3 (Armagh – Portadown); A3 (Armagh – Monaghan), A4 (Portadown – The Birches), A26 / A76 (Lough Road intersection – Lurgan – Banbridge), A27 (Craigavon Centre – Portadown (via Mandeville Road), A29 (Armagh – Dungannon), A29/B3/B32 (Armagh – Castleblayney), A28 (Armagh – Newry), A 28 (Armagh – Aughnacloy), A27 (Portadown – Tandragee) and the A50 (Portadown – Gilford), A50 (Banbridge – Newcastle) and A1 (Banbridge- Newry/Lisburn).

Option ECN 13A

Bringing forward an approach that is in line with existing Protected Routes policy, tailored to the needs of the Borough.

Justification

Within our Borough there is an extensive protected route network which is essential for both the efficient and safe movement of traffic and also the economic prosperity of our Borough. The preferred option would bring forward an approach in line with existing policy (Policy AMP 3 'Access to Protected Routes'- Planning Policy Statement 3 / Annex 1 of PPS 21) which seeks to control the number of new accesses and control the level of use of existing accesses onto protected routes, and provides specific guidance to control protected routes within and outside settlement limits. The

preferred approach complies with the regional strategic direction of the SPPS in that it would seek to restrict the number of new accesses and control the level of use of existing accesses onto protected routes therefore contributing towards a sustainable transportation network.

Whilst the preferred approach acknowledges the role of protected routes and the importance of ensuring that their function is not compromised, it also provides the opportunity to tailor policy to meet the specific needs of the Borough. The tailored policy, would acknowledge

that in some cases a new access onto a protected route is necessary, for example, in the case of residential development where this will significantly assist in the creation of a quality environment without compromising road safety standards or result in an excessive number of access points.

The preferred approach towards protected routes will therefore rely on improved integration between land use and transportation planning in order to identify where stricter or more relaxed approaches would be appropriate.

Alternative Options

Option ECN 13B

Bringing forward a more strict Protected Routes Policy.

This alternative option would reduce existing opportunities by providing less or no exceptions for access to protected routes. Whilst this may aid efficient traffic movement it would impose a stricter test which could restrict future sustainable growth.

Option ECN 13C

Bring forward a more relaxed Protected Routes Policy.

This alternative option would allow a more flexible approach, providing more opportunities for access onto protected routes. It is considered that a more flexible approach would impact upon the efficient flow of traffic movement and future sustainable growth.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue ECN 14 (Protecting proposed Strategic Road Improvement Schemes)

Option ECN 14A

Identify and safeguard Key Strategic Road Improvement Schemes in the LDP to enhance accessibility within the Borough.

Justification

Strategic Road Improvement Schemes (SRIs) are major projects designed to address areas affected by serious congestion along the key network and relieve the effects of heavy through traffic. The Regional Transportation Strategy recognises the key role that SRIs will play in delivering a modern, safe and sustainable transport system for Northern Ireland. The preferred approach will enable the Council to identify these SRIs, in consultation with Department

for Infrastructure (DfI), and protect such schemes within the Borough.

The preferred approach delivers on the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (2015) commitment to enhancing accessibility to the main gateways and cross border links, which involves the implementation of SRIs and also the Council's commitment to improving physical connectivity within our Borough. The LDP would also seek

to protect land from development that is required to facilitate long term Strategic Road Improvement Schemes to ensure that implementation of the project is not jeopardised. As such the preferred approach would align with the aim of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement which seeks to secure improved integration between transportation and land-use planning.

SRI Schemes within the Borough and their current Status are detailed in **Table 7.3** below:

Table 7.3: Strategic Road Improvement Schemes

Road	Road Description	Improvements	Status
A1	Rathfriland Road flyover, Banbridge	Compact Grade Separated Junction	Complete
A1	Hillsborough Road underpass, Dromore	Compact Grade Separated Junction	Complete
A1	Loughbrickland – Beech Hill	Upgrade of 9km to dual-carriageway standard	Complete
A1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Banbridge Road underpass, Dromore Dromore Road flyover, Banbridge Dublin Road underpass, Loughbrickland 	Compact Grade Separated Junctions	Complete
A1	Castlewellan Road	North bound on-slip	Stage 3- detailed design
A1	Gowdystown Road	Grade Separation	Stage 3- detailed design
A1	Skeltons Road/ Drumneath	Grade Separation	Stage 3- detailed design
A1	Waringsford Road	Grade Separation	Stage 3- detailed design
A1	Milebush road/ Hillsborough Road	Link Road	Stage 3- detailed design
A3	Armagh North and West Link	6.9km Single carriageway Link Road	Preferred 'out of town' corridor confirmed 2008. Work ongoing to confirm preferred line and junction strategy. Delivery of scheme remains subject to clearing the statutory procedures and the availability of funding in future budget settlements.
A28	Armagh East Link	2.25km Single Carriageway Link Road	Preferred route announced 2007. Review of the preferred route ongoing following public event held in 2014. Preferred option will be confirmed when stage two assessment is completed.

Source: Transport NI 2017

Table 7.4 details carriageway widening schemes currently relevant to the Borough. These schemes are also aimed at increasing capacity and alleviating congestion therefore enhancing accessibility to the main gateways in line with the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015.

Table 7.4: Carriageway Widening Schemes

Road	RSTN Category	Status
A3 Portadown	Link Corridor	Complete
A3 Richhill, Stonebridge Roundabout (Westbound)	Link Corridor	Not Progressed
A28 Newry Road, south of Armagh (Southbound)	Link Corridor	Complete
A28 North of Markethill (Northbound)	Link Corridor	Not Progressed
A28 South of Markethill (Southbound)	Link Corridor	Not Progressed

Source: Transport NI 2017

In addition, the identified road proposals and developer related road schemes within the Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 and the Craigavon Area Plan 2010 should be protected in the interests of longer term strategic planning. The LDP will review and

appraise these identified roads proposals and developer related road schemes. This assessment, in consultation with DfI Roads and any landowners, could help form a locally tailored policy approach to these road schemes. It will identify the extent of developer contributions

that would be applied in relation to facilitating and implementing these roads schemes. This approach will complement the key issue of developer contributions as raised in **Key Issue SOC 7, Facilitating development through developer contributions.**

Alternative Options

In respect of this Key Issue ECN 14, only one option is identified as the regional direction in respect of Strategic Road Improvement Schemes is clear, acknowledging that they are essential for delivering a modern, safe and sustainable

transport system for Northern Ireland. Therefore no alternative options have been proposed as they are not considered reasonable.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue ECN 15 (Protecting the Borough's Disused Transport Routes)

Option ECN 15A

Protect disused transport routes in line with existing policy and identify and safeguard routes in the LDP that have a reasonable prospect of becoming useable in the future.

Justification

Disused transport routes are transport networks such as roads, railway lines, canals and towpaths that are not currently operational. The preferred option would bring forward an approach in line with existing policy (Policy AMP 5 'Disused Transport Routes' of Planning Policy Statement 3) which provides a strict test in that it does not allow permission to be granted for development that would prejudice the future reuse of disused transport routes that are identified in Development Plans for transport or recreational use. However, the extant Area Plans are inconsistent in

their approach towards the protection of disused transport routes; the Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan 2010 and the Armagh Area Plans 2004 disused transport routes are not identified but both the Craigavon Area Plan 2010 and Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 seek to protect disused transport routes from development. As such, the preferred option would introduce a consistent approach towards disused transport routes across the Borough, by identifying and safeguarding all routes in the LDP that have a reasonable prospect of becoming useable in the future. As

such the preferred approach would also comply with the regional strategic objectives of the SPPS which seeks to protect disused transport routes that have a reasonable prospect of reuse for future transport purposes. In instances where there is no reasonable prospect of the reuse of such routes for future transport purposes, consideration may be given to protecting routes for appropriate alternative purposes such as recreational, nature conservation or tourism related use.

Alternative Options

Option ECN 15B

Protect disused transport routes in line with existing policy.

This option would seek to protect all disused transport routes from

development that may prejudice their reuse, however this approach would fail to acknowledge that in some instances there may be routes that have no reasonable prospect of becoming useable in the future. It also does not consider

the inconsistent approach across the extant plans, where two plans do not identify disused transport routes for protection.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue ECN 16 (Protecting key Park and Ride sites)

Option ECN 16A

Protect existing and proposed key Park and Ride sites and identify and safeguard potential new Park and Ride/ Park and Share sites within the Borough.

Justification

In order to promote alternatives to the private car and encourage more sustainable means of travel it is vital that there is adequate provision of Park and Ride / Park and Share sites in appropriate locations across the Borough. At present there are a number of existing Park and Ride sites including facilities located at Lough Road (Lurgan), Wilson Street (Portadown), Portadown Road (Armagh) and A1 Banbridge (Creamery Junction) and there is also a facility under development in Curran Street (Portadown).

The preferred approach seeks to protect Key Park and Ride sites across the Borough as an effective measure to help address congestion and reduce private car dependency in line with regional strategic direction which aims to promote sustainable patterns of development. The preferred approach would also enable the Council to identify new Park and Ride or Park and Share sites in viable locations where demand exists, therefore aligning with the SPPS which states that new transport schemes including Park

and Ride proposals should be identified and protected through the LDP. It will also enable the Council to review existing and proposed sites as well as identifying new Park and Ride / Park and Share Sites, which will allow the Council to be better equipped to target pressure areas so as to enable the efficient movement of people and goods in addition to encouraging a modal shift away from private car usage.

Alternative Options

Option ECN 16B

Protect proposed and existing key Park and Ride Sites.

Whilst this option would comply with regional strategic objectives for

transportation and planning, it would not offer opportunity to identify any new Park and Ride / Park and Share sites or review existing sites.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue ECN 17 (Promoting Active Travel and Sustainable Transport)

Option ECN 17A

Promote active travel networks and sustainable transport in all new development within Settlements to demonstrate accessibility to and integration with existing public transport, walking and cycling networks.



Justification

The vision of the Active Travel Strategy (DRD document 'Building an Active Travel Future for Northern Ireland' 2013) is to 'put walking and cycling at the heart of local transport, public health and well-being and wider government strategies for the benefit of society, the environment and the economy as a whole.' The Strategy also acknowledges the importance of providing adequate infrastructure and facilities to enable active travel, such as linkages with public transport.

Existing policy contained within PPS 7 'Quality Residential Environments' (Criterion (e) of Policy QD1 'Quality in New Residential Development') requires that all proposals for residential development provide a movement pattern that 'supports walking and cycling, meets the needs of people whose mobility is impaired, respects existing public rights of way, provides adequate and convenient access to public transport and incorporates traffic calming measures.' Furthermore, Policy AMP 8 'Cycle Provision' of PPS 3 'Access Movement and Parking' states that planning permission will only be granted for development providing jobs, shopping, leisure and services, including educational and community uses where the needs of

cyclists are taken into account, including appropriate provision of safe and convenient cycle links to existing or programmed cycle networks.

The preferred approach would seek to introduce a general policy requiring all new development, irrespective of the nature of the development, within urban areas to demonstrate that active travel networks and sustainable transport have been incorporated within the scheme. Whilst the new policy would be similar to those contained in the existing suite of operational policy detailed above, it would seek to build upon the regional direction contained in the SPPS by applying a more stringent test, with a greater responsibility on the developer to demonstrate the consideration given to promoting active travel.

The preferred option would seek to ensure that any proposals for new development may only be permitted where it is demonstrated that it would have acceptable access to walking, cycling and public transport facilities and provides a safe and convenient access for pedestrians and cyclists. The preferred option is proactive in nature, ensuring that sustainable travel options

are considered at the early stages of the planning process, which is in line with regional strategic objectives for transportation. It acknowledges the need to promote sustainable patterns of development which reduce the need to travel by car, through encouraging a modal shift towards alternative transport, including walking, cycling and public transport. The preferred option reflects the necessity for improved integration between transportation and land use, without which a shift towards active travel and other sustainable transport modes will be unachievable.

The approach to Active Travel will be supported and complemented by the approach in related LDP policies, including those relating to **Urban Housing** (in respect of sustainable movement patterns), **Open Space, Design and Place Making, Landscape** (Identifying and Protecting Urban / Rural Landscape Wedges) and the promotion of **Greenways** (**Key Issues SOC 1, SOC 3, SOC 4, SOC 5, ENV 6 and ECN 18**).

Alternative Options

In respect of this Key Issue ECN 17, only one option is identified as the regional direction is clear, acknowledging that sustainable patterns of development should be promoted, so as to reduce

the need for motorised transport and encourage active travel. Therefore no alternative options have been proposed as they are not considered reasonable in this instance.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue ECN 18 (Promoting and enhancing access to greenways)

Option ECN 18A

Identify and protect accessible and safe Greenways in order to encourage a modal shift away from the private car, connect people and places through active travel and enable ecological linkages.

Justification

Greenways are an active network of traffic free routes which are aimed at connecting people to facilities and services, as well as offering a sustainable transport alternative. The provision of greenways are associated with a number of potential benefits including the promotion of active travel, reduced reliance on the private car, improvement in air quality and levels of congestion and also improved access to the natural and built environment.

There are 2 types of greenways: Strategic Greenways which connect towns, cities, villages and countryside across all eleven Council areas, and Community Greenways which are intended to provide linkages between urban areas of open space and the countryside. Additionally, greenways may also provide linkages between neighbourhoods and local services and facilities.

‘Exercise - Explore - Enjoy’, A ‘Strategic Plan for Greenways’ (DfI, 2016) identifies that the provision of accessible and safe greenways will help lay the foundations for longer, healthier, more active lives and recognises the important role local

government can play in the delivery of a greenway network as a result of their responsibilities in respect of open space and recreation. Greenways can include publicly owned open space, woodlands, urban landscape wedges, parks, playing fields, school grounds, private lands, golf courses, and farmland and may form part of or link to existing networks including towpaths, the National Cycle Network, walkways and trails. Greenways, as a result of their typically linear and continuous structure, can provide a valuable ecological linkage, in particular where they follow river corridors. Therefore it is important that these areas are protected from development, as once lost, they cannot be easily replaced.

The preferred option will seek to identify and protect greenways to create a network of open spaces that provide links within and between rural and urban areas. The identification and promotion of greenways would assist in delivering a number of the Councils objectives, including a commitment to connecting all areas of the Borough which will ultimately result in a healthier and more resilient

population. The preferred approach is in keeping with regional strategic direction which requires that the Council take into account the importance of protecting linear open spaces such as pedestrian and cycle routes and community greenways, recognising the potential to provide a range of benefits, that extend beyond transportation, as detailed above. As such, the LDP will seek to identify and protect linear open spaces such as pedestrian and cycle routes, community greenways and river and canal corridors and ensure that greenways are integrated with other modes of sustainable transport and other land uses.

The approach to Greenways will be supported and complemented by the approach in related LDP policies, including those relating to **Open Space, Landscape** (Identifying and protecting Local Landscape Policy Areas / Identifying and Protecting Urban / Rural Landscape Wedges) and the promotion of **Active Travel (Key Issues SOC 4, SOC 5, ENV 5, ENV 6 and ECN 17)**.

Alternative Options

In respect of this Key Issue ECN 18, only one option is identified as the Central Government direction is clear, acknowledging that the provision of accessible and safe greenways will help lay the foundations for longer,

healthier, more active lives and that local government has an important role in the delivery of a greenway network. Furthermore strategic direction acknowledges that zonings for future needs should take into account the

importance of protecting linear open spaces such as pedestrian and cycle routes, community greenways and river and canal corridors. Therefore no alternative options have been proposed as they are not considered reasonable.

Questions

25. Do you agree with our preferred approach to our Borough's Protected Route Network?

26. Do you support our preferred approach towards the protection of Key Strategic Road Improvement Schemes within our Borough?

27. Do you agree with our preferred approach towards disused transport routes?

28. Do you agree with our preferred approach to protecting and identifying Park and Ride / Park and Share schemes?

29. Do you agree that developers should be required to demonstrate that new development is integrated with more sustainable modes of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport facilities?

30. Do you consider that our preferred approach towards greenways will improve connectivity and promote more sustainable patterns of travel?



8. Environment Theme

This theme is derived from the Strategic Objectives set out in Section 4:

- To conserve, protect and where possible enhance the natural and built environment to improve biodiversity, achieve quality design and to promote health and well-being.
- To promote sustainable high quality design in all developments to assist with climate change adaptation and place-making.
- To prevent inappropriate new development in areas known to be at risk of flooding or that may increase the flood risk elsewhere and put in place measures to assist in flood risk management.
- To protect and develop networks of green and blue spaces to support biodiversity and habitats and promote health and well-being.
- To facilitate integration between land use, planning and transportation to encourage a shift to more sustainable and active modes of transport.
- To safeguard unique sensitive landscapes from inappropriate development.
- To protect and enhance the network of open spaces in the Borough and promote opportunities for connections to create an enhanced network of pedestrian paths, cycle-ways and ecological corridors to improve linkages throughout the Borough.
- To support the generation of energy from renewable sources in appropriate locations whilst affording protection to the environment including sensitive or vulnerable landscapes.

The Key Issues set out in this section have been informed by the Strategic Objectives detailed above, the Policy Context set out in Section 2 and our evidence base.

Key Issues

Built Heritage and Archaeology

Key Issue ENV 1: Protecting, conserving and enhancing built heritage and archaeological assets

Natural Heritage

Key Issue ENV 2: Protecting international, national and local nature conservation designations (that are designated outside the LDP process)

Key Issue ENV 3: Identifying and protecting local nature conservation designations

Landscape

Key Issue ENV 4: Identifying and protecting Sensitive Landscapes

Key Issue ENV 5: Identifying and protecting Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs)

Key Issue ENV 6: Identifying and protecting Urban / Rural Landscape Wedges

Flood Risk and Drainage

Key Issue ENV 7: Developing within areas of flood risk (flood plains)

Key Issue ENV 8: Encouraging Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

Renewable Energy

Key Issue ENV 9: Facilitating appropriate renewable energy development

Waste Management

Key Issue ENV 10 Facilitating sustainable waste management

Built Heritage and Archaeology

Key Issue ENV 1 Protecting, conserving and enhancing built heritage and archaeological assets

Background

Built heritage and archaeological assets include ring forts; tombs; historic, vernacular and listed buildings; industrial and defence heritage; as well as planned parklands. These assets are important sources of information about our past and can represent significant landmarks within our countryside and townscape. Our built heritage and archaeology is an irreplaceable record which contributes to our understanding of both our past and present. It is also an important

economic resource which, if sustainably managed, can be a key recreational and tourism asset. These built heritage and archaeological assets add significantly to the quality of our lives, as well as contributing to a sense of local distinctiveness in our settlements and countryside.

Our key built heritage and archaeological sites within the Borough are shown on **Map 8.5**. These include the Navan

Fort Complex, Armagh City with its Cathedrals, Observatory and Georgian Architecture, the Danes Cast, Newry Canal and 5 Conservation Areas. The key built heritage and archaeology assets within the Borough are set out in the list below.

Built Heritage and Archaeological Assets

5 Conservation Areas (Armagh, Loughgall, Richhill, Dromore and Lurgan).

1052 Listed Buildings / Structures.

1 Candidate UNESCO World Heritage Site – Navan Fort Complex.

1 Area of Significant Archaeological Interest (ASAI) - Navan Fort Complex. This comprises Navan Fort, Loughnashade, Haughey's Fort, The King's Stables and a group of megalithic tombs.

14 Monuments in State Care- (9 within the former Armagh District, 1 in the former Craigavon Borough and 4 in the former Banbridge District).

16 Areas of Townscape Character (ATC) - (4 within the former Craigavon Borough and 12 in the former Banbridge District).

37 Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes (18 registered sites and 19 supplementary sites).

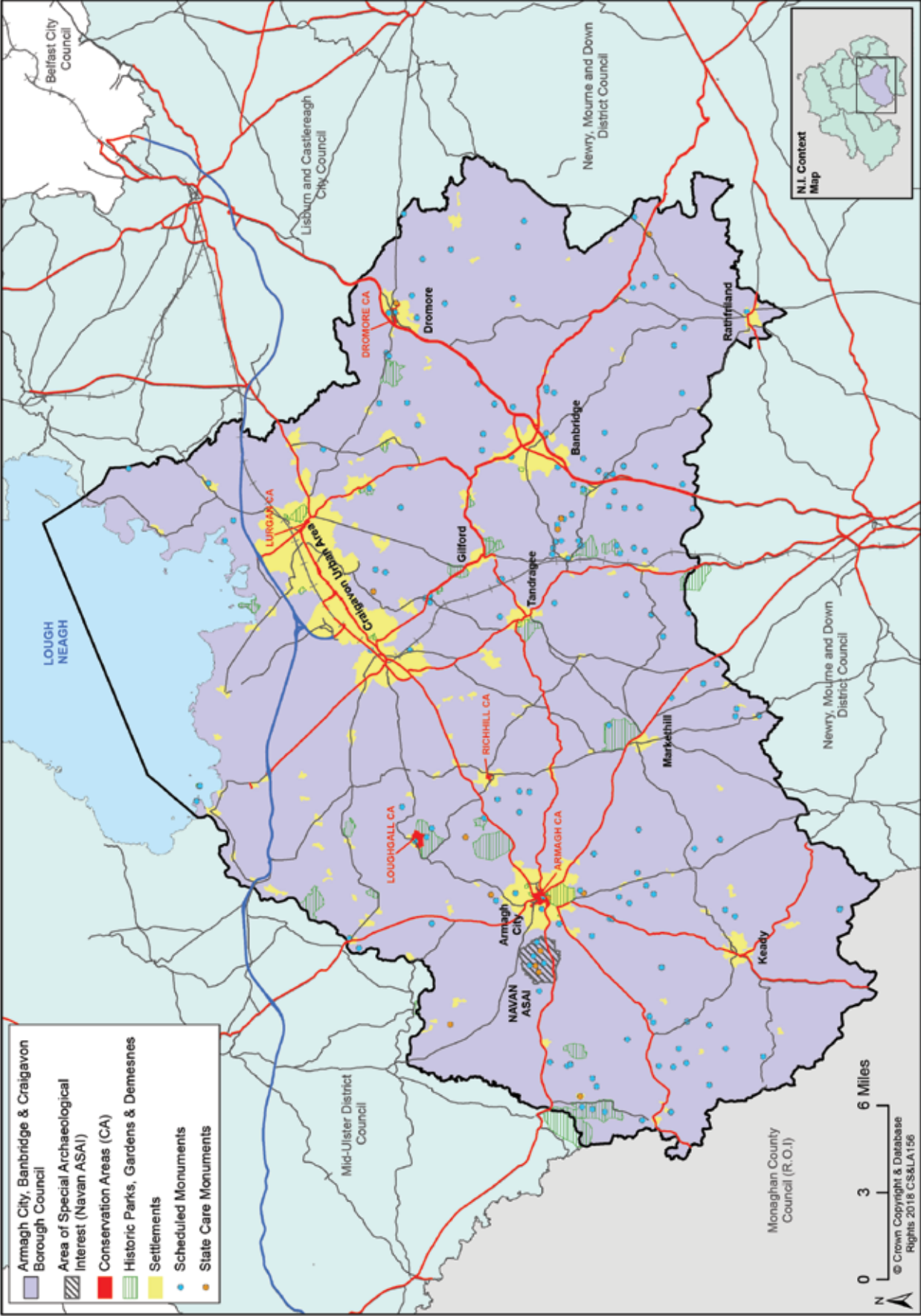
1293 Unscheduled Sites and Monuments.

21 Areas of Archaeological Potential (AAP) - (4 within in the former Craigavon Borough and 17 in the former Banbridge District).

31 Suggested new Areas of Archaeological Potential (AAP) – Boundaries to be confirmed by HED and shown 'for information only' in the LDP.

160 Scheduled Monuments.

Source: Historic Environment Division (HED), Department for Communities (DfC)



Policy Context (Regional and Local)

Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)

The RDS seeks to 'conserve, protect and where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment' (Regional Guidance RG11). This includes archaeological sites, monuments and historic buildings. It seeks to identify, protect and conserve the character within cities, town and villages and to maintain the integrity of built heritage assets, including historic landscapes. The RDS recognises the rich and diverse built heritage of the region and the valuable contribution built heritage and archaeology makes to the environment, economy and society, especially with regard to tourism and recreation if such assets can be sustainably managed.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)

The aim of the SPPS in relation to our built heritage and archaeology is to manage change in a positive way so as to safeguard that which society regards as significant whilst facilitating development that will contribute to the ongoing preservation, conservation and enhancement of these assets. The 3 Regional Strategic Objectives for built heritage and archaeology are to:

- secure the protection, conservation and where possible, the enhancement of our built and archaeological heritage;
- promote sustainable development and environmental stewardship with regard to our built and archaeological heritage; and
- deliver economic and community benefit through conservation that

facilitates productive use of built heritage assets and opportunities for investment, while safeguarding their historic or architectural integrity.

The SPPS states that the LDP should identify the main built and archaeological features within the plan area and bring forward appropriate local policies or proposals for their protection, conservation and enhancement. In doing so, the LDP should take account of the implications of its other local policies and proposals on all built heritage and archaeology features and their setting.

The SPPS also states that where a World Heritage Site (WHS), designated under the UNESCO World Heritage Convention 1972, falls within the plan area it will be appropriate for the LDP to identify the site and its broader setting and include local policies or proposals to safeguard the site and its setting from inappropriate development. Navan is currently a UNESCO Candidate Site as part of the Royal Sites of Ireland.

With regards to archaeological sites and monuments, the SPPS directs that, where appropriate, the LDP should designate Areas of Significant Archaeological Interest (ASAI) and where relevant include local policies or proposals for their protection. LDPs should also highlight for the information of prospective developers, areas within settlement limits where it is likely that archaeological remains may be encountered. These shall be referred to in the LDP as Areas of Archaeological Potential (AAP) and shown for information only.

The SPPS acknowledges that it may also be appropriate for the LDP to highlight particular listed buildings and their settings which are integral to the character and inform broader designations. These include Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs) or Areas of Townscape Character (ATCs).

The LDP should also identify Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes (HPGDs) along with their setting, having regard to the Registered and Supplementary Site List, and bring forward local policies or proposals for the protection of the overall character and integrity of these distinctive areas, in consultation with the Department (DfC).

In terms of Conservation Areas, the SPPS directs that the LDP should identify these within the plan area and may bring forward local policies or proposals for their protection and / or enhancement. However designation of new / amended Conservation Areas is not a LDP function and rests under separate legislation.

The SPPS also states that the LDP should designate Areas of Townscape Character (ATC) within settlements based on their unique identity and distinct character, normally based on their built form or layout. Where appropriate, councils should bring forward local policies or proposals for such areas in the LDP or in supplementary planning guidance.





Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 6: Planning, Archaeology and The Built Heritage; and PPS 6 (Addendum): Areas of Townscape Character

PPS 6 recognises the importance of archaeological and historical features. The policies aim to promote economic vitality and growth through the on-going regeneration of our built environment and seek to ensure that built heritage remains in continued use or active-reuse as an integral part of the living and working community. The policies recognise that conservation can play a vital role in promoting economic prosperity and encouraging inward investment. In return, economic prosperity can secure the vitality of historic areas and buildings.

PPS 6 details 15 policies (BH 1 to BH 15), which deal with archaeology and monuments; World Heritage Sites; Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes; Listed Buildings; Conservation Areas and Non-Listed Vernacular Buildings. The PPS 6 (Addendum) provides additional planning policies (ATC 1 to ATC 3) which relate specifically to Areas of Townscape Character (ATC). The 3 policies cover the demolition of buildings, new development and control of advertisements within ATCs.

Existing Development Plans

The existing plans for the Borough are the Armagh Area Plan 2004; Armagh Area Plan Alteration No. 1; Craigavon Area Plan 2010; Banbridge / Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015; and the Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan 2010. These identify, for information only, Conservation Areas in

Armagh City, Richhill, Loughgall, Lurgan and Dromore.

The Plans also designate 16 Areas of Townscape Character (ATCs) within various towns, villages and small settlements within the Borough. 37 Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes (18 Registered and 19 Supplementary Sites) are also identified.

One (1) Area of Significant Archaeological Interest (ASAI), at Navan, is designated in the Armagh Area Plan 2004. Twenty one (21) Areas of Archaeological Potential (AAPs) are also identified across the Borough, for information only. Numerous listed buildings / structures and monuments which are afforded statutory protection and are listed or scheduled by Historic Environment Division (HED) are also shown for information. Included in these are many defence and industrial heritage assets in the Borough.

The Council's Community Plan 2017-2030 'Connected'

'Place' is 1 of the 3 strategic themes set out in the Community Plan with 3 long term outcomes relating to the theme: Creative Place, Enhanced Place and Revitalised Place.

The long term outcome for 'Enhanced Place' is that "our rich and varied built heritage and natural assets are protected, enhanced and expanded for current and future generations to enjoy." There are 2 short term outcomes for Enhanced Place, the first being that 'There is understanding of and respect for the contribution of the built and natural

environment and the role it plays in improving the health and vitality of urban and rural communities, their sense of place, character and identity.' The second short term outcome for Enhanced Place is that "our physical and environmental assets are accessible. Everyone appreciates and takes responsibility for their protection, preservation and enhancement."

'Transform' – A Tourism Strategy for Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough 2017-2022

Tourism is identified as one of the key sectors which can drive economic growth in Northern Ireland. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council shares this growth ambition and targets a 10% annual growth in the Borough's tourism economy.

The strategy has a 3 tiered approach to tourism strategic priorities. Armagh City is highlighted as the centrepiece tourism destination within our Borough. Tier 1 specifically contains reference to the following built heritage and archaeological assets:

- re-development of the former Armagh Gaol;
- reposition Navan Fort Centre; and
- pursue a heritage-led regeneration approach.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue ENV 1 (Protecting, conserving and enhancing built heritage and archaeological assets)

Option ENV 1A

An approach in line with existing policy with regards to protecting, conserving and enhancing built heritage and archaeological assets within the Borough; and review existing areas / designations and identify new areas / designations as appropriate.

Justification

This option would ensure that all existing built heritage and archaeological assets designated within the existing Area Plans would be retained and afforded appropriate protection, conservation and enhancement through LDP policies and proposals. This includes:

LDP Designations:

- For Built Heritage: Areas of Townscape Character (ATCs);
- For Archaeology: Areas of Significant Archaeological Interest (ASAs);

Other designations made outside of the LDP process, will also be given appropriate conservation, protection, enhancement and / or treatment through policies and proposals within the LDP. These include:

Non-LDP Designations:

- For Built Heritage: Conservation Areas and Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes (HPGDs); and

- For Archaeology: Areas of Archaeological Potential (AAPs).

The overall preferred option allows for a comprehensive review of all existing built heritage and archaeological areas / designations within the Borough and provides an opportunity to identify new areas / designations which may be worthy of protection through the LDP. This option would be in line with regional guidance in the RDS and current policy in the SPSS and PPS6 (including its Addendum).

The preferred approach also recognises that the regeneration of built heritage and archaeological assets can promote economic growth and vitality particularly in sectors such as tourism and that the erosion of such assets can have a negative impact on the economy, by appearing less attractive to potential investors and visitors in the Borough. Furthermore, the preferred option will

also help to ensure that new development will be of a high quality in terms of design and that a balanced approach will be taken in terms of achieving economic growth and protecting, conserving and enhancing built heritage assets and archaeological remains.

This approach to Built Heritage and Archaeology will also reflect and complement the approach to **supporting good design and positive place-making (Key Issue SOC 3)**, whereby it has been identified that the Borough's unique areas and features of built heritage and archaeological interest may require more detailed criteria, to ensure an appropriate standard of design is reached that protects and enhances these assets.

Alternative Options

Option ENV 1B

An approach in line with existing policy with regards to protecting, conserving and enhancing built heritage and archaeological assets within the Borough.

This option would ensure that all existing built heritage and archaeological assets identified in the existing Plans

would be retained and afforded appropriate protection, conservation and enhancement in the new LDP. However there would be no opportunity to review existing areas / designation or to introduce new areas / designations.

Question

31. Do you agree with our preferred approach to review and further protect built heritage and archaeological assets within the Borough?



Natural Heritage

Key Issue ENV 2 Protecting international, national and local nature conservation designations (that are designated outside the LDP process)

Key Issue ENV 3 Identifying and protecting local nature conservation designations

Background

The Borough is home to a wealth of natural assets, as listed in **Table 8.1** below. From our diverse landscapes and earth science features to Lough Neagh and its shores, wetlands, woodlands, rivers and meadows, there is a wealth of natural assets to be sustained, enhanced and enjoyed by our residents and visitors.

The value and importance of many of these natural heritage assets are recognised and afforded protection through international, national and local environmental designations. The existing international and national nature conservation designations within the Borough are shown on **Map 8.6**.

Lough Neagh is identified as a Strategic Natural Resource in the RDS. The significance of the Lough and its Shores is acknowledged through the international environmental designations of Ramsar and Special Protection Area (SPA), as well

as the national Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) designation. The southern shore of this important and strategic asset lies within our Borough.

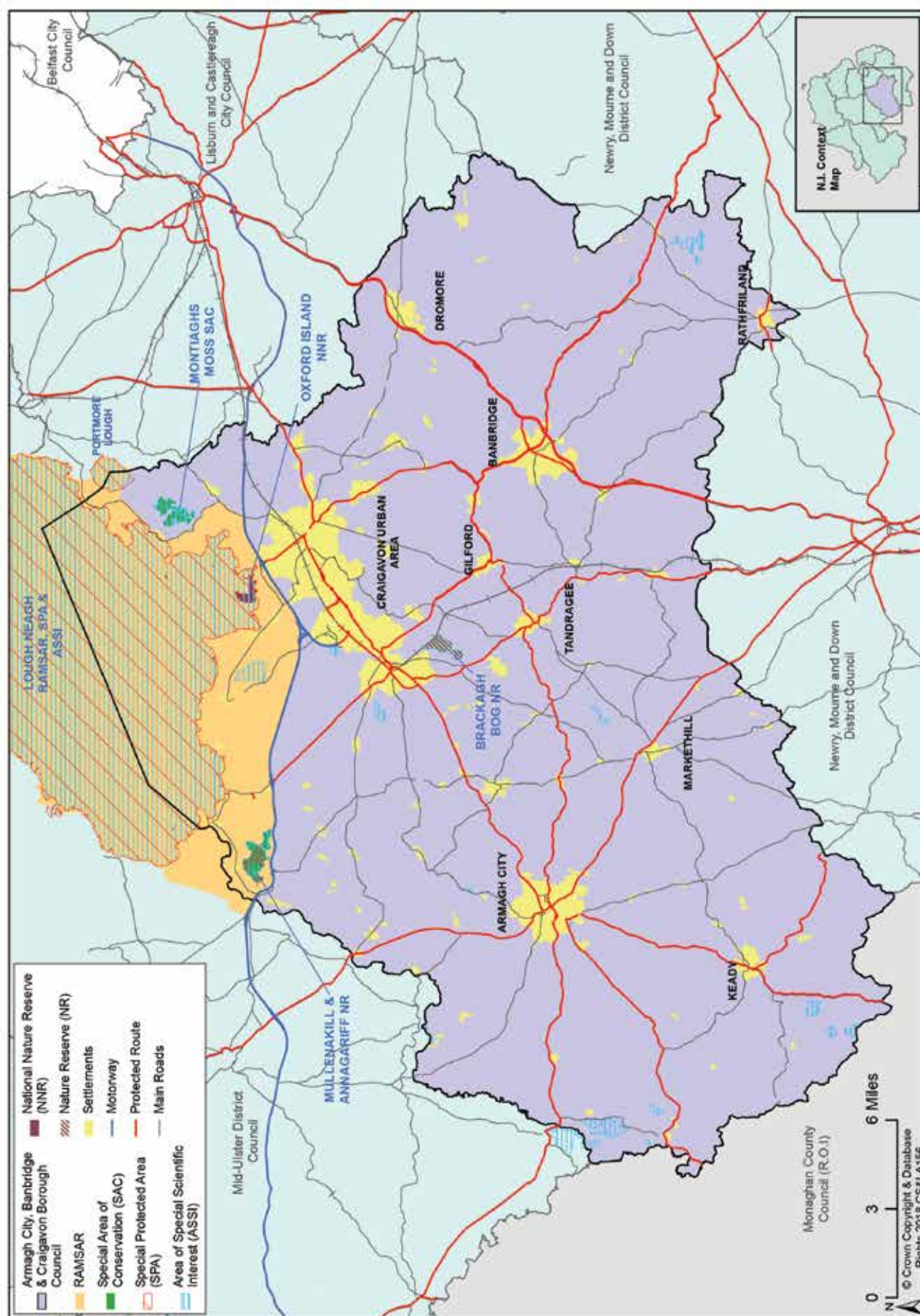
The Lough Neagh Ramsar wetland designation recognises the number and diversity of both flora and fauna which are supported in and around the Lough. The Lough Neagh SPA designation, which includes Lough Beg and Portmore Lough and surrounding swamp, fen and wet grassland regularly supports internationally important numbers of breeding wintering Bewick and Whooper Swans and nationally important numbers of breeding Common Tern.

The two Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) within the Borough, Montiagh Moss and Peatlands Park, support active raised bogs (a priority habitat which is rare or threatened within the European context).

Table 8.1: Nature Conservation Designations

Sites of International Importance	Site of National Importance	Site of Local Importance
1 Ramsar Area*	1 National Nature Reserve	3 Local Nature Reserves
2 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	21 Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI)	77 Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCI)
1 Special Protection Areas (SPA)	4 Nature Reserves	

* Ramsar Area, on the list of Wetlands of International Importance (known as the Ramsar List)



Map 8.6: Existing International and National Nature Conservation Designations

Policy Context (Regional and Local)

Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)

The RDS outlines in Regional Guidance RG1 that society should conserve, protect and, where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment. In relation to natural heritage it seeks to:

- sustain and enhance biodiversity;
- identify, establish, protect and manage ecological networks;
- protect and manage important geological and geomorphological features;
- protect, enhance and restore the quality of inland water bodies; and
- protect designated areas of countryside from inappropriate development (either directly or indirectly) and continue to assess areas for designation.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)

The SPPS provides the following Regional Strategic Objectives for natural heritage, to:

- protect, conserve, enhance and restore the abundance, quality, diversity and distinctiveness of the Region's natural heritage;
- further sustainable development by ensuring that natural heritage and associated diversity is conserved and enhanced as an integral part of social, economic and environmental development;
- assist in meeting international (including European), national and local responsibilities and obligations in the protection and enhancement of the natural heritage;
- contribute to rural renewal and urban regeneration by ensuring developments take account of the role and value of natural heritage in supporting economic diversification and contributing to a high quality environment; and
- take actions to reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate adaptation to climate change.

The SPPS also states that when drawing up new LDPs, Councils should take full account of the implications of proposed land use zonings, locations for development and settlement limits on built and natural heritage features and

landscape character within or adjoining the plan area. Natural Heritage features and designated sites should be identified in the LDP-making process. Where appropriate policies should be brought forward for their protection and / or enhancement. Key site requirements should be used to protect and integrate certain features when zoning sites.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 2: Natural Heritage

The objectives of PPS 2 precede but broadly reflect the objectives within the SPPS in relation to natural heritage.

PPS 2 also sets out operational policies for the conservation, protection and enhancement of our natural heritage. It contains 6 policies covering European and Ramsar Sites – International (NH 1), Species protected by Law (NH 2), Sites of Nature Conservation Importance – National (NH 3), Sites of Nature Conservation Importance – Local (NH 4), Habitats, Species or Features of Natural Heritage Importance (NH 5) and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NH 6).

Existing Development Plans

In addition to identifying relevant International and National Designations, with statutory protection, the local Plans identify areas of nature conservation or amenity value as follows:

- **The Armagh Area Plan (AAP) 2004** identifies a number of 'Open Space Wedges' that may have the potential to be considered within the development of an ecological network. **The Alteration No. 1: Armagh Countryside Proposals**, published in 2001 identifies and protects 8 Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs) and 61 Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCIs) which are afforded protection under Plan Policies LLPA 1 and SLNCI 1 respectively.
- **The Craigavon Area Plan (CAP) 2010** identifies 10 SLNCIs which are afforded protection under Plan Policy CON 1.
- **Banbridge / Newry and Mourne Area Plan (BNMAP) 2015** identifies 10 SLNCIs. Plan Policy CVN 1 prohibits development which would be liable

to have an adverse effect on the nature conservation interests of a designated SLNCI.

- **The Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan (DSTAP) 2010** identifies 50 SLNCIs, 3 of which now lie within our Borough. These are afforded protection under Plan Policy CON 1.

The Council's Community Plan 2017-2030 'Connected'

The 'Enhanced Place' Long-term Outcome in the Community Plan, aims for 'our rich and varied built heritage and natural assets to be protected, enhanced and expanded for current and future generations to enjoy'. Identifying areas of international, national and local nature conservation interest in the LDP provides an opportunity to develop a greater understanding of and respect for the natural environment, raising greater awareness and accessibility, where appropriate.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue ENV 2 (Protecting international, national and local nature conservation designations (that are designated outside the LDP process))

Option ENV 2A

An approach in line with existing policy with regards to protecting and enhancing international, national and local nature conservation sites that are not LDP designations.

Justification

The preferred option aims to carry forward policy in line with the provisions of existing Policies NH 1, NH 3 and NH 4 from Planning Policy Statement 2 (Natural Heritage) and the SPPS to ensure that all International, National and Local sites of Nature Conservation Importance designated outside the LDP process are afforded adequate protection against development proposals. These policies are as follows:

- Policy NH 1 (European and Ramsar Sites – International)
- Policy NH 3 (Sites of Nature Conservation Importance – National)
- Policy NH 4 (Sites of Nature Conservation Importance – Local)

This approach would cover all designations listed in **Table 8.1** (earlier in the topic) with the exception of Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCIs), which are designated solely in the LDP (and dealt with in **Key Issue ENV 3**). This will enable continued safeguarding of the Borough's natural heritage assets, such as the Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Special Protection Area (SPA) and Peatlands Park Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The existing Policy NH 6 (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, AONBs) in PPS 2, will not be carried forward by the LDP, as the Borough does not currently have any AONBs nor propose any through the new LDP.

The other existing natural heritage policies in PPS 2, Policies NH 2 and 5 will be reviewed in detail ahead of the draft Plan Strategy to consider their continued effectiveness. These cover:

- Policy NH 2 (Species Protected by Law)
- Policy NH 5 (Habitats, Species or Features of Natural Heritage Importance)

This will ensure that habitats, species and features (both protected by law and of natural heritage importance) are not harmed or adversely impacted by development proposals.

Alternative Options

No alternative options are being put forward. The regional direction in the SPPS on the protection of designated natural heritage sites, habitats, species and features is clear. There is no reasonable alternative to Option ENV 2A which would acknowledge the essential and important role these all play in maintaining and enhancing our biodiversity.



Preferred Option, for Key Issue ENV 3 (Identifying and protecting local nature conservation designations)

Option ENV 3A

An approach in line with the existing policy with regards to protecting and enhancing local nature conservation designations; and review existing and identify new LDP designations as appropriate.

Justification

This option allows for the review of existing Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCIs), and the designation of new SLNCIs in the LDP, which are worthy of protection due to their local nature conservation or earth science value. The current SLNCIs designated in the existing Area Plans will be reviewed and amended as necessary. This would address any inconsistencies in approach across the existing Area Plans, in terms of the level of protection afforded to these areas.

Appropriate policy to protect the intrinsic value of the SLNCIs (as reviewed), against development proposals, will be included in the LDP in line with regional direction in the SPPS.

Alternative Options

Option ENV 3B

Retain the current policy approach and existing local nature conservation designations.

With this option there would be no opportunity to review designated sites under existing Area Plans and therefore the extent of their current nature conservation value would not be assessed or amended where appropriate. This option would prevent any further local plan environmental designations, which is contrary to regional policy.



Question

32. Do you agree with our preferred approach to protecting international, national and local nature conservation designations (that are designated outside the LDP process)?

33. Do you agree with our preferred option that there is a need to review and identify local nature conservation designations and protect them from inappropriate development?

Landscape

Key Issue ENV 4 Identifying and protecting Sensitive Landscapes

Key Issue ENV 5 Identifying and protecting Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs)

Key Issue ENV 6 Identifying and protecting Urban / Rural Landscape Wedges

Background

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough comprises a diverse mix of landscapes, from the Lough Neagh basin and wetlands to drumlins, river valleys and apple orchards to name but a few, as well as our distinctive and historic settlements.

The Borough's landscapes provide a rich resource of productive agricultural land, habitats for nature conservation, archaeological and historical features and remains which illustrate ways in which the landscape has been shaped by human occupation and activity. It also provides

for many recreational activities and has the potential to become an increasingly important tourism asset.

Policy Context (Regional and Local)

Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)

The RDS (RG 11) highlights and requires the following in relation to the protection of our landscape:

- recognise and promote the conservation of local identity and distinctive landscape character. Landscape character is what makes an area unique. RG 11 also states that the NI Landscape Character Assessment 2000 provides valuable guidance on local landscape character and scenic quality;
- conserve, protect and where possible enhance areas recognised for their landscape quality; and
- protect designated areas of countryside from inappropriate development (either directly or indirectly) and continue to assess areas for designation. Designating special areas for protection is an effective way of ensuring our wildlife and natural landscapes retain their individual characteristics.



Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)

The SPPS states that where there are areas of the countryside which exhibit exceptional landscapes and visual amenity value such as lough shores, development should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Where appropriate these areas should be designated as Special Countryside Areas (SCA) in LDPs, and appropriate policies brought forward to ensure their protection from unnecessary and inappropriate development. Additionally, local policies may also be brought forward to maintain the landscape quality and character of Areas of High Scenic Value (AoHSV).

In relation to Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs) the SPPS advises that they consist of those features and areas within and adjoining settlements considered to be of greatest amenity value, landscape quality or local significance and therefore worthy of protection from undesirable or damaging development. They may include:

- archaeological sites and monuments and their surroundings;
- listed and other locally important buildings and their surroundings;
- river banks and shore lines and associated public access;
- attractive vistas, localised hills and other areas of local amenity importance; and
- areas of local nature conservation interest, including areas of woodland and important tree groups.

The SPPS states that LDPs should, where appropriate, designate LLPAs and bring forward local policies and guidance to maintain the intrinsic landscape, environmental value and character of such areas. The SPPS also directs, in relation to urban and rural wedges, that zonings for future needs should take into account the following:

- identifying and designating areas of open space which perform a strategic function, such as landscape wedges in urban areas.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage

PPS 6 sets out the planning policies for the protection and conservation of archaeological remains and features of the built heritage and advises on the treatment of these issues in development plans.

In relation to LLPAs it states that with an increased emphasis on the quality of new development and greater environmental awareness care must be taken to ensure that new development does not dominate the townscape / landscape characteristics of settlements. Development plans will, where appropriate, designate local landscape policy areas and contain local policies and guidance to maintain the intrinsic environmental value and character of such areas.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 8: Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation

PPS 8 states that areas of existing open space within or adjoining settlements may also be designated as landscape wedges, in particular those larger areas which perform a strategic function such as defining and separating urban areas; providing community greenways, 'green lungs' or landscape buffers within urban areas; better linking of town and country; and serving recreational needs over a wide area.

In addition, some smaller open spaces may merit designation as a Local Landscape Policy Area. Local policies will be included in the LDP for these designations.

Landscape Character Assessments

The SPPS states that LDPs must take account of the RDS 2035, the Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland, the SPPS and any other policies or advice and guidance such as the Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment (NILCA) 2000.

The Northern Ireland Character Assessment 2000 series provides a detailed record of 130 different Landscape

Character Areas (LCAs) within Northern Ireland. 23 LCAs fall within or partially within our Borough. For each LCA, the key characteristics were described and an analysis of its landscape condition and sensitivity to change was made.

An updated Regional Landscape Character Assessment for Northern Ireland was published in 2015. The assessment provides a strategic overview of the landscape and subdivides the countryside into 26 Regional Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) based upon information on people and place and the combinations of nature, culture and perception which make each part of Northern Ireland unique. The purpose of the Northern Ireland Regional Landscape Character Assessment (NIRLCA) is to provide an evidence base which can be used equally by planners, developers and the public. The document included five strategic landscape character areas in the Borough. This regional assessment is to be read alongside the local NILCA 2000 assessment series and may provide the base for updating the NILCA 2000 series.

Of the LCAs within our Borough that have a high sensitivity rating in the NILCA 2000 report and the supplementary wind energy guidance, two are also highlighted within the NILCA reports as Areas of Scenic Quality (ASQ). They represent a second tier below Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the hierarchy of landscape classifications. These ASQs have been translated as Area of High Scenic Value (AoHSV) plan designations in a number of Area Plans. They are characterised by visually pleasing patterns or combinations of landscape elements, and by their generally unspoilt character, free from major intrusion. In addition they may include significant sites or features of nature conservation, historic or cultural importance. Often they are visually prominent landscapes or open, distinct areas such as the Lough Neagh shores, which are particularly sensitive to change.

Within the NILCA 2000 Report, 2 ASQ's within our Borough are detailed:

- The Lough Neagh Shores; and
- The Blackwater Valley.

These ASQs also contain a number of nature conservation designations and are particularly sensitive to inappropriate development. In light of the above planning guidance, desktop research, constraints, planning history and preliminary assessment, the Council is of the opinion that these two areas may be considered for an additional plan designation to address landscape protection. It is considered that the most appropriate additional plan designations are either as an Area of High Scenic Value (AoHSV) or as a Special Countryside Area (SCA). Further consideration of these areas will inform a decision at Plan Strategy stage of any additional landscape protection required.

Existing Development Plans

The existing Plans identify a range of landscapes within the Borough that are afforded protection. Each Plan also identifies areas which are of nature conservation or amenity value.

- Within Armagh City there are 7 'Open

Space Wedges' that are designated in the **Armagh Area Plan (AAP) 2004** which are protected from undesirable development because of their high visual amenity in relation to their prominence, setting and role as a visual break / buffer. Within Keady a Policy Zone is designated to ensure that the area remains in agricultural use, due to its prominence. Furthermore, within Richhill a Policy Zone is also designated as an area of high visual amenity, providing an open space wedge between housing areas. The AAP 2004 Alteration No. 1: Armagh Countryside Proposals (2001), identifies 8 Local Landscape Policy Areas under policy LLPA 1 which is aimed at protecting the intrinsic environmental value and character of each designated LLPA.

- In the **Craigavon Area Plan (CAP) 2010** Local Landscape Policy Areas are designated in and around the Craigavon Urban Area and 11 other settlements.
- In the **Banbridge / Newry and Mourne Area Plan (BNMAP) 2015** Local Landscape Policy Areas are

designated with associated policy stating that within designated LLPAs, planning permission will not be granted to development proposals that would be liable to adversely affect their intrinsic environmental value and character.

- In respect of the **Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan (DSTAP) 2010** there are no LLPAs in the area transferred to the Borough.

The Council's Community Plan 2017-2030 'Connected'

The issue of protecting the Borough's sensitive landscapes links within the Enhanced Place outcome of our 'Connected' Community Plan which states 'Our rich and varied built heritage and natural assets are protected, enhanced and expanded for current and future generations to enjoy'. By identifying and protecting important areas of landscape value ensures that their condition and integrity is preserved now and for future generations.



Preferred Option, for Key Issue ENV 4 (Identifying and protecting Sensitive Landscapes)

Option ENV 4A

Consider areas of sensitive landscape for designation as Areas of High Scenic Value (AoHSV) or Special Countryside Areas (SCA).

Justification

These designations would be assisted by the identified Areas of Scenic Quality within the NILCA 2000 and policy brought forward to protect the Lough Neagh Shore and / or the Blackwater Valley sensitive landscapes from unsuitable forms of development, where appropriate. Any landscape designations will be informed by an appropriate evidence base. This option is preferred as it allows for the identification and protection of our most sensitive scenic landscapes. The policy also delivers an opportunity to provide a balanced approach to managing rural development as well as supporting the preferred option for **Key Issue ENV 9 Facilitating appropriate renewable energy**

development. If we restrict inappropriate forms of development in these sensitive areas, it will help positively manage and protect these sensitive landscapes for future generations.

Within any AoHSV designation, development proposals will be required to have regard to the siting, massing, scale and design, materials, finishes and landscaping in order to ensure that development will integrate well into the topography and landscape, and respect the features of interest.

Within any SCA designation, development should only be permitted in exceptional

circumstances and appropriate policies brought forward to ensure their protection from unnecessary and inappropriate development.

Draft designation boundaries would be drawn up in consultation with the relevant consultees with due consideration of planning guidance, existing constraints, planning history and a landscape assessment.

Alternative Options

Option ENV 4B

Rely on regional planning policy carried forward to provide protection for the landscape setting, nature conservation interests, built heritage features and tourism assets in areas of sensitive landscape.

This approach would not designate any sensitive landscapes so would not

offer any additional protection to the areas of sensitive landscape beyond the protection in existing policy carried forward. This approach has the potential to allow inappropriate development and damage the intrinsic natural and unique qualities of our most sensitive landscapes which may consequently affect the attractiveness and appeal of the Borough as a place to live, work and visit.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue ENV 5 (Identifying and protecting Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs))

Many settlements have a physical link to areas / features of historic, built or natural heritage which can be important markers to a settlement's origins. This link to the origins or history of a settlement creates and maintains an identity which can help guide development and encourage an appreciation of a settlement's sense of place.

The SPPS states that 'LDPs should, where appropriate, designate LLPAs and bring forward local policies and guidance to maintain the intrinsic landscape, environmental value and character.' Across the extant Area Plans there is currently an inconsistent approach to the designation of LLPAs and the associated policy.

Option ENV 5A

Evaluate and, as appropriate, retain existing Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs) designated in the extant Area Plans; consider the identification of new LLPAs; and introduce a consistent LLPA policy.

Justification

Under this option, the LLPAs designated in the extant Plans (AAP 2004 - Alteration No 1: Countryside Proposals, BNMAP 2015 and CAP 2010) would be reviewed and as appropriate, retained. This option would evaluate existing LLPAs and associated designated text / key features to introduce a more consistent approach across the Borough. This option would also consider new areas for LLPA designation and ensure policy is consistent across the Borough in line with regional planning policy. These designations can help to ensure that

new development does not dominate distinctive landscapes and the character of settlements. Furthermore, these designations can act as buffer zones between different uses, and can help to safeguard the setting of settlements. The protection of these areas can help to protect and/or enhance biodiversity, ecological networks and the attractiveness of our settlements. This option will also assist in the promotion of green infrastructure through the LDP and can help mitigate against the impacts of air and noise pollution.

LLPAs do not preclude development. Rather these designations enable development which respects the LLPA Key Features by ensuring that development is appropriately sited and sensitively designed to maintain landscape, environmental value and character.

Alternative Options

Option ENV 5B

Retain the existing Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA) designations and associated policies within the extant Area Plans.

This alternative option is not our preferred option as it would not offer the opportunity to review existing LLPAs and associated policy which varies across the extant Plans. This approach does not

provide for the identification of new LLPA designations through the LDP. It would not allow us to review existing LLPA policy and the associated designated text / key features to introduce a more consistent Borough wide approach in line with regional planning policy.

Urban and Rural Landscape Wedges

Urban Landscape Wedges are areas with an open aspect or undeveloped natural areas that are identified and retained in order to separate areas of built development within settlements, provide a visual break and protect specific features such as prominent lands. These areas provide an important function in helping to define and retain the identities and character of the urban area, preventing their coalescence. They can provide the opportunity to connect and develop further networks of natural corridors, linking green and blue infrastructure spaces throughout the Borough which can be used for outdoor recreation, enhancing biodiversity and promoting active travel.

Proposals within designated Urban Landscape Wedges would be required to maintain the open aspect, protect important views / features of the lands, retain the buffer between distinct localities and maintain the viability of any linkage. Urban Landscape Wedges shall be protected from built development to fulfil their amenity, recreation and biodiversity role. Any proposed buildings ancillary to open space / recreation use should demonstrate how they can integrate into the landscape and meet the other criteria detailed above.

Rural Landscape Wedges are buffer landscapes and open areas which abut and separate settlements that are in

close proximity to each other. These Rural Landscape Wedges aim to distinguish and maintain the visual separation and separate identities of the settlements within the Borough, prevent their coalescence, provide for the protection of the setting of settlements, and maintain the rural character of the countryside. They can also provide the opportunity to connect and develop further networks of natural corridors, linking green and blue infrastructure spaces throughout the Borough which can be used for recreation, enhancing biodiversity and promoting active travel.

The SPPS states that development in the countryside must not mar the distinction between a settlement and the surrounding countryside, or result in urban sprawl. Landscape wedges can also assist in the promotion of green infrastructure through the LDP.

Development proposals within designated Rural Landscape Wedges would be required to comply with rural policy in addition to further controls on the scale and form of any development in order to maintain the open aspect and visual separation, prevent the coalescence of settlements and maintain the viability of any linkage.

Within our Borough, we do not currently have any designated Rural Landscape Wedges. Under the AAP 2004, there are

7 Open Space Wedges designated within Armagh City and a Policy Zone in both Keady and Tandragee. These areas will be reviewed and considered as potential Urban Landscape Wedges, in addition to any other relevant areas in our settlements. The LDP will also provide the opportunity to consider areas for Rural Landscape Wedge designation.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue ENV 6 (Identifying and Protecting Urban / Rural Landscape Wedges)

Option ENV 6A

Review existing open space wedges and policy zones as potential Urban Landscape Wedges; and identify both new Urban and Rural Landscape Wedges with associated policy.

Justification

Urban and Rural Landscape Wedges function to maintain and protect the character and identity of individual settlements and localities and their visual separation, as well as to respect landscape features within settlements. This option allows for the introduction of a consistent approach to landscape

wedge designation and Plan policy. This would replace the existing designations and policy for open space wedges and policy zones in the Armagh Area Plan 2004. The setting, landscape features and character of our settlements should be protected from inappropriate forms of development which would adversely

impact on their form, relationship and character. Urban and Rural Landscape Wedges can be an effective means to achieving this, as well as providing additional ecological, greenway and open space resources.

Alternative Options

Option ENV 6B

Retain the existing designations (open space wedges and policy zones) and associated policies in the extant Area Plans that protect landscape.

The inconsistent approach of our extant Area Plans in respect of landscape wedges make this option difficult and potentially less robust. Only the Armagh

Area Plan 2004 designates landscape wedges. It has designated 7 areas within Armagh City as open space wedges and a policy zone in both Keady and Richhill. This option would not allow for further identification of new landscape wedges in other settlements and surrounding rural areas.

Question

34. Do you agree with our preferred approach to identifying and protecting areas of sensitive landscape?

35. Do you agree with our preferred option in relation to Local Landscape Policy Areas?

36. Do you agree with our preferred option to review existing and introduce new Urban and Rural Landscape Wedges?

Flood Risk and Drainage

Key Issue ENV 7 Developing within areas of flood risk (flood plains)

Key Issue ENV 8 Encouraging Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

Background

Flooding is a natural process that cannot be entirely prevented. There are four main sources of flooding i.e. rivers (fluvial), coastal, surface water (pluvial) and flooding from impounded water bodies such as reservoirs and dams.

Climate change is one of our most critical environmental, social and economic challenges. However there remains much uncertainty as to the degree of

climate change that will occur and the implications of it for particular areas of Northern Ireland. It is important to ensure that our new and existing infrastructure is as resilient as possible to all potential impacts. This includes being able to adapt to both gradual climate change as well as the increased risk of extreme weather events such as flooding, as the effects of flooding on human activity are so wide ranging.

Policy Context (Regional and Local)

Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)

The RDS recognises that climate change is one of the most serious problems facing the world and that Northern Ireland has its part to play in preparing for and adapting to climate change.

A summary of the specific measures to prepare for and adapt to climate change highlighted in the RDS include:

- employment land and the redevelopment of land for urban and rural renaissance, including necessary infrastructure, should avoid, where possible, areas at risk from flooding (RG 1 and RG 7);
- housing growth should be managed so that it mitigates the risk of flooding by avoiding those areas known to be at risk (RG 8);
- minimising development in areas at risk from flooding - a precautionary approach to development in areas of flood risk should be exercised using

the latest flood risk information that is available (RG 9); and

- promoting a more sustainable approach to flood risk management, including encouraging the greater use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) (RG 12).

Sustainable Water – A long term Water Strategy for NI 2015-2040 (DfI)

This Strategy provides a framework for action which will facilitate the implementation of a range of initiatives aimed at delivering the long term vision to have a sustainable water sector in NI. To achieve this vision the Strategy ‘encourages a sustainable and integrated approach to managing all our different water needs in a way which promotes regional development, without compromising the environment or increasing flood risk.’

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)

The aim of the SPPS in relation to flood risk is to prevent future development that may be at risk from flooding or that may increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. As such the issue of flooding will be a key determining factor in the designation of land or the designation of new settlement limits within the LDP. The SPPS directs that the LDP must take account of the most up to date information on flood risk. This includes the Strategic Flood Map, Hazard Maps and Flood Risk Management Plans produced by Rivers Agency (DAERA).

LDPs should apply a precautionary approach to development in areas that may be subject to flood risk presently or in the future as a result of climate change predictions. The SPPS also directs that LDPs should promote sustainable drainage where appropriate, including through the use of key site requirements on individual zonings.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 15: Planning and Flood Risk

The main objectives of PPS 15 are summarised as follows:

- application of the precautionary approach in relation to flood risk;
- presumption against development in flood plains except in exceptional circumstances;
- protection of existing flood defences;
- protection of areas outside of flood plains which are known to be at risk of flooding or would likely increase the risk of flooding;
- restrictions on the culverting or canalisation of watercourses; and
- requirement of mitigation measures/ flood risk assessments / drainage assessments.

The PPS states that the LDP will apply a precautionary approach to development in areas that may be subject to flood risk presently or in the future as a result of climate change predictions.

PPS 15 provides operational policy in relation to flood risk. Its policies cover Development in Fluvial (River) and Coastal Flood Plains (FLD 1), Protection of Flood Defence and Drainage Infrastructure (FLD 2), Development and Surface Water (Pluvial) Flood Risk Outside Flood Plains (FLD 3), Artificial Modification of Watercourses (FLD 4) and Development in Proximity to Reservoirs (FLD 5).

Existing Development Plans

The approach to flood risk in the existing Area Plans for the Borough is as follows:

- Neither the **Armagh Area Plan 2004** and **Armagh Alteration No. 1**; and the **Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan 2010** contain policy specifically addressing flooding issues.
- The **Craigavon Area Plan 2010** does not include a specific policy addressing flooding issues, however Policy UTIL 1 (Development within the Portadown Flood Pondage Area) prevents development in the identified flood pondage areas in the Plan.
- The **Banbridge / Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015** makes reference to the Strategic Flood Maps and states that prospective developers should check with these online maps at an early stage to clarify flooding or floodplain issues, however there is no specific flooding policy.

The Council's Community Plan 2017-2030 'Connected'

The Community Plan does not specifically mention flood risk. However the principles of flood risk management are in keeping with the long term outcomes of an 'Enhanced' and 'Revitalised' Place. Having an effective and informed policy approach to flood risk management will ensure that our built and natural assets and our distinct and vibrant urban and rural areas are protected.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue ENV 7 (Developing within areas of flood risk (flood plains))

Option ENV 7A

Adopt a precautionary approach in line with existing policy and regional direction by having a presumption against development in flood plains other than in exceptional circumstances. The precautionary principle will be applied to areas which are currently subject to flood risk or in the future.

Justification

This option will bring forward in the LDP an approach in line with the existing Policy FLD 1 (New Development in Fluvial (River) and Coastal Flood Plains) in PPS 15 and the further regional direction in the SPPS.

This approach will continue to adopt the presumption against development in flood risk areas, known as the

precautionary principle, unless it constitutes one of the listed exceptions. These include the replacement of existing buildings and the use of land for sport or outdoor recreation, subject to a satisfactory Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). This is to ensure that new development does not cause or exacerbate flooding elsewhere, now and into the future.

Alternative Options

Option ENV 7B

No development in areas of flood risk (flood plains).

This approach would prohibit all forms of development, including proposals of regional and sub-regional importance, within current and future flood prone areas. This may have an adverse impact on existing infrastructure and economic investment where there is a site specific need for development to be located within a flood plain, such as facilities required for water based recreation.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue ENV 8 (Encouraging Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS))

Option ENV 8A

Bring forward policy to encourage the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in new development where appropriate.

Justification

The preferred option would promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in new developments and would make it clear that SuDS is the preferred method of managing surface water drainage within new urban development. Effective SuDS schemes can reduce the risk of flooding by slowing down surface water run-off. They can also reduce the risk of sewer flooding during heavy rain and can recharge groundwater following periods of drought. Examples of SuDS techniques may include green roofs, purpose built ponds and wetlands or the use of permeable surfaces. SuDS schemes, in addition to protecting against flood risk and pollution, can also bring social, economic and environmental benefits such as providing valuable habitat for wildlife and creating green spaces within urban areas.

This approach would be in keeping with the SPPS and RDS guidance where it is encouraged that there is a more sustainable approach to the provision of water and sewerage services and flood risk management. The effects of climate change and increasing urbanisation and the consequent increase in flood events and extreme weather events have already been experienced throughout the Borough. It is important that we manage the risk of surface water (pluvial) flooding in order to protect existing and new

properties from flood damage.

Policy FLD 3 (Development and Surface Water (Pluvial) Flood Risk Outside Food Plains) within PPS 15 outlines the criteria against which a Drainage Assessment can be requested in relation to development proposals that may cause surface water flooding. Development thresholds and the surface water flood history of the site are taken into account when determining whether or not a Drainage Assessment is required.

The current Policy LC 3 (Permeable Paving in New residential Developments) in PPS 7 Addendum does not go far enough, in that only favourable consideration needs to be given to the use of permeable paving within new residential development as a means of reducing the risk of surface water flooding.

This preferred option would update and go further than the current policy provisions (FLD 3 and LC 3) in that it would encourage the integration of SuDS schemes irrespective of any history or potential of pluvial flooding. Greater onus would be placed on the developer (for certain types of development) to demonstrate why SuDS would not be suitable, even where it is demonstrated that surface water flood risk can be effectively controlled and mitigated and

not create greater potential for surface water flooding elsewhere. SuDS are more effective than traditional, piped drainage in reducing surface water flooding but they also provide environmental, economic and social benefits to communities.

Further engagement with relevant consultation bodies will be carried out in advance of the Plan Strategy to explore how best to encourage the implementation of SuDS in policy terms and ensure the management and maintenance of such schemes.

This preferred approach will complement **Key Issue SOC 1** and **Key Issue SOC 4** which aim to **support quality sustainable urban housing** and **protect open space**.

Alternative Options

Option ENV 8B

Continue the current approach to Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) with each application assessed on a case by case basis.

This alternative option does not place an emphasis on the introduction of SuDS and does not encourage its integration

into new development. Taking this alternative approach would limit the opportunity to establish SuDS as a more natural approach to drainage management within the Borough, as well as prevent against potential water pollution and surface water flooding events. This option would not be in line with the policy and guidance set out in

the SPPS and RDS respectively and would not provide the other social, economic and environmental benefits effective SuDS schemes can provide.

Notes

Development in Proximity to Reservoirs

Within our Borough, there are 17 controlled reservoirs, many of which are within or close to existing settlements. Introduction of the Reservoir Act 2015 aims to ensure that controlled reservoirs are managed and operated to minimise any risk of flooding due to an uncontrolled release of water resulting from dam failure thereby protecting people, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity.

In relation to development proposals in proximity to reservoirs, a policy similar to the existing policy set out in FLD 5

(Development in Proximity to Reservoirs) in PPS 15 will be brought forward in the LDP. This current policy relies on the applicant to provide evidence on the safety of a reservoir, which can be considered an unnecessary burden, especially if that information is not readily available. Further engagement is required with statutory bodies on this issue, to determine whether there is a need for any change in policy approach.

Other existing Flood Risk Policies

The other existing flood risk policies in PPS 15, Policies FLD 2-4, as referred to in the Policy Context, will be reviewed in detail ahead of the draft Plan Strategy to consider their continued effectiveness, taking account of regional direction in the SPPS.

Question

37. Do you agree that a precautionary approach should be adopted when considering development within identified flood plains?

38. Do you agree with our preferred option that we encourage Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) within the LDP in order to confirm our commitment to the implementation of SuDS throughout the Borough?

Renewable Energy

Key Issue ENV 9 Facilitating appropriate renewable energy development

Background

Renewable energy resources are sources of energy that naturally replenish themselves without being depleted.

The main sources of renewable energy include:

- wind;
- solar (sun);
- hydropower (moving water);
- heat extracted from the air, ground and water (including geothermal energy); and
- biomass (wood, biodegradable waste and energy crops).

Pursuing renewable energy resources is an effective and efficient way in which we can balance the increasing demand for energy against the environmental challenge of climate change. The use of renewable energy sources improves air quality by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and our dependence upon fossil fuels, therefore benefiting our health and well-being and helping to mitigate against climate change. Furthermore the renewable energy sector is a significant provider of jobs and investment in Northern Ireland. As

such there is strong relationship between renewable energy and the delivery of sustainable development. The challenge for the LDP is to ensure that renewable energy development is managed carefully so that our environmental, landscape and historic features are not prejudiced.

In comparison with other council areas our Borough has experienced a lesser demand for wind energy proposals, which may be due to the fact that some landscapes are able to accommodate wind energy proposals more easily than others, due to their topography, landform and ability to limit visibility.

However, in order to increase our consumption of renewable resources it is vital that we are prepared for further development and technological advances in other sources of renewable energy, including solar, hydro and geothermal technologies, which may be more suited to the Borough. As such the LDP has an important role in facilitating renewable energy development in appropriate locations whilst affording protection to our environment, so to assist in the delivery of sustainable development.

Key Facts

- The Northern Ireland Executive's 2011-2015 Programme for Government encourages Northern Ireland to seek to achieve 20% of its electricity consumption from renewable resources and 4% of its heat consumption by 2015.
- Between April 2016 to March 2017, 27.1% of total electricity consumption in Northern Ireland was generated from renewable sources located in Northern Ireland, the highest rolling 12 month proportion on record.
- Of all renewable electricity generated within Northern Ireland over this 12 month period, 82.8% was generated from wind.



Policy Context (Regional and Local)

Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)

The Regional Development Strategy 2035 emphasises the need to increase the contribution that renewable energy can make to the overall energy mix. Regional Guidance RG5 seeks to deliver a sustainable and secure energy supply by:

- increasing the contribution that renewable energy can make to the overall energy mix
- strengthening the electricity grid
- providing new gas infrastructure
- working with neighbouring countries
- developing 'Smart Grid' Initiatives.

Regional Guidance RG9 aims to reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate mitigation and adaption to climate change whilst improving air quality by increasing the use of renewable energies and utilising local production of heat and/or electricity from low or zero carbon energy sources.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)

The aim of the SPPS in relation to renewable energy is to facilitate the siting of renewable energy generating

facilities in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment in order to achieve Northern Ireland's renewable energy targets and to realise the benefits of renewable energy without compromising other environmental assets of acknowledged importance. The Regional Strategic Objectives for renewable energy are to:

- ensure that the environmental, landscape, visual and amenity impacts associated with or arising from renewable energy development are adequately addressed;
- ensure adequate protection of the region's built, natural, and cultural heritage features; and
- facilitate the integration of renewable energy technology into the design, siting and layout of new development and promote greater application of the principles of Passive Solar Design.

The SPPS states that particular care should be taken when considering the potential impact of all renewable proposals on the landscape.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 18: Renewable Energy

PPS 18 sets out the planning policy for development that generates energy from renewable resources. The policy objectives of PPS 18 are as follows:

- to ensure that the environmental, landscape, visual and amenity impacts associated with or arising from renewable energy development are adequately addressed;
- to ensure adequate protection of the Region's built and natural, and cultural heritage features; and
- to facilitate the integration of renewable energy technology into the design, siting and layout of new development and promote greater application of the principles of Passive Solar Design.

Existing Development Plans

The policy context in the existing statutory Plans across the Borough is summarised as follows:

- Within the Armagh Area Plan (AAP) 2004, Craigavon Area Plan (CAP) 2010 and the Dungannon and South Tyrone Plan (DSTAP) 2010 there is no specific reference to the development of

renewable infrastructure.

- Banbridge / Newry and Mourne Plan (BNMAP) 2015 reiterates RDS guidance which seeks to reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate mitigation and adaptation to climate change whilst improving air quality (RG9).

The Council's Community Plan 2017-2030 'Connected'

Whilst the Community Plan makes no specific reference to renewable energy, it identifies sustainability as a cross cutting theme which seeks to 'improve everyone's quality of life economically, environmentally and socially, without compromising our future generation's ability to develop, grow and flourish.'

The Community Plan contains a number of relevant Long Term and Short Term Outcomes including:

- Our rich and varied built heritage and natural assets are protected, enhanced and expanded for current and future generations to enjoy.
- There is understanding of and respect for the contribution of the built and natural environment and the role it plays in improving the health and vitality of urban and rural communities, their sense of place, character and identity.
- People have a greater understanding of the benefits of adopting healthy lifestyle choices and how to protect, manage and improve their physical health.

The use of renewable energy can contribute towards improving the health and wellbeing of our citizens, through reduced reliance on fossil fuel and the resultant improvement in air quality. The LDP, as the spatial reflection of the Community Plan, has an important role in facilitating the appropriate siting of renewable energy development, so our daily lives and environment can be improved by the benefits that arise from having a clean, secure energy supply.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue ENV 9 (Facilitating appropriate renewable energy development)

Option ENV 9A

An approach to renewable energy development in line with existing policy but in addition, identify areas of sensitive landscape which may be unsuitable for particular forms of renewable energy development.

Justification

It is acknowledged that making appropriate use of renewable energy sources will help to address the effects of climate change by reducing our dependency on fossil fuels and will also assist in providing a more diverse and secure energy supply. The current

provisions for renewable energy in Policy RE 1 (PPS 18) and regional direction in the SPPS support a sustainable approach to renewable technology development by protecting environmental, landscape and historic features and ensuring that the visual impact on the landscape and

residential amenity is not adversely affected.

The preferred option would support this approach, but in addition it would also identify sensitive landscapes that may not be able to support certain forms

of renewable energy technology, in particular wind turbines. In addition, alongside the preferred option for **Key Issue ENV 4: identifying and protecting sensitive landscapes**, this preferred option provides the opportunity to safeguard our vulnerable landscapes alongside facilitating renewable energy technologies in more appropriate areas within the Borough. Therefore, the preferred approach would seek to provide a balanced approach to

facilitating sustainable renewable energy development in the Borough.

Finally, it is also important to note that the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) is currently reviewing the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) in relation to 'Renewable Energy', following a Call for Evidence, and the outcome of this could affect the Council's policy direction in due course.

Alternative Options

Option ENV 9B

Continue the current approach to renewable energy development in line with existing policy, with each application assessed on a case by case basis.

This option facilitates the development of renewable energy which is in keeping with existing planning policy (RE 1 in PPS 18) and regional direction : Renewable Energy and the SPPS, whilst ensuring that environmental, landscape and historic

features are protected. However, by not identifying areas of sensitive landscape which may be unsuitable for particular forms of renewable energy development it may impose an inconsistent approach as applications would be considered on a case by case basis. Such an approach may lead to piecemeal development, an inefficient and visually intrusive approach to renewable energy development, in particular wind generation.

Question

39. Do you agree with our preferred option approach to facilitating renewable energy development?

40. Do you agree that sensitive landscapes should be identified and protected from inappropriate renewable energy infrastructure?

Waste Management

Key Issue ENV 10 Facilitating sustainable waste management

Background

Waste, when managed appropriately, can make a valuable contribution towards our economy and support the delivery of sustainable development. Waste management facilities and services are valuable providers of jobs and investment, with the potential to support and innovate future business opportunities, in addition to being essential for the health and well-being of our society.

The EU Waste Framework Directive provides the legislative framework for the collection, transport, recovery and disposal of waste and requires that necessary measures are undertaken to ensure waste is recovered or disposed of without endangering human health or

causing harm to the environment. The Directive also requires that appropriate measures are undertaken to encourage the prevention or reduction of waste production and its harmfulness and the recovery of waste by means of recycling, re-use or reclamation or any other process with a view to extracting secondary raw materials, or the use of waste as a source of energy.

In order to meet the EU Waste Framework Directive target which seeks to increase household waste recycling rates (including preparing for re-use) to 50% by 2020 it is vital that waste is managed sustainably. As such Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, supported by government policy,

has an important role in delivering sustainable waste management, through the timely provision of an integrated network of waste services and facilities to enable the diversion of waste away from landfill in favour of more sustainable methods.



Policy Context (Regional and Local)

The Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)

The RDS sets out regional guidance in relation to the sustainable management of waste in line with the 5 step waste hierarchy as set out in the Waste Framework Directive. Regional Guidance (RG10) of the RDS acknowledges that managing waste is a significant part of how we treat our environment and that if waste is not managed safely then it can become a serious threat to public health,

and cause damage to the environment as well as being a local nuisance.

The Waste Hierarchy aims to encourage the management of waste materials in order to reduce the amount of waste materials produced, and to recover maximum value from the wastes that are produced. Although not applied as a strict hierarchy, as a guide it encourages the prevention of waste, followed by the reuse and refurbishment of goods, then

value recovery through recycling and composting. The next option is recovery, including energy recovery. Waste disposal should only be used when no option further up the hierarchy is possible. RG10 also encourages application of the proximity principle emphasising the need to treat or dispose of waste as close as practicable to the point of generation to minimise the environmental impacts of waste transport.

Figure 8.1: The Waste Hierarchy

WASTE MINIMISATION	STAGES	DETAIL
	STAGE 1 – PREVENTION:	Using less material in design and manufacture, keeping products for longer, re-use, using less hazardous materials.
	STAGE 2 – PREPARING FOR REUSE:	Checking, cleaning, repairing, refurbishing, whole items or spare parts.
	STAGE 3 – RECYCLING:	Turning waste into a new substance or product, includes composting if it meets quality protocols.
	STAGE 4 – RECOVERY:	Includes anaerobic digestion, incineration with energy recovery, gasification and pyrolysis which produce energy (fuels, heat and power) and materials from waste, some backfilling.
	STAGE 5 – DISPOSAL:	Landfill and incineration without energy recovery.

Source: Article 4 of the revised EU Waste Framework Directive

The Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy 'Delivering Resource Efficiency' (2013)

The revised Strategy provides a coherent approach to the waste policy framework for Northern Ireland and the local waste management plan, emphasising that waste is a resource and therefore represents an opportunity as opposed to a burden. The 5 step waste management hierarchy, which is referenced in the RDS, is a core principle of the Strategy and the 'Proximity Principle' is also highlighted, emphasising the need to treat and/or dispose of wastes in reasonable proximity to their point of generation.

Joint Waste Management Plan

Waste management plans (WMPs) provide the framework for waste management including requirements for collecting, recovering, treating and disposing of waste in each local authority. The former Councils of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon were members of the Southern Waste Management Partnership (SWaMP2008) which was dissolved with effect from 31 March 2015 under The Local Government (Constituting a Joint Committee a Body Corporate) Order (NI) 2015. In July 2016, a Joint Waste Management Plan was prepared for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Omagh and Fermanagh

Council and Mid Ulster District Council. This plan reviews the content of existing plans and sets out the arrangements for the management of controlled waste arising within the joint Councils.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)

The aim of the SPPS in relation to waste management is to support wider government policy focused on the sustainable management of waste, and a move towards resource efficiency. It sets out regional strategic objectives and regional strategy policy for waste management which must be taken into account in the preparation of the

Planning Strategy and Local Policies Plan. The SPPS contains the following Regional Strategic Objectives:

- promote development of waste management and recycling facilities in appropriate locations;
- ensure that detrimental effects on people, the environment, and local amenity associated with waste management facilities (e.g. pollution) are avoided or minimised; and
- secure appropriate restoration of proposed waste management sites for agreed after-uses.

The SPPS states that Councils must assess the likely extent of, and need for, future waste management facilities for the plan area and identify specific sites for the development of such facilities. Any new waste management policy will be underpinned by the precautionary approach i.e. where there are significant risks of damage to the environment, its protection will generally be paramount unless there are imperative reasons for overriding public interest.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 11: Planning and Waste Management

The aim of PPS 11 is to promote the highest environmental standards in development proposals for waste management facilities. Key objectives of PPS 11 include:

- promote the development, in appropriate locations, of waste management facilities that offer the Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO)* in meeting need as identified by the relevant WMP, or as demonstrated to the Department's satisfaction in the case of waste water treatment works (WWTWs);
- ensure that detrimental effects on people, the environment, and local amenity associated with waste management facilities are avoided or minimised; and
- secure appropriate restoration of proposed waste management sites for

agreed after-uses.

Existing Development Plans

The existing 4 statutory Area Plans covering the Borough provide the policy framework against which development proposals are considered. However, due to the varying ages of the relevant statutory plans, there are clear inconsistencies in their direction in relation to waste management.

- The **Armagh Area Plan 2004** acknowledges the statutory obligation of the Council to ensure that arrangements are in place for the disposal of waste, however it focuses upon landfilling as the primary method of waste management.
- The **Banbridge / Newry and Mourne Plan 2015** acknowledges the commitment to the principles of sustainable patterns of development, including the reuse, recycling and recovery of material from our waste.
- The **Craigavon Area Plan 2010** recognises the principles of the Waste Management Strategy for Northern Ireland, however it affords the producers, processors or holders of waste the responsibility for determining the preferred methods of dealing with waste materials or specific sites for new facilities.
- The **Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan 2010** acknowledges that the careful management of waste is an integral part of sustainable development, however it affords the producers, processors or holders of waste the responsibility for determining the preferred methods of dealing with waste materials or specific sites for new facilities.

The LDP provides an opportunity to streamline and make consistent the local policy approach in line with wider government policy, towards sustainable waste management and resource efficiency that reflects the specific needs of the Borough.

The Council Community Plan 2017- 2030 'Connected'

The Community Plan identifies sustainability as a cross cutting theme which seeks to improve everyone's quality of life economically, environmentally and socially, without compromising our future generation's ability to develop, grow and flourish. These principles, in so far as they relate to waste, would involve identifying the impact that waste management can have on our environment, recognising if waste is not managed appropriately it can become a serious threat to public health and cause damage to the environment.

The Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2016/17 – 2018/19

The Municipal Waste Strategy gives direction to Council in relation to waste management processes and efficiencies. It sets out aims and objectives to achieve national and EU targets in the most effective manner. The Strategy sets out aims and objectives to:

- sustainably manage the waste collected by, or on behalf of the Council;
- encourage and support communities to recycle;
- continue to divert more waste from landfill;
- maximise efficiencies within the service;
- balance the cost implementation and level of expenditure to meet targets and requirements; and
- work with key partners to move towards greater resource efficiency.

* Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) is no longer treated as a material consideration.

Preferred Option, for Key Issue ENV 10 (Facilitating sustainable waste management)

Option ENV 10A

An approach to waste management in line with existing criteria based policy but tailored to meet local circumstances; and in addition identify suitable locations for waste management facilities were appropriate.

Justification

The preferred approach would seek to bring forward an approach that is in line with the existing criteria based waste management policy (Planning Policy Statement 11: Planning and Waste Management), however wording would be updated to reflect the positive role that waste management can make towards sustainable development, emphasising waste as a resource as opposed to a burden and its role in developing a circular economy (where resources are kept in use for as long as possible so as to extract maximum value from them).

The preferred option would provide an opportunity to modify the policy wording to ensure that it is appropriate to the Borough, by removing references that are not relevant (for example, references to a 'port area' being a suitable location for a waste treatment or collection facility- Policy WM2 of Planning Policy Statement 11). Any references towards Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) would also be removed from forthcoming policy in accordance with

the recommendations of the Revised Waste Management Strategy 'Delivering Resource Efficiency' (2013).

The preferred approach would also seek to tailor the LDP to meet the specific needs of the Borough through identifying appropriate waste facilities and/or services in suitable locations that may be required over the plan period to support a growing population and sustainable waste management. For example, as recovery, reuse and recovery rates grow, a decreasing amount of landfill will be required and there will be increasing demand for more sustainable methods. This would facilitate sustainable management of waste materials in order to reduce the amount of waste materials produced, and to recover maximum value from the wastes that are produced in line with the waste hierarchy whilst ensuring that any detrimental effects are avoided or minimised. As such, the preferred approach complies with regional guidance contained within the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035 and

regional policies within the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).

As waste management facilities often by virtue of their size, nature or location have the potential to have significant adverse impacts upon the environment, there is a need to protect the built and natural environment of the Borough. As such new Strategic Waste Policy would also be underpinned by the 'precautionary approach' and the 'proximity principle.'

Alternative Options

Option ENV 10B

Continue the current approach to waste management in line with existing policy.

The existing policy approach to planning and waste management (PPS 11) represents waste as a burden, an unwanted by-product of industrial, commercial and domestic activities. By adopting the existing approach it would not provide an opportunity to update policy wording to reinforce the value of waste as a resource and the positive role it can make towards a circular economy, which is vital if we are to change mind-sets and behaviours. Also the alternative

option would not provide an opportunity to tailor the policy wording to reflect the circumstances of our Borough or remove references that are no longer material considerations (e.g. BPEO). Furthermore, the alternative option would not provide an opportunity to identify appropriate locations for waste management facilities, therefore it would not align with regional direction of the SPPS. As per Planning Policy Statement 11, this approach would also be underpinned by the precautionary approach and proximity principle.

Question

41. Do you agree with our preferred approach towards sustainable waste management?

Appendices

Appendix A:	Glossary
Appendix B:	Local Development Plan Preparatory Papers
Appendix C:	Existing Suite of Planning Policy and Supplementary Guidance
Appendix D:	List of Key Issues
Appendix E:	List of Maps, Figures and Tables

Appendix A

Glossary

Active Travel:

An approach to travel and transport by physically active, human powered modes, as opposed to motorised vehicles.

Affordable Housing:

Housing defined as social rented housing and intermediate housing for eligible households.

Areas of Archaeological Potential (AAP):

Comprise those areas within historic settlements which may require mitigating measures (which may include excavation) in the context of redevelopment.

Areas of Constraint on Minerals Development (ACMD):

Protect the most valuable and vulnerable features of the natural environment and man-made heritage including areas of high scenic value from the adverse effects caused by the development of mineral resources.

Areas of High Scenic Value (AoHSV):

Areas of High Scenic Value are designated in some Development Plans in recognition of their special landscape quality.

Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI):

Protected sites that are of special interest by reason of their flora, fauna, geological or physiological features designated under the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 (as amended).

Areas of Significant Archaeological Interest (ASAI):

An area designated in some Development Plans in order to protect not just the individual sites and monuments but the overall landscape settings within which they are located.

Areas of Townscape Character (ATC):

Areas of Townscape Character are designated in some Development Plans based on their distinct character and

intrinsic quality, often based on the historic built form or layout, in cities, towns and villages.

Brownfield Sites:

Sites within a settlement limit which are or were occupied by a permanent structure. These for example may include underused buildings or vacant buildings. Brownfield Sites may also be referred to as 'Previously Developed Land'.

Built Heritage:

This relates to manmade features of the historic environment and can include archaeological sites and monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, historic parks, gardens and demesnes and sites of industrial heritage.

Community Plan:

The Strategic Policy Planning Statement 2015 states that the Local Development Plans will provide a spatial land use reflection of the Community Plan linking public and private sector investment through the land use planning system.

Conservation Area:

A Conservation Area is an area previously designated by the Department, or since designated by the Council or Department under Section 104 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, to be 'of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance'.

Creating Places:

Creating Places is a (former) DoE and DRD prepared document that seeks to achieve quality in residential development and incorporates guidance on layout and access.

Development Management (DM):

The process of receiving, assessing and deciding planning applications and providing related information and advice to customers, the general public and

other stakeholders.

District Centre:

Groups of shops, separate from the town centre, usually containing at least one food supermarket or superstore and non-retail service uses such as banks, building societies and restaurants.

Elected Members:

A person elected to the office of Alderman or Councillor in the Council.

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA):

A process designed to ensure that a policy, procedure, project or scheme is fair to all and does not discriminate or disadvantage any people or group. It seeks to identify and address any adverse or negative impact.

Evidence Base:

The information and data gathered by the Council to justify the soundness of the policy approach set out in the Local Development Plan. Documents, include the physical, economic and social characteristics of the plan area.

Green and Blue Infrastructure:

Is a phrase used to describe all green and blue spaces in and around our towns and cities. The term enables the consideration of the collective value of all of these spaces together. Constituent elements of green and blue infrastructure include parks, private gardens, agricultural fields, hedges, trees, woodland, green roofs, green walls, rivers and ponds. The term covers all land containing these features, regardless of its ownership, condition or size. It is all green and blue spaces in and around our towns and cities.

Greenways:

Greenways are an active network of traffic free routes which are aimed at connecting people to facilities and services, as well as offering a sustainable transport alternative.

Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes:

Important designated features contributing to the landscape's appearance. Many are distinguished by their carefully composed design of trees, meadows and water features, perhaps as a setting for a house. Some have valuable tree plantations, shrubs or plants, while others may provide a significant historical record, of a particular era or show how the design of a parkland or garden has changed over the centuries.

Housing Growth Indicators (HGIs):

The RDS introduces the concept of having housing growth indicators applied to the Region. Their purpose is to direct the distribution of housing in the Region over the period to 2025, through the development plan process, in accordance with the Spatial Development Strategy.

Housing Monitor:

The purpose of a Housing Monitor is primarily to inform local development plan preparation by assessing the extent of housing land available within an area and the estimated number of units that this could accommodate. It will also help the Council identify where a potential shortfall in land supply might exist and serve to inform house builders on the availability of land that may be suitable for housing.

Housing Needs Assessment:

Is an assessment of local housing needs primarily in relation to general needs social housing, supported housing, travellers and affordable housing.

Hubs:

The Regional Development Strategy spatial framework guidance defines most towns in Northern Ireland as either main hubs or local hubs.

Infrastructure:

The basic physical and organizational structures and facilities (e.g. buildings, roads, power supplies, water services) needed for the operation of a society or enterprise.

Intermediate Housing:

Intermediate housing consists of shared ownership housing provided through a Registered Housing Association and helps eligible households who can afford a small mortgage, but that are not able to afford to buy a property outright. The property is split between part ownership by the householder and part social renting from the Registered Housing Association.

Key Transport Corridor:

Part of the Regional Strategic Transport Network as defined in the RDS. There are 5 Key Transport Corridors throughout Northern Ireland.

Landscape Character Assessments:

A tool in identifying the landscape features that give a locality its 'sense of place'. The LCA grew out of the European Landscape Convention. The Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment 2000 (NILCA) identified 130 district LCAs as fragile landscapes at risk of development pressures.

Listed Building:

Listed Buildings are buildings of special architectural or historic interest and range from grand mansions and cathedrals to warehouses and vernacular dwellings.

Local Centre:

Small groupings of shops, typically comprising a general grocery store, a sub-post office, occasionally a pharmacy and other small shops of a local nature.

Local Development Plan (LDP):

The plan for the long-term future development of the Borough, drawn up by the Council in consultation with the community. The LDP applies regional / strategic policies at local council level and informs the general public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested bodies of the policy framework and land use proposals that will guide development decisions relating to a specific issue or area.

Local Landscape Policy Areas (LPAs):

Areas of especially high amenity or of local significance identified in some Development Plans to protect them from unsuitable development

Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and Wildlife Refuges:

LNRs can be provided by Council under the powers conferred to them under the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 to conserve areas of nature conservation, earth science and recreational value, with the primary land use being for conservation purposes.

Local Policies Plan (LPP):

The second part of the Local Development Plan, which provides detailed policies and proposals for the development of specific geographical or subject areas.

Masterplan:

A masterplan is a plan that outlines an overall development concept for an area, including urban design, landscaping, infrastructure, service provision, circulation, present and future land use and built form. It provides a structured approach and creates a clear framework for the future development of an area.

Mineral Safeguarding Zones (MSZs):

Designated in some Development Plans to protect mineral deposits of economic or conservation value. They can also be used to ensure that workable mineral resources are not sterilised by surface development.

Natural Heritage:

Incorporates biodiversity, including flora and fauna and ecosystem types, together with associated geological structures and formations (geodiversity).

Open Space Wedges:

Areas within the development limit of settlements which, due to their amenity value or location, act or will act as a buffer between different uses or help retain hilltops or reduce the likelihood of over-intensive urban development.

Planning Agreement (Section 76):

A legally binding agreement for developer contributions which allows the provision of facilities and infrastructure that is necessary for development to go ahead.

Planning Policy Statements (PPSs):

These provide strategic direction and guidance in the form of regional planning policy and are a material consideration in preparing development plans and dealing with individual planning applications.

Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (PSRNI):

Establishes the objectives and the policies for land use and development appropriate to the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland and which need to be considered on a scale wider than the individual District Council Area.

Plan Strategy:

The Plan Strategy sets out a growth strategy and outlines the strategic aims and objectives of the Local Development Plan. It is prepared following consultation on the Preferred Options Paper. Together with the Local Policies Plan, it will be the principle consideration when determining future planning applications for development in the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough area.

Preferred Options Paper (POP):

This sets out the key issues that the Local Development Plan needs to address, a series of options for dealing with them, with supporting evidence and justification for the preferred options. The POP is an early consultation paper in the Plan process to promote debate on issues of strategic significance which are likely to influence the shape of future development within the Borough.

Preparatory Paper:

A series of topic papers produced to establish the main social, economic and environmental characteristics, key issues and needs of the plan area.

Primary Retail Core (PRC):

A primary retail core defines the main

focus of retail activity within a city or town centre, and should be the area which encompasses new retail investment during the Plan period.

Programme for Government:

The Programme for Government is the highest level strategic document of the Executive – setting out the priorities.

Ramsar Site:

A wetland site designated of international importance under the Ramsar Convention 1971.

Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS):

A spatial strategy of the Northern Ireland Executive, its purpose is to deliver the spatial aspects of the Programme for Government. It complements the Sustainable Development Strategy and informs the spatial aspects of the strategies of all Government Departments.

Renewable Energy:

Any naturally occurring source of energy such as solar, wind, tidal wave, biomass and hydroelectric power that is not derived from fossil or nuclear fuel.

Rural Proofing:

Rural Proofing is the process where any major policy and strategy are assessed to determine whether they have a differential impact on rural areas, and where appropriate, make adjustments within their plans to take account of particular rural circumstances.

Scheduled Monuments:

Archaeological sites and monuments are scheduled for protection under the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995.

Section 75 Groups:

Nine key groups listed in section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 that traditionally have been under-represented or disadvantaged. Section 75 requires all Government Departments, Agencies and Councils to consider these groups when creating policy.

Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCIs):

Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance are identified within the process of preparing a development plan with policies provided in the plan for their protection and/or enhancement.

Social Housing:

Housing provided at an affordable rent by a registered Social Landlord ie. by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) or a Registered Housing Association (regulated by the Department for Communities as a social housing provider). This housing is offered in accordance with the Common Selection Scheme administered by the NIHE.

Soundness:

A set of key tests that underpin the Local Development Plan process, which require the Plan Documents to be tested at the Independent Examination, in terms of the coherence, consistency and effectiveness of proposals, their conformity with relevant policies and the process by which they were produced. A document will be sound if found to meet these tests.

Spatial Strategy:

A coherent long-term policy framework to guide and influence future development. It aspires to guide future development in an orderly, economic and sustainable manner.

Special Area of Conservation (SAC):

Are strictly protected sites of European importance, recognised for the threatened habitats and species they support.

Special Countryside Areas (SCA):

An area of countryside where it is proposed to provide a stricter policy control for those sensitive landscapes which merit special protection.

Special Protection Areas (SPA):

SPAs are sites established under the European Commission Directive of Wild Birds (2009/147/EC), commonly known as the 'Birds Directive'. SPAs are important

areas for breeding, overwintering and migrating birds.

Stakeholders:

Individuals or organisations who stand to gain or lose from the impact of a planning policy, proposal or decision. The term is used mostly to refer to bodies that will affect the delivery of a planning document's policies and proposals.

State Care Monuments:

Archaeological sites and monuments are taken into the care of the DfC under the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA):

A structured assessment-based process that aims to ensure the integration of environmental considerations in the preparation and adoption of plan, policy and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS):

The Department of the Environment's (now Department for Infrastructure) Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) published in 2015, sets out strategic subject planning policy for a wide range of planning matters. It also provides the core planning principles to underpin delivery of the two-tier planning system with the aim of furthering sustainable development. It sets the strategic direction for the new Councils to bring forward detailed operational policies within future local development plans.

Super Output Areas (SOA):

Statistics produced by NISRA for a small geographical area.

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG):

Supports, clarifies and offers guidance on policy in the LDP or other designations. It can relate to a topic or a specific area.

Supported Housing:

A range of both long and short-term accommodation provided for people

who need an additional level of housing related support to help them lead an independent life.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA):

A tool for appraising policies to ensure that they reflect sustainable development objectives through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations. Required by the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to be undertaken for all the Local Development Plan Documents, it is carried out in tandem with the SEA process (referred to above).

Sustainable Development Strategy (2010):

The NI Executive launched its new Sustainable Development Strategy, 'Everyone's Involved', on 27 May 2010. The strategy has been designed to provide a framework that can support and inform the decisions and actions taken by individuals, groups and organisations in progressing the sustainability agenda.

Sustainable Development:

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS):

A range of measures designed to alleviate the problems associated with hard and paved surfaces in urban environments, by storing or re-using surface water at source, thereby decreasing flow rates to watercourses and improving water quality.

Travellers:

A generic group as defined by the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 i.e. "having a shared history, culture and traditions, including a nomadic way of life."

Urban Capacity Study:

A study undertaken to assess the potential housing capacity of previously developed land within the built up areas of larger settlements.

Urban Footprint:

The Urban Footprint of a settlement limit is the continuous built up area which has

a formal urban use.

Urban Landscape Wedges:

Urban Landscape Wedges are areas with an open aspect or undeveloped natural areas that are identified and retained in order to separate areas of built development within settlements, provide a visual break and protect specific features such as prominent lands.

Urban Regeneration:

Urban Regeneration, also known as Urban Renewal or Renaissance, is a program of land or building redevelopment in areas of medium to high-density urban land use. It includes a focus on significant physical, economic, community and social interventions within a designated area. The development of masterplans and other strategies within an urban renewal area is an important part of the process in establishing a clear framework for the improvement and revitalization of these areas.

Viability:

A measure of a centres capacity to attract ongoing investment for maintenance, importance and adaptation to changing needs.

Vitality:

A measure of how busy a centre is.

Windfall Housing:

An estimate of the potential housing returns from previously developed land within the urban footprint which may become available for housing during the lifespan of the LDP.

Appendix B

Local Development Plan Preparatory Papers

Paper No.1	Population
Paper No.2	Housing
Paper No.3	Employment
Paper No.4	Town Centres
Paper No.5	Transportation
Paper No.6	Public Utilities
Paper No.7	Tourism
Paper No.8	Environmental Assets
Paper No.9	Education, Health & Community
Paper No.10	Open Space
Paper No.11	Landscape
Paper No.12	Minerals
Paper No.13	Pressure Analysis
Paper No.14	Strategic Settlement Evaluation

Appendix C

Existing Suite of Policy and Supplementary Guidance

Regional Guidance

- Regional Development Strategy 2035 (March 2012)

Regional Policy

- Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) (September 2015)

Planning Policy Statements (PPSs)

- **PPS 2:** Natural Heritage (July 2013)
- **PPS 3:** Access, Movement and Parking (February 2005)
- **PPS 4:** Planning and Economic Development (November 2010)
- **PPS 6:** Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage (March 1999)
- **PPS 6 (Addendum):** Areas of Townscape Character (August 2005)
- **PPS 7:** Quality Residential Environments (June 2001)
- **PPS 7 (Addendum):** Residential Extensions and Alterations (March 2008)
- **PPS 7 (Addendum):** Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas (August 2010)
- **PPS 8:** Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation (February 2004)
- **PPS 10:** Telecommunications (April 2002)
- **PPS 11:** Planning and Waste Management (December 2002)
- **PPS 12:** Housing in Settlements (July 2005)
- **PPS 12:** Policy HS 3 (Amended) 'Travellers Accommodation' (January 2013)
- **PPS 13:** Transportation and Land Use (February 2005)
- **PPS 15 (Revised):** Planning and Flood Risk (September 2014)
- **PPS 16:** Tourism (June 2013)
- **PPS 17:** Control of Outdoor Advertisements (March 2006)
- **PPS 18:** Renewable Energy (August 2009)
- **PPS 21:** Sustainable Development in the Countryside (June 2010)

- **PPS 23:** Enabling Development for the Conservation of Significant Places (April 2014)

Other Policy

- A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (September 1993)

Design Guides

- Living Places (September 2014)
- Building on Tradition – A Sustainable Design Guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside (May 2012)
- Creating Places: Achieving quality in residential environments (May 2000)
- Improving the Quality of Housing Layouts (May 2000)
- Conversation Area Guides

Development Control Advice Notes

- **DCAN 1:** Amusement Centres
- **DCAN 2:** Multiple Occupancy
- **DCAN 3:** Bookmaking Offices
- **DCAN 4:** Restaurants, Cafes and Fast Food Outlets
- **DCAN 5:** Taxi Offices
- **DCAN 7:** Public Houses
- **DCAN 8:** Housing in Existing Urban Areas
- **DCAN 9:** Residential and Nursing Homes
- **DCAN 10 (Revised):** Environmental Impact Assessment
- **DCAN 11:** Access for People with Disabilities
- **DCAN 12:** Planning Control for Hazardous Substances
- **DCAN 13:** Crèches, Day Nurseries and Pre-School Play Groups
- **DCAN 14:** Siting and Design of Radio Telecommunication Equipment
- **DCAN 15:** Vehicular Access Standards
- **Issued for Consultation:** Access for all – Designing for an Accessible Environment.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- (Draft) Supplementary Planning Guidance: Anaerobic Digestion (June 2013)
- Supplementary Planning Guidance: Wind Energy Development in Northern Ireland's Landscapes (August 2009)
- Supplementary Planning Guidance: Parking Standards (February 2005)
- Supplementary Planning Guidance: Transport Assessment (November 2006)
- Supplementary Planning Guidance – Policy PED 8: Development Incompatible with Economic Development Uses'
- Best Practice Guide to Planning Policy Statement 18 'Renewable Energy' (August 2009)
- Best Practice Guide to Planning Policy Statement 23 'Enabling Economic Development for the Conservation of Significant Places'
- Trees and Development: A Guide to Best Practice (May 2003)

Appendix D

List of Key Issues

Strategic Issues

Key Issue SGS 1: Defining a Settlement Hierarchy

Key Issue SGS 2: Allocating housing

Key Issue SGS 3: Allocating economic development lands

Social Theme Issues

Key Issue SOC 1: Supporting quality sustainable urban housing and balanced communities

Key Issue SOC 2: Supporting sustainable rural housing

Key Issue SOC 3: Supporting good design and positive place-making

Key Issue SOC 4: Protecting open space

Key Issue SOC 5: Facilitating open space / play provision in new largescale residential developments

Key Issue SOC 6: Facilitating community and cultural facilities to meet the needs of the Borough

Key Issue SOC 7: Facilitating development through Developer Contributions

Economic Theme Issues

Key Issue ECN 1: Zoning for economic development

Key Issue ECN 2: Locating Class B1 Business Uses

Key Issue ECN 3: Supporting Start-up and Grow-on Businesses

Key Issue ECN 4: Supporting sustainable rural economic development

Key Issue ECN 5: Defining a hierarchy of centres

Key Issue ECN 6: Protecting and strengthening town centres

Key Issue ECN 7: Supporting the evening and night-time economy

Key Issue ECN 8: Facilitating office development (Class A2 Uses)

Key Issue ECN 9: Identifying Development Opportunity Sites (DOSs)

Key Issue ECN 10: Supporting sustainable tourism development

Key Issue ECN 11: Supporting sustainable minerals development

Key issue ECN 12: Facilitating sustainable infrastructure, telecommunications and utilities development to meet the needs of the Borough

Key Issue ECN 13: Protecting the Borough's Protected Routes

Key Issue ECN 14: Protecting proposed strategic road improvement schemes

Key Issue ECN 15: Protecting the Borough's Disused Transport Routes

Key Issue ECN 16: Protecting key Park and Ride Sites

Key Issue ECN 17: Promoting active travel and sustainable transport

Key Issue ECN 18: Promoting and enhancing access to greenways

Environmental Theme Issues

Key Issue ENV 1: Protecting, conserving and enhancing built heritage and archaeological assets

Key Issue ENV 2: Protecting international, national and local nature conservation designations (that are designated outside the LDP process)

Key Issue ENV 3: Identifying and protecting local nature conservation designations

Key Issue ENV 4: Identifying and protecting Sensitive Landscapes

Key Issue ENV 5: Identifying and protecting Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs)

Key Issue ENV 6: Identifying and protecting Urban / Rural Landscape Wedges

Key Issue ENV 7: Developing within areas of flood risk (flood plains)

Key Issue ENV 8: Encouraging Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

Key Issue ENV 9: Facilitating appropriate renewable energy development

Key Issue ENV 10: Facilitating sustainable waste management

Appendix E

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Next Steps

This Preferred Options Paper (POP) identifies:

- a broad range of key strategic planning issues which are likely to influence the direction of future development within the Borough, during the life-time of the LDP (up to 2030);
- a range of options to address these issues; and
- the Council's preferred approach to addressing these issues, with justification.

It is hoped that the POP and associated documentation (published alongside) will encourage feedback from a wide variety of interested parties. All feedback received (relating to strategic issues), during the consultation period, will be taken into account during the preparation of the Draft Plan Strategy, the next stage in the LDP process.

After the close of the **9-week consultation (on 30 May 2018)**, a summary of all representations received will be presented to Elected Members in the form of a Public Consultation Report. This report will detail the strategic issues raised in the consultation responses. All representations will be held on a database which will be used for the

preparation of the LDP in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. The Public Consultation Report will be published on the Council's website and will also be considered during the Independent Examination of the Plan Strategy.

Representations made at the POP stage should relate to strategic matters only as these will be used to inform the preparation of the Draft Plan Strategy. There will be an opportunity, further on, at Local Policies Plan stage to submit representations of a site specific nature and such representations will only be considered at that stage.

Indicative timescales for the key stages in the LDP process are outlined in the Local Development Plan Timetable which is available to view on the Council's website at:

www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/resident/local-development-plan-residents/

The POP offers the opportunity for anyone who lives or has an interest in the future of the Borough to get involved in the Council's first Local Development Plan-making process, from this early stage.

We welcome your comments on our Preferred Options Paper.







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