



January 19th, 2017

Notice Of Meeting

You are invited to attend the Strategy Policy and Resources Committee Meeting to be held on **Thursday, 19th January 2017 at 5:00 pm** in **Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick.**

The Members of the Strategy Policy and Resources Committee are:-

Chair: Councillor P Brown

Vice Chair: Councillor C Enright

Members: Councillor T Andrews Councillor N Bailie

Councillor R Burgess Councillor P Byrne

Councillor M Carr Councillor W Clarke

Councillor S Doran Councillor M Murnin

Councillor B Ó'Muirí Councillor B Quinn

Councillor M Ruane Councillor G Sharvin

Councillor W Walker

Agenda

1 Apologies

Cllr Carr

Cllr Bailie

2 Declarations of Interest

3 Action Sheet of the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 15 December 2016 (copy attached)

[SPR-15122016.pdf](#)

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[Proposed New Scheme of Delegation - 19th December 2016 1A.pdf](#)

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[Proposed Changes to Planning Operating Protocol - 19th December 2016 1B.pdf](#)

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Local Development Plan

4 Local Development Plan - Statement of Community Involvement Consultation Draft (copy attached)

PLEASE NOTE THAT MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE ARE INVITED TO ATTEND FOR DISCUSSION ON THIS ITEM OF BUSINESS.

[SPR Report Jan'17 re Draft SCL.pdf](#)

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[Draft SCL.pdf](#)

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5 Local Development Plan: Preparatory Studies - Paper 7 - Tourism (copy attached)

[SPR Report Jan'17 re LDP Paper 7 - Tourism.pdf](#)

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[LDP Paper 7 - Tourism.pdf](#)

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6 Local Development Plan: Preparatory Studies - Paper 9 - Public Utilities (copy attached)

Community Planning and Well-being

7 Consultation on Proposals for the Updated Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM 2017) (copy attached)

NI Multiple Deprivation Measures SPR Report.pdf

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Appendix 1- NIMDM17-consultation.pdf

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NIMDM Response Appendix 2.pdf

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Communication

8 NMD Citizens Magazine (copy attached)

NMD Citizens Magazine Report.pdf

Page 261

For Consideration and/or Decision

9 Visit from School 7, Kirovsk in March 2017 (copy attached)

Report re Kirovsk.pdf

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10 Garden Area at junction of Kilmorey Street/River Street, Newry (copy attached)

Garden Area Kilmore St River St Newry.pdf

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Appendix 1.pdf

Page 264

Equality and Policy

11 Section 75 Policy Screening Report - Quarterly Report October - December 2016 (copy attached)

Report on Section 75 Policy Screening Report - Quarterly Report for period October - December 2016 for consideration at SP.pdf

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Quarterly Screening Report October - December 2016.pdf

Page 266

12 Northern Ireland Charter for Elected Member Development (copy attached)

[Elected Member Development Charter Report.pdf](#)

Page 269

[Charter Assessment report Nov 16.pdf](#)

Page 271

13 Review of Non-Domestic Rating System in NI - Roundtable Meeting (copy attached)

[Review of non domestic rating system in ni.pdf](#)

Page 279

14 Allocation of one outstanding Special Responsibility Allowance (copy attached)

[SRA allowances - SPR January 2017.pdf](#)

Page 280

15 Invitation to Partnership Panel Meeting - 31 January 2017 (copy attached)

For Noting.

[SUB-0004-2017 - Partnership Panel Meeting - 31 January 2017 - Reply to Council Chief Executives.pdf](#)

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[DRAFT Minutes of Partnership Panel meeting - 12 October 2016.pdf](#)

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[Partnership Panel Terms of Reference - Nov 2016.pdf](#)

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[Partnership Panel Standing Orders - Nov 2016.pdf](#)

Page 292

16 Peace IV (copy attached)

[PEACE IV January 2017.pdf](#)

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[Project Proposals PEACE IV.pdf](#)

Page 297

17 Shared Spaces and Services Application

18 Sister Cities Programme (copy attached)

SPR Agenda - Sister Cities Jan 2017.pdf

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Items Restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014

19 Saintfield Community Centre (copy attached)

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information).

Report to SPR Saintfield CC Jan 17.pdf

Not included

20 Report on Final Accounts for Victoria Lock Refurbishment Scheme (copy attached)

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information).

Victoria Lock.pdf

Not included

NMDDC - Victoria Lock - CPD Desktop Report on Final Accounts.pdf

Not included

Victoria Lock Final Account.pdf

Not included

21 Terms of Reference for a Review of the Big Screen, Newry (copy attached)

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information).

Report re Newry Big Screen.pdf

Not included

201617 NMDDC Big Screen investigation draft TOR to Council.pdf

Not included

22 Proposed Sale of Land at Saval Playing Fields to Saval GFC (copy attached)

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information).

<i>ReportSavalPlayingFields19012017.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
<i>Approval - Sale of additional land at Saval.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
<i>Land Transfer with Sightlines NM258-G-1-10 Final.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
<i>Land Transfer with Sightlines NM258-G-1-11 Final.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
<i>Saval GAC 29-12-16.docx.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>

23 LPS Valuation - Land adjacent to Ballyhornan Family Centre for construction of Ballyhornan 3G Sports Pitch (copy attached)

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information).

For noting.

<i>LPS valuation re Ballyhornan.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
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24 Employee Learning & Development Policy (copy attached)

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Council or a Government Department and employees of, or office holders under, the Council and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

<i>Report on Employee Learning & Development Policy.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
<i>Appendix 1-Learning & Development Policy.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>

25 Proposed Changes to Management Structures (copy attached)

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - Information in relation to any individual and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

<i>Proposed changes to Management Structures.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
<i>Appendix 1 - Existing approved Directorate Structures.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>
<i>Appx 2 - Proposed Directorate Structures.pdf</i>	<i>Not included</i>

Invitees

Cllr Terry Andrews	terry.andrews@downdc.gov.uk
Cllr Naomi Bailie	naomi.bailie@nmandd.org
Cllr Patrick Brown	patrick.brown@nmandd.org
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Cllr William Walker	william.walker@nmandd.org
Mrs Marie Ward	marie.ward@downdc.gov.uk

ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) – THURSDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2016 –

ITEMS STILL IN PROGRESS OR ON-GOING.

SPR/192/2016	Former Kindle Primary School – Business Case	Agreed - officer's recommendation to purchase the site from Department of Education in order to develop a community centre, subject to a full economic appraisal and business case being carried out on the site.	M Lipsett	On-going.	
ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2015					
SPR/210/2016	Derelict Site- Daisy Hill, Newry	<p>Agreed to:</p> <p>Declare the land as surplus.</p> <p>Request LPS to provide a current market valuation and a recommendation on the most appropriate way to dispose of the land.</p> <p>Concrete shed on-site to be demolished if required in advance of the proposed sale.</p> <p>Review and if necessary improve security at the site to reduce unauthorised entry/anti-social behaviour.</p>	K Scullion	Ongoing.	

ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) – THURSDAY 13 OCTOBER 2016 – ITEMS STILL IN PROGRESS OR ON-GOING.

SPR/223/2016	Report on Former Chairperson's Portraits	<p>It was agreed that the former Chairperson's portraits be disposed of as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the subjects of the original portraits are still alive, the 	A Robb	In progress.	
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		<p>portraits should be offered to them at nil consideration. If an individual does not respond or does not wish to accept his/her portrait the Council will hold it for a period of 3 months and then arrange for appropriate disposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the subject of a portrait is deceased the original portrait should be offered to his/her personal representatives in line with the distribution of estates priority list as set out in the Administration of Estates Act (NI) 1955 at nil consideration. • If there is more than one eligible person in an entitled group eg. if the deceased has no surviving married or civil partner and there are children and more than one child wishes to obtain the original portrait then the matter will be resolved by the drawing of lots. • Either the original portrait subject or any person claiming a portrait on his/her behalf will be responsible for collection of the portrait from Down County Museum and its care and maintenance thereafter, and will accept the portrait as seen i.e. in its existing condition. • If there was no interested party in obtaining a portrait the Council will hold same for a period of 3 months and then arrange for appropriate disposal. • The above process will be facilitated by Down County Museum. 			
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ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2015

SPR/236/2016	Right of Way Proposal at Ballyedmond, Killowen, Rostrevor	<p>It was agreed to accept the officer's recommendations as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of the details of the proposed Killowen Coastal Path around the Big Moat at Ballyedmond as per the presentation at the meeting, 	E McManus	Response awaited from Pat Savage or AECOM in response to E McManus e mail dated 19 Dec 2016 .	
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		<p>ie. the design drawings and technical specification.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A joint application for Planning Permission will be submitted by the Ballyedmond Estate and the Council for the creation of the proposed Coastal Path as per the approved details. 			
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ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) – THURSDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2016 – ITEMS STILL IN PROGRESS OR ON-GOING.

SPR/249/2016	Correspondence from Lidl re Planning Permission in Newcastle	Invitation from Lidl to meet with Councillors accepted.	E Curtis	Meeting date sought.	
SPR/250/2016	Disposal of Land at Carnbane Road, Newry beside Carnbane Playing Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to express an interest in the disposal of land at Carnbane Road, Newry as this land is important for the future management and development of Carnbane Playing Fields and the land is under Council control as present. The acquisition will also resolve any discrepancies in the Council boundary. • Council to seek a transfer at nominal value in the first instance. • If Council is successful in acquiring this land, the Council agree to re-imburse NIE for any costs incurred in the relocation of their equipment on this site in the event of development and also agree to enter into a Wayleave Agreement with NIE for the equipment. 	A Robb	Questionnaire returned to LPS to formally register the Council's interest in this matter.	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easements may also be required for Transport NI, BT and NI Water. 			
SPR/251/2016	Disposal of Land at Sugar Island, Newry	<p>Council to express an interest in the disposal of land at Sugar Island, Newry.</p> <p>Council to seek a transfer at nominal value in the first instance.</p>	B Magill	Questionnaire returned to LPS to formally register the Council's interest in this matter.	
SPR/257/2016	Peace IV	Application to be submitted to Shared Spaces and Services funding call for the John Doyle Peace Centre.	S Burns		

ACTION SHEET – STRATEGY, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING (SPR) – THURSDAY 15 DECEMBER 2016

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
SPR/267/2016	Proposed Changes to Planning Committee Operations	Proposals for the proposed changes to the Planning Committee to be referred back to a sub-committee of the Planning Committee for further discussion.	C O'Rourke	Planning Committee on 18/01/2017 considered and agreed changes to the Planning Scheme of Delegation and Operating Protocol, without the need to convene a workshop. These revised documents are attached at Appendix 1 of this Action Sheet for consideration by SPR Committee.	
SPR268/2016	Council's Response to Consultation on the Future Delivery of Electoral Services in Northern Ireland	Correspondence to be sent to the NIO requesting the number of postal applications that a Councillor can verify to be extended from 10.	L Hannaway	Response submitted in relation to Electoral Services.	
SPR/269/2016	Response to the Consultation on the Programme for Government	Response to the Consultation on the Programme for Government approved subject to the amendment suggested by Councillor Enright (that local regeneration powers should be delegated to Councils and Council to address infrastructure projects).	Nicola Doran	Approved.	

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
SPR/270/2016	Performance Improvement – Final Report from the Local Government Auditor	Findings of the Local Government Auditor concerning audit and assessment of the Council's compliance with the Duty of Performance Improvement in 2016-17 accepted.	J McBride	Findings accepted.	
SPR/275/2016	Items for Discussion at the Next Partnership Panel	<p>Following items agreed for inclusion on the Partnership Panel agenda on 31 January 2016:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Joint Working between education authorities and Councils on community/recreation provision. 2. Contribution from Transport NI towards grass cutting/maintenance carried out by Councils. 3. Community asset transfer scheme. 4. Planning process – response times by statutory consultees. 	L Hannaway	Agenda items agreed.	
SPR/276/2016	Council Constitution	Draft Council Constitution approved. To be tabled at the Council meeting on 9 January 2017.	L Hannaway	Approved.	
SPR/277/2016	Review Date – Committee Terms of Reference	Terms of Reference for Council's Committee structures and the corresponding Terms of Reference be undertaken within the first 3 months of the new Council and a review of Terms of Reference be undertaken by the Council.	L Hannaway	Approved.	
SPR/278/2016	Rates Support Grant	Council to jointly lobby the Minister for the Department for Communities regarding the importance of future Rates Support Grant allocations to Councils with Derry City & Strabane District Council.	L Hannaway		
SPR/279/2016	Correspondence received from East Border Region	Request from East Border Region to be referred to the Rates Estimates Process.	E Curtis	Efficiencies Working Group content for this to be included in the	

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
				2017/18 budget.	
SPR/280/2016	International Relations Policy & Reference Group	Reference Group to be established as a partnership between Council and external agencies to approve the Terms of Reference and Framework outlined in the report.	E Curtis	On-going.	
SPR/281/2016	Belfast City Region Growth Deal Briefing Session	<p>Agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newry, Mourne and Down Council agree to collaborate with Belfast City Council and Neighbouring Councils to advocate a City deal for the Eastern Region. 2. Senior Management and Party Group Leaders meet with their counterparts in the other Councils to discuss how the authorities can begin to work together in a wider partnership with a shared agenda. 3. Begin conversation with Louth County Council on linking into this initiative on a Cross Border basis. This may include revisiting the Twin City region arrangement developed in 2006. 	L Hannaway	Agreed.	
SPR/282/2016	Correspondence from the Department for Communities Regeneration Bill	Council to write to the Minister for Communities asking him to reconsider the decision not to progress the Regeneration Bill.	L Hannaway		
SPR/283/2016	Carlingford Lough Greenway – from Weir on Middlebank to Victoria Lock	Council to proceed to seek tenders for the second phase of the Greenway from the Weir on Middlebank to Victoria Lock and to carry out this scheme during 2017. The tender process project management and contract supervision to be carried out by the Phase 1 Consultant who was appointed to deal with the development of the	E McManus		

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
		Greenway from Newry to Victoria Lock with Consultancy costs to be funded by Council through the Landfill Communities Fund administered by Ulster Wildlife.			
SPR/284/2016	Peace IV Update	Letter of Offer as issued by SEUPB for the Councils Local Action Plan accepted. Proceed with implementation of non-risk aspects of the letter of offer, such as staff.	S Burns	Letter of Offer accepted.	

ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2015

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
SPR/288/2016	Ordinary Parental Leave Policy	Approved.	C Miskelly	Approved.	
SPR/289/2016	Car Purchase Assistance Scheme Policy	Approved.	C Miskelly	Approved.	
SPR/290/2016	Travelling & Expenses & Subsistence Policy & Procedures	Approved.	C Miskelly	Approved.	

SPR/291/2016	Recommendations for Collaborative Working Arising from the Dissolution of the Local Government Staff Commission	Approved.	L Hannaway	Approved.	
SPR/292/2016	Minutes of Efficiencies Working Group 18 November 2016	Approved.	J McBride	Approved.	
SPR/293/2016	Minutes of Efficiencies Working Group 30 November 2016	Approved.	J McBride	Approved.	
SPR/294/2016	Council Lands at Altnaveigh, Dorans Hill, Newry	Approved – proceed with sale of land to Thomas Davis GFC restricted to recreational use, subject to the conditions set out in the report.	D Carville.	Approved.	
SPR/295/2016	Tender for the Provision of Corporate Graphic Design Services	Tender for the provision of Corporate Graphic Design approved for a 6 month period, with the option to extend for a further period if required, compliant with the Council's Financial Policy and Procedures Regulations.	R Mackin	Ongoing.	
SPR/296/2016	Disabled Angling Facility – Whitewater, Kilkeel	Approved – recommendation relating to rental of land currently maintained by the Council subject to the completion of a suitable Legal Agreement and to the terms and conditions being agreed by the	A Robb	Approved.	

		Council's legal advisor.			
SPR/297/2016	Proposals to increase Permanent Headcount in the Planning Department	Decision to increase the permanent headcount in the Planning Department to be taken after the Efficiencies Working Group to be held on 22 December 2016.	C O'Rourke		



APPENDIX 1A

Scheme of Delegation: Delegation of Planning Applications, Enforcement and other Planning Matters.

Introduction

Section 31 of The Planning Act (NI) 2011 requires that the Council must prepare a scheme of delegation by which any application for planning permission for a development within the category of local developments or any application for consent, agreement or approval required by a condition imposed on a grant of planning permission for a development within that category is to be determined by a person appointed by the Council.

Part 4 Section 7 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 allows a Council Committee to delegate certain matters to an officer of the Council. In relation to the scheme of delegation for planning applications, enforcement and other planning matters the person appointed by the Council to exercise delegated powers is the Chief Planning Officer within the Council and those officers nominated by this officer in writing. Any reference to the Chief Planning Officer in Part 1-4 shall also be deemed to be a reference to those officers.

Scheme of Delegation for Planning Applications

The scheme of delegation for the determination of applications has been agreed by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and is set out in the following paragraphs.

Part 1. Planning Applications required under the Planning Act to be determined by the Planning Committee

The Planning Act (NI) 2011 and the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 state that the following categories of application cannot be delegated to officers:

- Applications which fall within the 'Major' category of development;
- An application for planning permission where the application is made by the Council or an elected member of the Council;
- The application relates to land in which the Council has an interest or estate.

Part 2. Delegated Planning Applications

The Chief Planning Officer is authorised to determine all planning applications that fall within the 'Local' category of development, applications in relation to tree preservation and those which relate to the issuing of consents and approvals, with the following exceptions:

- An application recommended for refusal **except where;**
 - **there are active Enforcement issues**
 - **all necessary documentation pertaining to the application, having been reasonably requested and, without reasonable justification, has not been provided within three weeks of the request**
- Applications which are significantly contrary to the development plan and which are recommended for approval;
- Applications attracting six or more material planning objections from different addresses where the officer's recommendation is for approval;
- Applications attracting a material planning objection from a statutory consultee, where the officer's recommendation is for approval;
- An application which the Chief Planning Officer considers should be brought before and decided by the Planning Committee;
- Applications referred to the Planning Committee by a Member of the Council who represents the DEA in which the land to which the application relates is situated, although in exceptional circumstances members from outside the DEA may be permitted to request the referral of an application to Committee. Any such referral, or request for referral where the application is not in the Member's DEA, must be made in writing to the Chief Planning Officer within 25 days of receipt of the application and accompanied by a material planning reason;
- Applications which are submitted by members of staff directly involved in the consideration of planning applications and officers of the Council at the level of Head of Service or above.

Part 3. Delegation of Enforcement Matters

The Chief Planning Officer is authorised to carry out the enforcement responsibilities set out within The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, together with all regulations and orders made under the said legislation, on behalf of the Council.

Part 4. Determination of Other Planning Matters

The following functions are also delegated to the Chief Planning Officer:

- The issuing of a certificate of lawful use or development;
- The making of a non-material change to a planning permission;
- The issuing of a correction notice;
- The screening of and determination decisions on development proposals required under the Environmental Impact Assessment or Habitats Regulations;
- Executing works in default of compliance with any notice or order or in an emergency, where empowered by statute, and recovering the costs of so doing;
- Temporary listing of buildings in urgent cases;
- Lodging objections, in consultation with the Chief Executive, in relation to local planning applications where the Council has been notified as part of the neighbourhood notification scheme;
- Generally carrying out all other statutory powers connected to the exercise of the planning functions which have been conferred upon the Council which are not specifically provided for within this Scheme of Delegation.

The Chief Planning Officer may, having taken legal advice, refer a decision back to Committee for reconsideration.

APPENDIX 1B

13

Comhairle Ceantair an Iúir Mhúrn agus an Dúin

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Planning Committee

Operating Protocol

INTRODUCTION

1. The following protocol has been developed for use by the Planning Committee (“the Committee”). It should be read alongside relevant provisions of the Council’s Standing Orders and the Code of Conduct for Councillors and is not intended to replace either document. The key aims of the protocol are to ensure that the Committee makes decisions in a sound, lawful and transparent way and in a timely and efficient manner.

REMIT OF THE COMMITTEE

2. The primary roles of the Committee will include:
 - (a) Consideration of applications for planning permission and consents in accordance with the Council’s Scheme of Delegation.
 - (b) Exercising the Council’s powers and duties in relation to planning policies and plan strategies.
 - (c) Responding to consultations in relation to regionally significant or major applications to be determined by the Department of Environment or relevant Department.
 - (d) Responding to consultations issued by the Department of Environment or relevant Department, or any other Department, in relation to planning matters.

FREQUENCY & TIME OF MEETINGS

3. It is recommended the Committee shall meet every fourth week, though there should be flexibility for additional meetings if required.
4. Dates and times will be advertised at least 5 days in advance on the Council website and at the Council's main offices at Downpatrick and Newry.

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

5. As required by Section 31 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 the Council will operate a scheme of delegation for planning, outlining delegation both to the Committee and Officers (this can be found on the Council's website and at the Council's main offices at Downpatrick and Newry). The overall objective is to ensure that arrangements for decision-making on applications for local developments are effective whilst ensuring that proposals that raise strong local views or issues for the district can be dealt with by elected members. Delegating determination of some planning applications to Officers is also seen as a critical factor affecting the overall performance of the development management process as it helps ensure that decisions are taken at the most appropriate level, procedures are clear and transparent, costs are minimised and members have more time to concentrate on complex applications.
6. The following applications cannot be delegated and therefore must be presented to the Planning Committee for determination:
 - Applications which fall within the Major category of development;
 - An application for planning permission where the application is made by the Council or an elected member of the Council;
 - The application relates to land in which the Council has an interest or estate.

7. The Scheme of Delegation delegates all local development applications to Officers for determination, whether for approval or refusal, except in relation to the following circumstances which must be presented to the Planning Committee for determination:

- An application recommended for refusal **except where;**
 - **there are active Enforcement issues**
 - **all necessary documentation pertaining to the application, having been reasonably requested and, without reasonable justification, has not been provided within three weeks of the request**
- Applications which are significantly contrary to the development plan and which are recommended for approval;
- Applications attracting six or more material planning objections from different addresses where the officer's recommendation is for approval;
- Applications attracting material planning objection from a statutory consultee, where the officer's recommendation is for approval;
- An application which the Chief Planning Officer considers should be brought before and decided by the Planning Committee;
- Applications referred to the Planning Committee by a Member of the Council who represents the DEA in which the land to which the application relates is situated, although in exceptional circumstances members from outside the DEA may be permitted to request the referral of an application to Committee. Any such referral, or request for referral where the application is not in the Member's DEA, must be made in writing to the Chief Planning Officer within 25 days of receipt of the application and accompanied by a material planning reason
- Applications which are submitted by members of staff directly involved in the consideration of planning applications and officers of the Council at the level of Head of Service or above.

8. Enforcement activities are also delegated to The Chief Planning Officer. The Committee will receive regular reports on enforcement matters.

9. All Members of the Council will receive a weekly list containing details of all valid applications received and all decisions issued under the scheme of delegation.

FORMAT OF MEETINGS

10. Committee Meetings (dates, times and papers) will be published on the Council's website at least 5 days in advance.
11. Case Officer Reports will also be available on the Northern Ireland Planning Portal.

12. Committee papers will typically include the following:

- a) Minutes of the previous meeting for approval;

For decision/discussion

- b) Details of non-delegated applications (including those brought back following deferral) for consideration by the Committee;
- c) Details of applications of regional significance with an impact upon the Council area in respect of which the Council is a statutory consultee or where it may wish to make representations;
- d) **Correspondence received from statutory consultees**

For noting

- e) Details of proposed pre-determination hearings;
- f) Details of delegated applications for noting only by the Committee;
- g) Details of appeals (notified and concluded).

13. Members, staff directly involved in the consideration of planning applications and Officers of the Council at the level of Head of Service or above must pass to the Planning Case Officer any representation(s) received in respect of a planning application for inclusion in the planning file.

14. A quorum, as outlined in the Council's Standing Orders, is required for the Committee to convene; the quorum being half (six) of the members of the Committee.
15. Members will be required to declare an interest in any item on the agenda at the beginning of the meeting and must then leave the table when the matter in which they have declared an interest is being discussed. Once a decision had been made in respect of that item, the Member will then be invited to return to the table before consideration of the next item commences.
The Democratic Services Officer will record when members enter and leave the room during the course of the Meeting.
16. The Committee will discuss each application that has been presented, **for a maximum of 20 minutes (with extension at the Chair's discretion)**, before taking a vote on one of the following options:
 - a) Approve the application with conditions as recommended;
 - b) Approve the application with amendments to the recommended conditions;
 - c) Approve the application contrary to Officer recommendations;
 - d) Refuse the application for the reasons recommended;
 - e) Refuse the application with additional, fewer or amended reasons;
 - f) Refuse the application contrary to Officer recommendations;
 - g) Defer the application with a direction for additional information or clarification; or for a Members' site visit.
17. The Committee can defer consideration of an application to a subsequent meeting for further information, further negotiations or a site visit. Deferrals have an adverse effect on processing times, and the applicant can lodge an appeal after a period of time if the Council has not made a decision. The Committee will therefore generally only defer an application once. The Member proposing deferral must provide clear relevant planning related reasons as to why a deferral is necessary. **If a Committee Member was not present for the initial discussion/debate in relation to a deferred application, or did not attend a site**

visit, he/she cannot participate in the discussion on, nor vote on that application when it is subsequently presented to Committee.

18. The Chair has a casting vote.
19. Members must be present for the entire item, including the Officer's introduction and update, otherwise they cannot take part in the debate or vote on that item. However the Chairperson of the Planning Committee can use their discretion in exceptional circumstances in accordance with the Council's standing orders.
20. Following issue of the agenda Committee Members may request the attendance of statutory consultees and this request must be submitted through the Chief Planning Officer at least one week in advance of the Committee Meeting.

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

21. Meetings of the Committee will be open to the public, however, seating within the Committee Chamber will be limited according to the venue capacity and associated fire and safety regulations.
22. Seating for the applicant and/or their agent and objectors will be reserved but only for the time during which the relevant application is being considered. Otherwise seating will be on first come first served basis.
23. If a member of the public wishes to speak at Committee they must contact Democratic Services by telephone or by email (democratic.services@nmandd.org) at least 5 working days before the date of the meeting at which the application will be considered. Only those who have made written submissions in respect of a planning application and registered a request to speak in respect of the application shall be permitted to make oral representations before the Committee.

24. Each deputation who wishes to appear before the Committee shall submit a prepared statement in advance of the meeting and shall only be permitted to speak to that statement, except in those circumstances outlined elsewhere in the Protocol, when addressing the Committee. Deputations will not be permitted to circulate papers to members at the Committee Meeting.
25. All information must be submitted a minimum of 5 working days in advance of the Committee Meeting to ensure that the issues raised can be fully processed and considered by officers prior to the Committee Meeting. Late information may therefore be disregarded or result in consideration of the application being deferred if officers have not had an opportunity to fully investigate and process said information. In deciding whether to disregard late information Committee will consider whether it is fair in all the circumstances to allow the late information to be submitted, and in particular whether the information is material, how long the party seeking to introduce it has known about its existence; the length and reason for any delay and the promptness with which the party seeking to rely on the late information acted.
26. All Committee papers will be available online. However, access to some documentation may be restricted by virtue of the Council's publication policy. Information which is determined to be exempt by virtue of Schedule 6 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014 may be published where the Council considers that the public interest in disclosing same outweighs the public interest in maintaining the exemption.
27. Documentation should not be provided directly to a Council Member. However, if documentation is provided directly to any member of the Council in relation to a particular application it must be copied to Democratic Services Section and to the Chief Planning Officer.
28. Deputations shall be heard in the following order:
 - a) Objectors and/or their representatives;
 - b) Applicant and/or their representatives and/or those supporting the application

29. The Council will not notify applicants or those who have made representations in respect of a particular planning application that a request to address the Committee has been received. Applicants and those who have made representations in respect of a particular application that appears on the Committee agenda may contact Democratic Services in advance of the relevant meeting to ascertain whether there have been any such applications.
30. Only one deputation on behalf of those objecting to the application will be permitted to address the Committee. Only one deputation on behalf of the applicant and/or those supporting the application will be permitted to address the Committee. Additionally Elected Members from the DEA specific to the planning application may make the representation in line with paragraphs 46, 47 and 48.
31. Deputations, unless otherwise agreed in advance by the Committee, shall consist of no more than 3 persons. Where there are 3 or more persons or groups wishing to address the Committee they will be required to arrange a single deputation to express their representations.
32. If more than 3 persons have registered a request to speak in support of or in objection to an application, the Council will notify, in so far as reasonably practicable, those persons that they may not be guaranteed an opportunity to address the Committee. They will be invited to attend Council offices an hour before the Committee is due to start so that they can agree a deputation of speakers. If agreement cannot be reached the places on the deputation shall be allocated by planning officers so as to ensure that the deputation is representative of the range of issues raised by those who have made representations.
33. The applicants or their representatives, right to address committee shall be prioritised over other persons/groups wishing to speak in support of an application.

34. Deputations shall be confined to the making of a 5 minute address either by each member of the deputation or, should they so wish, by their nominated spokesperson or legal advisor.
35. Each deputation shall be permitted a maximum of 5 minutes to address the Committee. Where more than one person wishes to speak, the 5 minutes will be shared between the members of the deputation.
36. All members of a deputation must continue to be seated and remain silent whilst other deputations are being made to the Committee.
37. Cross-examination, discussion or any type of debate between persons making representation to Committee shall not be permitted.
38. Once all deputations have been made, by invitation of the Committee Chair, the parties shall be permitted an opportunity to rebut any factual inaccuracies which may have arisen from the oral representations of another deputation but it will only be permitted in respect of a factual inaccuracy which they have not had a previous opportunity to comment upon. This will be strictly limited to responding to any such issue and the party will not be permitted to rehearse representations which have already been made.
39. The Committee may, upon advice from officers, exclude any deputation from being present during the whole or part of the time due to the confidential nature of the information being presented; or for such other reasons as may be deemed appropriate having regard to Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.
40. The Committee may seek clarification from those who have spoken on any issues raised by them but must not enter into a debate.
41. Officers can address any issues raised during the course of representations from any deputation and the Committee may seek clarification from officers.

42. The Chair will ensure that those making representation to the Committee adhere to the time limits set out in this protocol. These time limits will have been communicated to those making representations in advance of the meeting.
43. The Chair may at any time during the hearing of deputations, if they think it necessary to secure order, suspend the meeting and direct the removal of any individual from the meeting, or order that the meeting be cleared of all deputations.
44. When hearing deputations, the Chair will require members engaging in debate to desist, until such time as all relevant information has been received.
45. The Chair may bring the questioning of any person appearing before the Committee to a close provided s/he is satisfied that all relevant issues have been addressed. The Chairperson may also prevent duplication of questions being put.
46. If a member of the Committee moves that the question be put to a vote and the Chair is of the opinion that the application before the Committee has been sufficiently discussed, s/he shall put the motion to the vote.

REPRESENTATIONS BY MEMBERS

47. Members who represent the DEA specific to the location of a planning application, and who wish to address the Committee, must notify Democratic Services 5 working days prior to the Committee meeting. These speaking rights are not extended to Members from outside the specific DEA unless a Member from outside the DEA has previously requested the application be referred to the Committee in accordance with Paragraph 7 of this Protocol.
48. All information must be submitted a minimum of 5 working days in advance of the Committee Meeting to ensure that the issues raised can be fully processed and considered by officers prior to the Committee Meeting. Late information may

therefore be disregarded or result in consideration of the application being deferred if officers have not had an opportunity to fully investigate and process said information. DEA Members, or other Members wishing to address the Committee who have complied with Paragraph 7 of this Protocol, will not be permitted to circulate papers to Committee Members at the Meeting.

49. DEA Members who wish to address the Committee, or other Members wishing to address the Committee who have complied with Paragraph 7 of this Protocol, will be permitted to do so for a maximum of 2 minutes. This 2 minutes to be shared among all DEA Members wishing to address the Committee, regardless of the number of Members to speak.
50. Those members who sit on the Committee and wish to support or oppose an application are free to do so but cannot take part in the decision-making process. It is important that the public see that they are not acting in their capacity as a Committee member. When that application is being discussed the member must leave their seat and sit with the other parties who are making representations. Once a decision has been made on that application the member can return to their seat as part of the Committee.

DECISIONS CONTRARY TO OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

51. The power to decide an application lies with the Committee and it is entitled to come to a decision contrary to Officers' recommendations.
52. Any such decision may be subject to legal challenge and Members must therefore ensure that the rationale for the decision is fully explained and based on proper planning considerations.
53. The Chief Planning Officer or other Senior Planning Officer and/or the Council's Legal Advisor will always be given the opportunity to explain the implications of the Committee's decision prior to a vote being taken on any such proposal.

54. The reasons for the decision contrary to the Officer's recommendation must be formally recorded in the minutes and a copy placed on the planning application file/electronic record.

DECISIONS CONTRARY TO PLANNING POLICY

55. In general, planning decisions should be taken in accordance with the relevant Development Plan and any other associated planning policy documents. If a Committee Member proposes, seconds or supports a decision contrary to the local Development Plan they will need to clearly identify and understand the planning reasons for doing so, and clearly demonstrate how these reasons justify departure from the relevant Development Plan. The reasons for any decisions which are made contrary to the relevant Development Plan must be formally recorded in the Minutes and a copy placed on the planning application file/electronic record.

PRE- DETERMINATION HEARINGS

56. The Committee must hold pre-determination hearings for those major developments which have been subject to notification in accordance with Regulation 7 of the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (NI) 2015 (i.e. referred to the Department but returned to the Council for determination) prior to the application being determined.
57. If the case officer recommends approval in the circumstances set out within The Planning (Notification of Applications) Direction 2015, the application will be reported to Committee as a minded to approve report. If Committee is minded to agree with the officer recommendation, the application must be notified to the Department who may decide to 'call in' the application. If the Department do not 'call in' the application, Committee must hold a pre-determination hearing and all those persons who submitted representations to the application should be afforded an opportunity to appear before the Committee, subject to the provisions of this Protocol. No decision is taken at a pre-determination hearing.

58. The Committee may also hold a pre-determination hearing, at its own discretion, where the Committee considers it necessary to do so.
59. A pre-determination hearing will take place after the expiry of the period for making representations on the application but before the Committee meeting which is due to determine the application.
60. After the pre-determination hearing, officers will prepare a report taking into account the representations made and present that to a subsequent Committee which then proceed to determine the application. In exceptional circumstances the Committee may depart from that procedure and hold the pre-determination meeting and substantive decision making meeting on the same date.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

61. The Local Development Plan will be prepared by the Development Plan Team and considered and agreed by Council's Strategy Policy and Resources Committee in conjunction with the Planning Committee. It will then require approval by resolution of the Council.
62. The Strategy Policy and Resources Committee, in conjunction with the Planning Committee, shall ensure that the Local Development Plan is monitored annually, particularly in terms of the availability of housing and economic development land.
63. The Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee, in conjunction with the Planning Committee, shall review the Local Development Plan every five years.

SITE VISITS

64. Site visits may be arranged subject to Committee agreement. They should normally only be arranged where the impact of the proposed development is difficult to visualise from the plans and other available material and the expected benefit outweighs the delay and additional costs that will be incurred.
65. No one, other than Members of the Committee and Officers plus any other statutory consultees, may participate in a site visit.
66. Members will not carry out their own unaccompanied site visits as there may be issues around permission to access the land, they will not have all of the relevant information from the relevant Planning Officer and, if a Councillor is seen with an applicant or objector, it might lead to allegations of bias.
67. A nominated officer shall attend the site visit and will record the date of the visit, attendees and any other relevant information. This record will be placed on the planning application file/electronic record.
68. The Chairperson, or Deputy Chairperson in the Chairperson's absence, with the assistance of Council Officers present, will ensure that the site visit is conducted in accordance with this Protocol and the Code of Conduct for Councillors and will ensure that the merits of the application are not discussed.
69. The Planning Officer will remind Members, at the outset of the site visit, of the proposal and the main issues.

Report to:	Strategy, Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Newry, Mourne and Down Draft Statement of Community Involvement
Date:	19 January 2017
Reporting Officer:	Anthony McKay, Chief Planning Officer
Contact Officer:	Andrew Hay, Principal Planning Officer

Decisions Required

Note the content of this report and agree the recommendations.

1.0 Purpose & Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a draft of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which outlines how the Council proposes to engage the community and stakeholders in exercising its planning functions.
- 1.2 The publication of an SCI is required under Stage 1: Initial Plan Preparation as part of the Local Development Plan process. While the SCI addresses all the planning functions, including Development Management and Planning Enforcement, in relation to the Local Development Plan (LDP), the Council has a statutory requirement to have an agreed SCI in place before it can consult on its 'Preferred Options Paper', which will be the first formal publication as part of the LDP process.
- 1.3 The Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 state that before preparing an SCI the Council must also consider whether it is appropriate to invite representations from persons who have an interest in development in the District. If public consultation is undertaken on the SCI then the Council must also take into account any representations received before the document is sent to the Department for Infrastructure for its agreement.
- 1.4 Officers consider it would be appropriate for the Council to invite representations on its SCI. If Members agree that it should carry out this discretionary public consultation, officers will seek to attract community participation over a 4 week period using the following measures:
 - Place a copy of the draft SCI on the Council's website.
 - Place a notice in local newspapers for 2 consecutive weeks.
- 1.5 Following completion of the consultation period Officers will analyse and take account of the responses received before presenting the final version of the SCI for Members' agreement. Subject to receiving that agreement, the SCI will then be sent to the Department for Infrastructure who have 4 weeks to comment.

2.0 Key Issues

- 2.1 The attached draft SCI explains how the community and stakeholders will be involved in the preparation of the Local Development Plan as well as Development Management and Planning Enforcement.

2.2	The draft SCI sets out the steps that the Council will take to facilitate community involvement and sets out the vision and strategy for involving the community and stakeholders at various stages of the planning process.
2.3	The draft SCI sets out the standards to be met by a Council in terms of the community involvement, building upon the minimum requirements set out on both the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. The document has been prepared in accordance with the DOE guidance 'Development Plan Practice Note 2: Statement of Community Involvement' (Version 2: August 2015)
2.4	<p>The document outlines the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The background and purpose of the SCI. • Why planning is important. • The principles and benefits of community Involvement. • Alignment to the Community Plan. • How and when the community can engage in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The LDP ○ Development Management. ○ Planning Enforcement. • The opportunity for community involvement in other planning functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supplementary Planning Guidance. ○ Conservation Area designation. ○ Simplified Planning Zone Area designation.
2.5	It is intended to provide a proactive and timely approach to community involvement through a process of providing clear information and encouraging participation during plan preparation and planning application submission, assessment and determination.
3.0	<u>Recommendations</u>
3.1	<p>Members are requested to note the content of this report.</p> <p>The Committee is asked to agree;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft Statement of Community Involvement. • That the draft SCI be subject to a 4 week public consultation period during which representations will be invited using the following measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the draft SCI be published on the Council website for a 4 week period. ○ a notice be placed in the local press for 2 consecutive weeks.
4.0	<u>Resource Implications</u>
4.1	N/A
5.0	<u>Equality Assessment</u>
	The draft SCI has taken account of the Council's Equality Scheme. Para 3.2.6 of the Equality Scheme states that a consultation period should last for a minimum of 12 weeks. However, in exceptional circumstances, the Council may shorten timescales to 8 weeks or less. Given the timeframe for the preparation of the LDP, and as consultation on the SCI is not a statutory requirement, a consultation period of 4 weeks is considered adequate.
6.0	<u>Appendices</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Statement of Community Involvement



Comhairle Ceantair
**an Iúir, Mhúrn
 agus an Dúin**
**Newry, Mourne
 and Down**
 District Council

Statement of Community Involvement

A guide to community engagement in the planning process

January 2017

Consultation Draft

Responding to this Consultation Document

How to Respond

You are invited to send your views on this draft Statement of Community Involvement. Comments should reflect the structure of the document as far as possible with references to paragraph numbers where relevant.

All responses should be in writing and submitted to us no later than the **xx xxx** 2017 in one of the following ways:

By email: planning@nmandd.org

By post to: Development Plan Team
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Downpatrick Office
Downshire Civic Centre
Downshire Estate, Ardglass Rd
Downpatrick BT30 6GQ

We look forward to receiving responses to the proposals and issues raised with this consultation document. Your representations will be made public. We will publish your name and organisation however we will not publish information we consider sensitive, including your address, email address and telephone number.

Additional copies of the consultation document can be downloaded from our website at www.nmandd.org or requested via the postal address, email as above, or by telephone on 0300 013 2233.

To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, copies of this document in alternative formats are available on request. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.

If you have any queries regarding this document please contact us using the details above.

Advisory Note:

This Statement of Community Involvement in the Planning process is not intended to be a source of definitive legal advice. Reference should be made to the actual legislation referred to in this statement and if any discrepancy exists the provisions of the legislation will prevail.

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1.0 Introduction

Our Statement of Community Involvement: Background and Purpose

- 1.1 Following the transfer of planning powers to local councils on the 1st April 2015 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has become the main decision maker on the majority of planning applications within its District and is the body responsible for the production of its local development plan.
- 1.2 The purpose of this statement is to set out policy for involving the community in the production of the Newry, Mourne and Down Local Development Plan and the consideration of planning applications. It describes who, together with how and when the community will be invited to participate in the different stages of both plan formulation and the determination of planning applications.
- 1.3 The term 'community' embraces all the individuals, groups and organisations that make Newry, Mourne and Down what it is and extends to local residents, business, voluntary and community groups and local and national organisations with interests in planning matters.
- 1.4 The requirement to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was introduced in the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. The Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 came into operation on the 1st April 2015 and set out the process that the Council must follow in preparation of its SCI. The Council do not however see community involvement as just a statutory requirement, it has a positive role to play in helping to identify local issues, inform policy-making, provide feedback on service delivery and create a sense of local ownership.

Why is Planning Important?

- 1.5 The planning system directly affects the environment that we live in, where we live, work, shop and spend our leisure time. Planning decisions determine where new homes, offices, shops and leisure facilities go and what happens to our countryside, open spaces and historic environment. In doing so it influences our quality of life and general well-being.
- 1.6 Planning has to balance competing land uses, shaping places by setting out the vision for how communities will change. For many people planning is something they only get involved with when a development directly affects them, this can sometimes be too late to really influence the process. By getting involved in the early stages of local planning policy formulation as well as the end stage of specific planning applications, you can help to shape the way your local environment looks and works. This document sets out how you can do this.

A Vision of Participation

- 1.7 The Council is committed to ensuring that all council engagement is meaningful, inclusive and fit for purpose and that all its citizens share a sense of effective participation in the decision making process. The Council therefore aims to ensure that:
 - (i) Everyone has an early and informed opportunity to express their views on the development of the area and have it considered before decisions are made; and
 - (ii) All groups in our community, regardless of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, sex, marital status, physical ability, sexual orientation, and those with and without dependants are enabled and empowered to participate.
- 1.8 It is intended to adopt a proactive and timely approach to community involvement through a process of providing clear information and encouraging participation during plan preparation. The process must therefore be informative, user friendly, as inclusive as possible, and conducted in an open and transparent way. Every effort is to be made to engage the community, record views and provide feedback throughout the process.

Principles of Community Involvement

- 1.9 The Council's approach to community involvement is based on a number of key principles.
 - **Culture of engagement.** People should know that they are encouraged to take part in the planning process, and that decision makers are interested in their views;
 - **Early involvement.** The community should be involved at an early stage in the preparation of local development documents and major development proposals;
 - **Appropriate Consultation Methods.** Methods used to encourage involvement should be appropriate to people's experience and needs. Arrangements for consultation need to be appropriate for the type of document or application being considered and realistic in terms of available resources.
 - **Clarity.** The planning process and timetables for producing or reviewing local development documents should be clear so that people are able to participate in a timely and effective manner.

What are the benefits of community involvement in Planning?

- 1.10 There are many benefits to involving local communities in the consideration of planning applications, and in the development of plans and policies for their local council area, including:
- a greater focus on the priorities identified by local communities;
 - a greater influence on the provision of local services to ensure they are better able to meet local needs;
 - the suggesting new ways and ideas for achieving objectives;
 - a shared ownership of key policy documents;
 - an increased support for local planning policies; and
 - an increased understanding of how planning policies are developed and how they are linked to each other and other documents produced by the Council.
- 1.11 Community involvement is important to the Council to ensure that the services being delivered tackle issues identified by local communities. It also helps to set priorities, in the context of limited resources, and to ensure that the Council's services are customer focused.

Alignment to the Community Plan

- 1.12 The Local Government Act 2014 introduces a statutory link between the Council's community plan and its local development plan (LDP), in that the preparation of the LDP must take account of the community plan.
- 1.13 Community Planning is "a process led by a council in conjunction with partners and communities to develop and implement a shared vision for their area, a long term vision which relates to all aspects of community life and which also involves working together to plan and deliver better services which make a real difference to people's lives."¹
- 1.14 The Council's Community Plan will identify long term objectives for improving:
- (i) the social well-being of the district;
 - (ii) the economic well-being of the district; and
 - (iii) the environmental well-being of the district.

Review of the Council's SCI

- 1.15 The body of the SCI will also be reviewed after 5 years to ensure fitness of purpose. It may also be necessary to review the SCI at an earlier date to take account of major legislative changes.

¹ Extract from Northern Ireland Community Planning Foundation Programme Version 1 October 2013.

2.0 The Local Development Plan

Purpose, Structure and Process

- 2.1 The purpose of the Newry, Mourne and Down Local Development Plan (LDP), is to inform the general public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested bodies of the policy framework and land use proposals that will guide development decisions within Newry, Mourne and Down District up to 2030.
- 2.2 The LDP will be prepared within the context of the Council's Corporate Plan and Community Plan. It will also take account of regional policy context set by the Northern Ireland Executive and Central Government Departments. This includes, amongst others, The Programme for Government, The Everyone's Involved - Sustainable Development Strategy, The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) and The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).
- 2.3 At the outset of the plan process a timetable will be prepared and published. The timetable will set out the Council's programme for production of the LDP, and will include key milestones and timelines for plan preparation, covering all elements of the process through to adoption.
- 2.4 The LDP will comprise two separate documents, the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan. Prior to development of these documents key planning issues will be identified and a range of options for addressing these issues will be brought forward through a Preferred Options Paper.
- 2.5 The Plan Strategy will be developed first and will define the strategic objectives for the future development of the District. It will include a range of strategic policies to facilitate and manage development and a spatial strategy that will indicate where different types of development will be promoted. Once the Plan Strategy is adopted the Local Policies Plan will be prepared. This will include site specific proposals, policy designations and land use zonings required to deliver the Plan Strategy, objectives, and strategic policies.
- 2.6 The LDP will be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal which will run in parallel with preparation of the Preferred Options Paper, Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan. The Sustainability Appraisal process aims to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which policies and proposals in the LDP, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve social, economic and environmental objectives.
- 2.7 The LDP will, on adoption, replace the current development plans for the District (the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 and the Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015) and operational planning policies that were produced by the Department of the Environment.

Who can get involved?

- 2.8 Anyone who wishes to get involved in the preparation of this local development plan will be encouraged to do so at the opportunities provided. In particular the views of the following groups of people will be sought:

- people living within the Newry, Mourne and Down District;
- elected representatives;
- voluntary groups;
- community forums / groups / umbrella organisations;
- environmental groups;
- residents groups;
- business interests; and
- developers / landowners.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive nor is it intended to restrict any individual group, or organisation from participating in the plan making process.

- 2.9 Elected members, forums, community and residents groups provide a voice for the local community. Other voluntary and interest groups also bring a special knowledge and can ensure that important concerns are addressed.

Empowering disadvantaged and under-represented groups

- 2.10 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires a public authority, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:

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

- 2.11 In addition, without prejudice to the above obligations, public authorities are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or race. The above "Section 75 groups" are important participants within the planning process and include people who traditionally have been under represented or disadvantaged. These groups will be targeted through the consultation process on the local development plan in order to obtain their views and contribute to the consideration of equality issues under Section 75. Their views on any equality screening documents or draft Equality Impact Assessments will also be sought within the specified period for comment along with the draft Plan Strategy and draft Local Policies Plan.

- 2.12 To ensure that Local Development Plan and consultation documents are accessible to everyone they will be made available in alternative formats upon request. Alternative formats may include Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.

How and when will the Community be involved?

- 2.13 The formulation of a local development plan involves a number of key stages each presenting opportunities for community involvement. These stages are: Data Collection; publication and adoption of the Plan Strategy; publication and adoption of the Local Policies Plan and Monitoring and Review. The actions will fulfil the statutory requirements on public consultation, as set out in the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.
- 2.14 The LDP Timetable will outline an indicative timeframe for each of the stages. Council will give notice, by local advertisement, of the availability of the timetable, which can be viewed on the Council's website and at the Council's Planning Offices at Monaghan Row, Newry and the Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick during normal working hours (and at any other places within the District that the Council considers appropriate).

Next Steps

- 2.15 Council must carry out a review of its LDP every five years and no later than five years from the date that the local policies plan was first adopted or approved. A report on the findings of the review must be sent to the Department for Infrastructure (DfI).

Stages in the LDP Process

Stage 1: Data Collection

- 2.16 The purpose of the data collection stage is to establish whether a new plan is needed the key issues to be addressed and the options for addressing them. This will be undertaken using a topic based approach accompanied with a Countryside Assessment. By the end of this stage a timetable for plan preparation and the SCI will be agreed. A Preferred Options Paper (POP) will be prepared together with Scoping Reports for the Sustainability Appraisal including Strategic Environmental Appraisal and Equality Impact Assessment.

What we will do:

- Following approval of the timetable by the Council and the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) we will issue a Public Notice in the local newspapers (see Appendix G) for two consecutive weeks. This notice will confirm details of the following:
 - (i) the LDP timetable is available for public inspection; and
 - (ii) the locations and times it can be inspected.
- We will set up a Steering Group comprising elected members and Senior Council Officers (to be determined by the Council). This is the high-level co-ordinating body that will ensure overview and strategic input on behalf of the whole community, as well as from the planning professionals.
- We will set up a Project Management Team comprising Senior Council Officers and representatives from the key statutory/government departments will also be invited. The purpose of the team is to facilitate key consultee cooperation in the plan making process. The Project Management team will be consulted on and act as the screening and scoping group for the Sustainability Appraisal, including Strategic Environmental Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment.
- We will issue invitations to key consultees (see Appendix B) requesting them to participate in the plan making process by providing information on the key strategic issues that the Local Development Plan should address.
- We will invite under represented (Section 75) groups to identify whether there are any types of planning policies which are likely to have a significant impact on the groups they represent.
- We will send the Scoping Report of the Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) as the statutory consultation body.

Stage 2: Formal Notice of LDP Preparation

- 2.17 This stage represents the formal commencement of work on the Local Development Plan. It commences with the publication of the Preferred Options Paper (POP) which will set out the key plan issues, identify a range of options available to address them and define our preferred options. The POP will be subject to a period of public consultation to promote debate on issues of strategic significance which are likely to influence the shape of future development within the Newry, Mourne and Down District. The intention is to stimulate a wide-ranging, yet focused, debate and encourage feedback from a wide variety of interests. Any representations or views

received as a consequence of its publication will be considered whilst formulating the draft Plan Strategy.

- 2.18 The POP is subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). An SA Interim Report, consisting of SA Scoping Report and assessment of alternatives, will be published with the POP.

What we will do:

- We will issue a Public Notice in the local newspapers (see appendix G) for two consecutive weeks and on the Council's website. This notice will confirm:
 - (i) the Council's intention to prepare a Local Development Plan;
 - (ii) publication of the Sustainability Appraisal Interim Report (consisting of a Scoping Report and assessment of alternatives), and screening reports for Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA) and Equality Impact Assessments;
 - (iii) publication of the LDP timetable;
 - (iv) publication of the Preferred Options Paper inviting comment within the 8 week consultation period²; and
 - (v) details of launch events, community workshops or information sessions during the consultation period.
- We will make the topic papers available to view on the Council's website and at the Council's Planning Offices at Monaghan Row, Newry and the Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick during normal working hours (and at any other places within the District that the Council considers appropriate). Hard copies can also be provided upon request (at a specified price).
- We will issue a Press Release about the intention to prepare a new LDP and drawing attention to the Preferred Options Paper and the public consultation.
- We will hold a launch event to announce the publication of the Preferred Options Paper.
- We will hold public exhibitions where planning officers will be available to answer any questions.
- We will write to key consultees and Elected Members providing them with a copy of the Preferred Options Paper and inviting them to attend the launch, provide comments within the next 8 weeks; inform them of the public meetings, exhibitions etc.

² Regulation 11(3) of the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 states that, in relation to a Preferred Options Paper; this "must be a period of not less than 8 weeks or more than 12 weeks".

- We will write to local community groups and under-represented (Section 75) groups inviting them to; comment within the next 8 weeks; attend the public meetings, exhibitions etc; and offering the opportunity of a meeting with a planning officer to record their views.
- We will present a Public Consultation Report to Elected Members following the 8 week consultation on the POP. This will contain a summary of each representation and plan team comment, recording where members take a different view and the rationale for that view. This will be taken into account whilst formulating the draft Local Development Plan.
- We will provide The Project Management Team with the opportunity to comment on emerging policy for inclusion in the draft Plan Strategy, an integral part of testing emerging policy through the Sustainability Appraisal process and Equality Impact Assessment.

Stage 3: Publication of draft Plan Strategy

- 2.19 The Plan Strategy will define the strategic objectives for the future development of the District. It will include a range of strategic policies to facilitate and manage development together with a spatial strategy that indicates in broad strategic terms the locations where different types of development will be promoted.
- 2.20 The draft Plan Strategy will provide an indication of our intentions regarding future development of the District. It will be issued for public consultation as a key part of the community involvement and public participation process.

What we will do:

- We will issue a public notice in the local newspapers (see Appendix G) for two consecutive weeks, in the Belfast Gazette³ and on the Council's website. This notice will state:
 - (i) publication of draft Plan Strategy and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal (including the Environmental Report and Equality Report), and how to view or obtain copies;
 - (ii) the dates and locations of public engagement events; and
 - (iii) the 8 week period⁴ and closing date for receipt of representations to the draft Plan Strategy and accompanying Environmental Report.

³ The Belfast Gazette is the official Newspaper of Record for Northern Ireland. It consists of legal and official announcements from HM Government, the NI Executive, the Armed Forces, local authorities, churches, companies and private citizens.

⁴ Regulation 16(2)(a) of The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 states that, in relation to a Development Plan Document, "representations must be made with a period of 8 weeks".

- We will make the draft Plan Strategy, the Sustainability Appraisal (including the Environmental Report), the Equality Report, and the Public Consultation Report available for inspection on the Council's website and at the Council's Planning Offices at Monaghan Row, Newry and the Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick during normal working hours (and at any other places within the District that the Council considers appropriate). Hard copies can also be provided upon request (at a specified price).
- We will issue a Press Release and hold a launch event to announce the publication of the draft Plan Strategy.
- We will hold public exhibitions where planning officers will be available to answer any questions.
- We will write to key consultees, and Elected Members informing them of the publication of the draft Plan Strategy and providing them a copy; the dates of the public exhibitions; and confirmation of the 8 week period for public consultation and the closing date for receipt of representations.
- We will report representations to the Elected Members before being forwarded to the DfI prior to the Independent Examination.

Stage 4: Public Inspection of Representations received to the draft Plan Strategy

- 2.21 All representations are to be made available for public inspection as part of the public consultation process. Interested parties may also comment on the site specific policy representations that have been received, these are known as counter-representations.
- 2.22 All representations and counter-representations will be fully considered by the Council before it forwards the draft Plan Strategy to the DfI for Independent Examination prior to the Independent Examination.

What we will do:

- We will issue a public notice in the local newspapers (see Appendix G) for two consecutive weeks, in the Belfast Gazette, and on the Council's website. This notice will state:
 - (i) the availability of representations for inspection; and
 - (ii) the 8 week period for public consultation, and the closing date for receipt of counter-representations.

- We will make representations available for inspection on the Council's website and at the Council's Planning Offices at Monaghan Row, Newry and the Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick during normal working hours (and at any other places within the District that the Council considers appropriate). Hard copies can also be provided upon request (at a specified price).
- We will write to key consultees and Elected Members informing them that representations are available for inspection and the places and times they can be inspected.
- We will make the counter-representations available for inspection on our website, and in our planning offices at Monaghan Row, Newry and Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick during normal working hours (and at any other places within the District that the Council considers appropriate). Hard copies can also be provided upon request (at a specified price).
- We will report counter-representations to the Elected Members before forwarding them to the Department for Infrastructure prior to the Independent Examination.

Stage 5: Submission of the Plan Strategy (and associated documents) for Independent Examination

- 2.23 Council will only submit the draft Plan Strategy, associated documents and supporting evidence to the DfI if it considers that they are ready for examination. The DfI will then cause an Independent Examination to be held, unless it issues a direction to Council to withdraw the draft Plan Strategy, or intervenes to direct Council to modify it.
- 2.24 In either scenario, the DfI will be expected to give reasons for its decision.

What we will do:

- Submit the following documents to DfI:
 - (i) Draft Plan Strategy;
 - (ii) Statement of Community Involvement;
 - (iii) Evidence of compliance with SCI;
 - (iv) LDP timetable;
 - (v) Sustainability Appraisal;
 - (vi) Statement setting out the main issues raised in representations made and how these have been taken into account in the preparation of the draft Plan Strategy; and
 - (vii) Such other documents that are required or as Council considers relevant to the preparation of the draft Plan Strategy.

- As soon as reasonably practicable after the submission of the draft Plan Strategy and associated documents (see above) to DfI we will:
 - (i) issue a public notice in the local newspapers (see Appendix G) for two consecutive weeks, in the Belfast Gazette and on the Council's website. Advising of the time and place at which the examination is to be held and whether the PAC or another (identified) person appointed will carry out the examination;
 - (ii) notify the consultation bodies of the time and place at which the examination is to be held and whether the PAC or another (identified) person appointed will carry out the examination;
 - (iii) notify any person who has made (and not withdrawn) representations or counter representations; and
 - (iv) we will make the draft Plan Strategy and all associated documentation available on the Council's website and at the Council's Planning Offices at Monaghan Row, Newry and the Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick during normal working hours (and at any other places within the District that the Council considers appropriate). Hard copies can also be provided upon request (at a specified price).

Stage 6: Independent Examination (IE) of the draft Plan Strategy

- 2.25 The purpose of the Independent Examination is to determine the soundness of the draft Plan Strategy, taking into account all representations received.
- 2.26 The examination will be carried out by either the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) or other persons appointed by DfI. They must consider all representations before they make recommendations.
- 2.27 Council Planning Officers, consultees and any consultants (acting on behalf of Council) will be available at the examination to answer questions and provide comment on representations.

What we will do:

- We will request key consultees to provide comment on the representations for consideration at the Independent Examination.
- At least 4 weeks before the opening of the Independent Examination:
 - (i) we will issue a Public Notice in the local newspapers (see Appendix G), in the Belfast Gazette and on the Council's website advising the dates, times and venues for the Independent Examination;
 - (ii) we will notify consultation bodies of the time and place at which the examination is to be held and whether the PAC or another (identified) person appointed will carry out the examination; and

- (iii) we will notify all persons who submitted (and have not withdrawn) representations and counter representations of the arrangements for the Independent Examination.
- Continue to make the draft Plan Strategy and all associated documentation available on the Council's website and at the Council's Planning Offices at Monaghan Row, Newry and the Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick during normal working hours (and at any other places within the District that the Council considers appropriate). Hard copies can also be provided upon request (at a specified price).

Stage 7: Adoption of the Plan Strategy

- 2.28 Following the Independent Examination, the PAC, or other person appointed by DfI, will send their recommendations and reasoning to DfI.
- 2.29 DfI will issue a Direction to the Council, requiring us to adopt the draft Plan Strategy as originally prepared or with modifications. The DfI may also direct the Council to withdraw the draft Plan Strategy. In either scenario, DfI will be expected to give reasons for its decision.
- 2.30 Council must comply with the Direction within such timeframes as may be prescribed by DfI. The Plan Strategy must be adopted by resolution of the Council.

What we will do:

- Adopt the Plan Strategy as soon as reasonably practicable after receipt of the Direction from DfI.
- We will issue a public notice in the local newspapers (see Appendix G) for two consecutive weeks , in the Belfast Gazette and on the Council's website. This notice will confirm:
 - (i) adoption of our Plan Strategy; and
 - (ii) where to get copies of the Plan Strategy, the DfI Direction and the accompanying Independent Examiners Report.
- On the date of adoption we will make the Plan Strategy and the DfI Direction and accompanying Independent Examiners Report available on the Council's website. Hard copies will be available on request for a specified price from the Council Planning Offices.
- We will write to key consultees advising of the adopted of the Plan Strategy, and where to get hold of copies together with the DfI Direction and the Independent Examiner's Report.

- We will send DfI a copy of the Plan Strategy and other necessary documents.
- We will notify any person who has asked to be notified of the adoption of the Plan Strategy.

Stage 8: Publication of the draft Local Policies Plan

- 2.31 The Local Policies Plan is the second document comprising the Local Development Plan. This must be consistent with the Plan Strategy and will contain the Council's detailed land use policies and proposals regarding the future development of the District. This draft document is a key part of the public participation process.
- 2.32 The draft Local Policies Plan will provide detailed zonings and designations for the District. The Plan Strategy must be adopted before the draft Local Policies Plan is published for consultation, subjected to Independent Examination and adopted.

What we will do:

- We will issue a public notice in the local newspapers (see Appendix G) for two consecutive weeks, in the Belfast Gazette and on the Council's website. This notice will confirm:
 - (i) publication of Draft Local Policies;
 - (ii) the dates and locations of Public Exhibitions; and
 - (iii) the 8 week period and closing date for receipt of representations.
- We will make the draft Local Policies Plan and any supporting documentation available on the Council's website and at the Council's Planning Offices at Monaghan Row, Newry and the Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick during normal working hours (and at any other places within the District that the Council considers appropriate). Hard copies can also be provided upon request (at a specified price).
- We will issue a Press Release and hold a launch event to announce the publication of the draft Local Policies Plan.
- We will hold public exhibitions where planning officers will be available to answer any questions.
- We will write to key consultees, and Elected Members informing them of:
 - (i) the publication of the draft Local Policies Plan and providing them a copy;
 - (ii) the dates of the public exhibitions;
 - (iii) the 8 week consultation period; and

- (iv) the closing date for receipt of representations.
- We will report representations to the Elected Members before being forwarded to the Department for Infrastructure prior to the Independent Examination.

Stage 9: Public Inspection of Representations received to the draft Local Policies Plan

- 2.33 All representations to the draft Local Policies Plan will be made available for public inspection as part of the public consultation process. Interested parties may also comment on the representations that have been received (counter-representations).
- 2.34 All representations and counter-representations will be fully considered by the Council before it submits the draft Local Policies Plan to the Department for Infrastructure.

What we will do:

- We will make representations available for inspection on the Council's website and at the Council's Planning Offices at Monaghan Row, Newry and the Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick during normal working hours (and at any other places within the District that the Council considers appropriate). Hard copies of representations can also be provided upon request (at a specified price).
- We will write to key consultees and elected members informing them that representations are available for inspection and the places and times at which they can be inspected.
- We will issue a public notice in the local newspapers (see Appendix G) for two consecutive weeks, the Belfast Gazette, and on the Council's website. This notice should state the availability of representations for inspection and the 8 week consultation period including closing date for counter representations.
- We will make counter representations available for inspection on the Council's website and at the Council's Planning Offices at Monaghan Row, Newry and the Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick during normal working hours (and at any other places within the District that the Council considers appropriate). Hard copies of counter representations can also be provided upon request (at a specified price).
- We will report counter representations to the Elected Members before forwarding these to the DfI prior to the Independent Examination.

Stage 10: Submission of the draft Local Policies Plan, and associated documents, for Independent Examination

- 2.35 Council will only submit the draft Plan Strategy, associated documents and supporting evidence to the DfI if it considers that they are ready for examination. DfI will then cause an Independent Examination to be held, unless it issues a direction to Council to withdraw the draft Local Policies Plan, or intervenes to direct Council to modify it.
- 2.36 In either scenario, the DfI will be expected to give reasons for its decision.

What we will do:

- Submit the following documents to DfI:
 - (i) draft Local Policies Plan;
 - (ii) Statement of Community Involvement (SCI);
 - (iii) evidence of compliance with SCI;
 - (iv) LDP timetable;
 - (v) Sustainability Appraisal;
 - (vi) statement setting out the main issues raised in representations made and how these have been taken into account in the preparation of the draft Local Policies Plan; and
 - (vii) such other documents that are required or as Council considers relevant to the preparation of the draft Local Policies Plan.
- As soon as reasonably practicable after the submission of the draft Local Policies Plan and associated documents (see above) to DfI we will:
 - (i) issue a public notice in the local newspapers (see Appendix G) for two consecutive weeks, in the Belfast Gazette and on the Council's website, advising of the time and place at which the examination is to be held and whether the PAC or another (identified) person appointed will carry out the examination.
 - (ii) notify the consultation bodies of the time and place at which the examination is to be held and whether the PAC or another (identified) person appointed will carry out the examination.
 - (iii) notify any person who has made (and not withdrawn) representations or counter representations.
- Continue to make the draft Local Policies Plan and all associated documentation available on the Council's website and at the Council's Planning Offices at Monaghan Row, Newry and the Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick (and at any other places within the District that the Council considers appropriate) and provide hard copies upon request (at a specified price).

Stage 11: Independent Examination of the draft Local Policies Plan

- 2.37 The purpose of the Independent Examination is to determine the soundness of the Local Policies taking into account all representations received.
- 2.38 The examination will be carried out by either the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) or other persons appointed by DfI. They must consider all representations and counter representations before they make recommendations.
- 2.39 Council Planning Officers will be available to answer any question of the Independent Examiners and provide comment on the representations and counter representations.

What we will do:

- We will request key consultees to provide comment on the representations for consideration at the Independent Examination.
- At least 4 weeks before the opening of the Independent Examination:
 - (i) We will issue a Public Notice in the local newspapers (see Appendix G), in the Belfast Gazette and on the Council's website advising the dates, times and venues for the Independent Examination.
 - (ii) We will notify consultation bodies of the time and place at which the examination is to be held and whether the PAC or another (identified) person appointed will carry out the examination.
 - (iii) We will notify all persons who submitted (and have not withdrawn) representations and counter representations of the arrangements for the Independent Examination.
- Continue to make the draft Local Policies Plan and all associated documentation available on the Council's website and at the Council's Planning Offices during normal working hours (and at any other places within the District that the Council considers appropriate) and provide hard copies upon request (at a specified price).

Stage 12: Adoption of the Local Policies Plan

- 2.40 Following the Independent Examination, the DfI will issue a Direction to the Council, requiring it to adopt the draft Local Policies as originally prepared or with modifications. The Council may also be directed to withdraw the draft Local Policies. In either scenario, the DfI will be expected to give reasons for their decisions.

What we will do:

- We will issue a public notice in the local newspapers (see Appendix G) for two consecutive weeks, in the Belfast Gazette and on the Council's website. This notice will confirm:
 - (i) adoption of the Local Policies; and
 - (ii) where to get copies of the Local Policies, the DfI Direction and the accompanying Independent Examiners Report.
- Make the Local Policies Plan and the DfI Direction and accompanying Independent Examiners Report available on the Council website with hard copy available on request for a specified price;
- Write to key consultees and those submitting representation advising of the adopted of the Local Policies, and where to get hold of copies together with the DfI Direction and the Independent Examiners Report; and
- Send DfI a copy of the Local Policies Plan and other necessary documents.

Next Steps

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

3.0 Development Management

Purpose

- 3.1 The Council as the local planning authority for the area deals with the majority of planning and Listed Building applications in the district. It also deals with applications for works in conservation areas, works to protected trees and advertising consent.
- 3.2 Development management is the process through which such applications are considered. An important part of the process is to provide information and advice to applicants and to seek and take into account the views of the general public and statutory consultees on all planning applications. The statutory requirements for consultation on planning applications are set out in legislation. These requirements vary according to the type of proposal but include notification to specified bodies and general publicity.
- 3.3 All planning applications are now categorised on receipt as local, major or regionally significant, with the Council responsible for determining all local and major applications, unless called-in by the DfI.
- 3.4 Regionally significant developments are those which are considered to have a critical contribution to make in regard to the economic and social success of Northern Ireland as a whole, or to a substantial part of the region. Such proposals also include developments which have significant effects beyond Northern Ireland or involve substantial departure from a Local Development Plan. Regionally significant applications are processed by the DfI.
- 3.5 Major developments have important economic, social and environmental implications for the Council. Due to the potential of these proposals to deliver important benefits to the community, major applications are prioritised to avoid undue delay and risk to investment decisions. Common examples of major development proposals include:
 - a housing development involving the construction of 50 units or more, or where the area of the site is or exceeds 2 hectares;
 - a retail development involving 1,000 square metres or more of gross retail floor space outside town centres, or where the area of the site is or exceeds 1 hectare; and
 - industrial development involving 5,000 square metres or more gross floor space or where the area of the site is or exceeds 1 hectare.
- 3.6 Local development proposals are those applications which are not considered to be regionally significant or major. The vast majority of planning applications are likely to constitute local developments and these will include most commercial and housing proposals as well as minor schemes and householder development.

- 3.7 The Council receives a wide variety of planning applications and therefore needs to involve the community to differing degrees, according to the scale and complexity of the application.

This section of the SCI looks at:

- how the public can become involved at the various stages of the application process; and
- how the level of community involvement will depend on the scale of the application.

Pre-Application Stage

Pre-Application Discussions (PADs)

- 3.8 Pre-application discussions are encouraged for a range of types of applications, both major and local. The objective of pre-application discussions should be to confirm whether the principle of development is acceptable and to clarify the format, type and level of detail required to enable the council to determine an application. For major applications it will also enable the applicant to discuss with the council details of how the community should be involved in the decision-making process.

Pre-Application Community Consultation (PACC)

- 3.9 The 2011 Planning Act has introduced a requirement for applicants to inform and involve the wider community in planning applications. Greater community engagement from the outset is key to not only creating better quality developments but also improving the process of place making. Applicants submitting major applications to the Council or as the case may be the DfI are, as of the 1 July 2015, required to undertake community consultation before submitting their application.

The Council will require the following actions to be undertaken by the applicant before a major application is submitted-

- (i) notify the Council, 12 weeks in advance, that an application for a major planning application is to be submitted. This is referred to as a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) and will outline the detail of the proposed application and what consultation is to be undertaken;
 - (ii) hold at least one public event where the community will be afforded the opportunity to make comment;
 - (iii) publish details of the proposal in the local press, outlining where further details can be obtained and the date, time and location of a public event; and
 - (iv) submit a pre-application community consultation report on submission of the planning application.
- 3.10 The Council will assess the report and determine if the consultation undertaken meets the legislative requirements. The Council may, providing it does so within 21

days of receipt of the PAN, ask that the applicant notify further individuals or organisations or advise that additional consultation is required.

- 3.11 Pre-application consultation is likely to be more successful if the applicant makes significant efforts to open lines of communication with, and provide feedback to, local communities and work with them to secure development proposals which are acceptable to everyone.
- 3.12 As previously stated the Council would recommend all applicants considering submitting development proposals that fall within the definition of major development to seek a Pre-Application Discussion with planning officers. Where applicants fail to fully meet the pre-application community consultation requirements the Council will decline to determine the application.
- 3.13 Local people are encouraged to participate in the pre-application consultation as this should help applicants better understand local concerns or circumstances and possibly take action to address these concerns before submitting a formal application. Where local concerns and issues are not adequately addressed by the applicant at pre-consultation stage they should be raised again at formal application stage.

Application Stage

- 3.14 When a planning application is submitted for determination the Council will involve the community in the decision making process. If you feel you will be affected by development proposals you will have an opportunity to consider what is proposed and how it will affect you. You will also have the opportunity to make your views known before a final decision is made on the application.

The Council will inform the public of all planning applications through:

- Advertising; and
- Neighbour Notification.

- 3.15 The Council undertakes statutory publicity in accordance with current legislation. Government may change the statutory publicity requirements and our future approach will reflect any changes that are made.

Advertising

- 3.16 The Council will advertise all new applications on a weekly basis in at least one local newspaper (listed in Appendix G) in accordance with Article 8 of the Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (NI) 2015. The weekly list of all new applications received by the Council can also be viewed on the Planning NI web portal.⁵

⁵ See http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/my_council/council_newry_mourne_down.htm

The notice placed in the local newspapers advises that any representations to be made should be received within 14 days of publication (4 weeks in the case of EIA applications) to assist efficient processing of applications. However, it should be noted that any late representations made on an application, provided they are received before a decision is made, will be considered.

Neighbour Notification

- 3.17 The Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 2015 states that any identified occupier of land neighbouring the land to which the application relates shall be notified by serving a notice on them. Under the Council's neighbour notification scheme, the Council will issue neighbour notification letters to occupiers of neighbouring premises which fulfil both of the following criteria:
 - (i) the property in question is within 90m of the boundary of the application site;
and
 - (ii) meets the definition of neighbouring land, in that it directly adjoins the boundary of the application site, or would adjoin it but for an entry or road less than 20m in width.
- 3.18 The Planning Officer when carrying out a site inspection will also check the accuracy of the neighbour notification details supplied on the application form and may add details as considered appropriate.
- 3.19 The period for responding following receipt of a neighbour notification letter is also 14 days (4 weeks in the case of applications requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment) , though again any late representations received before a decision is made will still be considered.

EIA Development

- 3.20 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a method for ensuring that the likely effects of new development on the environment are fully understood and taken into account before consent is given for the development to proceed.
- 3.21 The Environmental Statement (ES) produced as part of an environmental impact assessment, brings together in a single document or series of documents information about a proposed development and its effects on the environment.
- 3.22 In most cases it will fall to the Council to determine if the application is an EIA application. It should be noted that if an application is an EIA application it cannot be processed until the ES is received. When a developer submits an ES in support of a planning application, the Council will publish a notice of its receipt in a local newspaper and indicate where it may be purchased and the address of the Council Office where it may be inspected. The Council will also allow 4 weeks from the date the notice is first published for representation to be made.

Obtaining further information and getting involved in planning applications

- 3.23 The weekly lists of planning applications received within the council area are also available on the Northern Ireland Planning Portal (www.planningni.gov.uk). Planning applications including supporting documents and corresponding plans can be viewed online as well at the Council offices during normal office hours. A duty Planning Officer will be available during normal office hours (9am – 5pm) to give advice on current or proposed applications (you are advised to make an appointment if you wish to speak to a particular officer).

Public Register

- 3.24 The Council will make the application, plans and any associated environmental statement available on a public register. Each register will contain the following information:
- a copy(which may be photographic) of each application together with copies of plans and drawings submitted in relation thereto;
 - the decision notice, if any, in respect of the application, including details of any conditions subject to which permission or consent was granted;
 - the reference number, the date and effect of any decision of the PAC in respect of the application; and
 - brief details of any revocation or modification relating to any permission or consent, including date of issue.

File Inspection

- 3.25 Planning application files are open to the public, the Council will make the application file available for inspection, by appointment. The amount of information on the file, will of course, be dependent on the stages the application has completed. Certain information may be withheld on data protection grounds e.g. a person's medical information.

Submitting Comments

- 3.26 Individuals, groups and organisations can comment on a planning application even if they have not been neighbour notified by the Council. All comments will be carefully considered. Care should be taken when making comments to the Council to ensure that no personal data is included.
- 3.27 When a decision is made on a planning application only certain issues are taken into account, these are often referred to as 'material planning considerations'. Material considerations must be genuine planning considerations. The basic question is not whether owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties would experience financial

or other loss from a particular development, but whether the proposal would unacceptably affect amenities and the existing use of land and buildings that ought to be protected in the public interest. A list of material and non-material considerations is contained in Appendix F.

- 3.28 Generally greater weight is attached to issues which are supported by evidence rather than solely by assertion. If an identified problem can be dealt with by means of a suitable condition the Council is required to consider this as an alternative to refusing an application.

- 3.29 You can make comments in a variety of ways, these are as follows-

By email: planning@nmandd.org (Please quote the application number)

By post to:

Newry Planning Office or	Downpatrick Planning Office
O'Hagan House	Downshire Civic Centre
Monaghan Row	Downshire Estate, Ardglass Rd
Newry BT35 8DJ	Downpatrick BT30 6GQ

Online through the Planning Portal. Comments can be submitted by members of the public through Public Access once they have been registered for an account on the Planning Portal.

<http://epicpublic.planningni.gov.uk/publicaccess/>

- 3.30 All written comments on an application will be acknowledged within five working days. The acknowledgement letter will set out who is dealing with the application and who to contact if there are any questions.
- 3.31 Whilst Planning Officers may not be able to respond to each comment made due to the large numbers received. All comments will be summarised and fully considered within the Planning Officer's report.
- 3.32 The Council will not normally contact the respondent again until after a decision is made unless the application is significantly altered or is withdrawn.
- 3.33 The Council may, if it considers it appropriate to do so, stage public exhibitions, issue press releases or arrange public meetings to provide information about major developments or proposals which are particularly significant or have wide-spread effects on communities.
- 3.34 The Council will consult with a range of Statutory Consultees (see Appendix C) to assist in the determination of an application. If a representation raises issues that are relevant to the responsibilities of the consultee (e.g.road safety) the representative

will be copied to the appropriate consultee for consideration and comment. The council will carefully take any comments made into account before a decision is made. All comments are scanned and added to the web site once email addresses and hand written signatures have been removed.

- 3.35 The Council may negotiate changes to applications where these are expedient. Re-consultation (for 14 days), re-advertisement and further neighbour notification will take place on minor amendments if the council considers that they raise new issues that could lead to further comment. If any change is considered to be substantive, the council may decline to treat it as an amendment and a new application may be invited.

Community Involvement at the Planning Committee Stage

- 3.36 The Planning Committee meeting is normally held every fourth week in the Boardroom , O'Hagan House, Monaghan Row, Newry. Additional meetings of the Planning Committee may be scheduled according to business needs. The meeting commences at 10.00am (unless otherwise stated and may be subject to change) and is open to the public.

Scheme of Delegation

- 3.37 The majority of planning applications submitted to Council are determined by Council appointed planning officers using delegated powers. The circumstances under which an application can, or cannot, be determined using delegated powers are set out in the Council's Scheme of Delegation. It should be noted that this document will be subject to regular review. The most up to date version of the document can be accessed at : <http://www.newrymournedown.org/planning>. A copy is also available for inspection, during normal working hours, at the Council Planning Office.

Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee

- 3.38 Applications which do not fall within the Scheme of Delegation must be presented to the Council Planning Committee for decision. Council's Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee sets out the detailed procedures for this Committee. It should be noted that this protocol is also subject to change. The most up-to-date version of the document can be viewed on the Council's website. A copy is also available for inspection, during normal office hours, at the Council's Planning Offices.

Pre-determination hearings and speaking at the Planning Committee

- 3.39 There may be occasions when major applications will raise particularly complex planning issues or attract a significant level of objection. In such cases the Planning Committee may decide to hold a pre-determination hearing prior to making its decision at the scheduled monthly Planning Committee meeting.

- 3.40 A pre-determination hearing will provide the opportunity for the applicant and their agent, as well as those who may have made representations, to present their case to the committee and for Members to ask questions and clarify matters. Key consultees may also be invited to report their expert views. When the Planning Committee agrees to such a hearing, the applicant will be advised and the detailed arrangements will be advertised in the local press. Any hearing will take place after the expiry of the period for making representations on the application but before the Committee hears the application.
- 3.41 For any major application that has been notified to the Department for Infrastructure but is subsequently returned to the Council for determination, the Council is required to afford the applicant the opportunity of appearing before and being heard by the Planning Committee at a Pre-determination hearing.
- 3.42 If a member of the public wishes to speak at the Planning Committee they must contact the Council's Democratic Services by telephone or email (democratic.services@nmandd.org) at least 5 working days before the date of the meeting at which the application will be considered. Only those who have made written submissions in respect of a planning application and registered a request to speak in respect of the application shall be permitted to make oral representations before the Committee as outlined in the Planning Committee Operating Protocol (available to view on the Council's website or at local planning office).

Post Application Stage

Community Involvement after a Planning Application has been determined

- 3.43 A notification of decision letter is sent to the applicant/agent and all people who have responded to the consultation on the planning application, informing them of the decision and the reason for that decision. The decision is recorded in the statutory Planning Register. If it is a case that has been considered by the Planning Committee, it can be found either by contacting the Planning Development Management team following the Committee meeting, or by viewing the minutes of the committee meeting published on Council's website.

Community Involvement in Planning Appeals

- 3.44 Planning appeals may be made against the refusal of planning permission, against conditions placed on a planning approval and against an enforcement notice. Only applicants and those upon whom notices have been served have the right of appeal. There are no third party rights of appeal. Where an applicant is unhappy with the Council's decision on an application or a condition attached to a permission, he/she may appeal to the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC). An applicant may also appeal to the PAC where the Council has not determined an application within the relevant

period prescribed by the Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (NI) 2015, where such an appeal is lodged, the application is deemed to have been refused. Appeals must be lodged with the PAC within four months from the date of notification of the Council's decision, or expiry of the prescribed period as the case may be.

- 3.45 All those people who responded on the original planning application that is the subject of appeal will be advised that an appeal has been received, and provided with an opportunity to make their views known. Copies of letters already submitted will be forwarded to the PAC. For hearings and public inquiries, the interested parties have the opportunity to make their views known verbally to the PAC. Guidance on Planning Appeals and the rights of applicants and objectors can be found on the PAC website www.pacni.gov.uk

4.0 Planning Enforcement

- 4.1 The Council encourages the community to report cases where they believe there has been a breach of planning control. A breach of planning control occurs when development or other certain activities take place without the necessary planning permission or consent from the Council or the Department. This may also include failure to carry out development in accordance with the approved plans or conditions.

- 4.2 Suspected breaches of planning control can be reported in the following ways:

By email: planning@nmandd.org

By post to:

Newry Planning Office	or	Downpatrick Planning Office
O'Hagan House		Downshire Civic Centre
Monaghan Row		Downshire Estate, Ardglass Rd
Newry BT35 8DJ		Downpatrick BT30 6GQ

By Phone: 0300 200 7830

- 4.3 You may also wish to raise the matter with one of the Elected Members who can bring the matter to the attention of the Planning Officers on your behalf.
- 4.4 All planning enforcement related complaints are treated confidentially. If the complaint results in a planning application being submitted, then this will be publicised in the normal manner and adjoining neighbours and complainants notified.
- 4.5 In cases where planning enforcement action is taken, complainants are informed of the action. In cases where enforcement action is not taken, a full explanation providing the council's reasons will be sent to the complainants. Many initial complaints relate to non-enforcement issues in the district, such as householder permitted development type extensions or alterations to a dwelling house.
- 4.6 The Council's priorities for enforcement action will be set out within our forthcoming Enforcement Strategy. Once published, this strategy will be subject to regular review.

5.0 Community Involvement in Other Planning Functions

Community Involvement in Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 5.1 The Council may also prepare non-statutory planning guidance to support its development plan. Supplementary planning guidance includes for example design guides and advice notes. These will be published for public consultation and comment prior to the publication of the final draft. Comments received will be published on the Council web site. It is not necessary for Supplementary planning guidance to go through the public examination process.

Community Involvement in Conservation Area Designation

- 5.2 A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance. The Council considers that consultation with, and the involvement of local people is important when undertaking work associated with Conservation Areas. This will help encourage greater ownership of the concept and greater co-operation and commitment to achieving the aims of the designation.
- 5.3 The Council will involve the community in the designation or variation or cancellation of a Conservation Area. This will entail formal consultation with the Historic Buildings Council and Department for Infrastructure. Any alterations to existing Conservation Areas or designation of new Conservation Areas will be advertised by way of a public notice in the local press. Where appropriate public meetings will be held to discuss and present proposals.

Community Involvement in the Designation of a Simplified Planning Zone

- 5.4 If the Council proposes to commence work on a simplified planning zone (see Appendix A Glossary of Planning Terms) it will undertake consultations with the neighbouring district council, the land owner and occupier, the Department for Communities and will notify the Department for Infrastructure.
- 5.5 Once details of a scheme have been prepared the Council will make copies available for inspection at the Council's office, give notice by way of an advertisement in the local press and on the Council's website, and will serve a notice on those it has consulted with.
- 5.6 Following advertising of the proposed planning zone(s) details there will be an 8 week period when representations can be made to the Council. If the Council subsequently decides not to proceed with the proposed planning zone it will publish a further advertisement to that effect and will notify all those have made representations.

- 5.7 The Council may cause an independent examination to be held to consider the representations received. Where it is proposed to hold an independent examination details including the time and place of the examination will be published in the local press. Where it is decided not to hold an independent examination the Council will notify all those who have made representations.
- 5.8 Following the independent examination the Council will produce a report and statement detailing its decision and outlining reasons for its decision. Notice of publication will be advertised in the local press and the report and statement will be available for public inspection in the Council offices.

Appendices

Appendix A – Glossary of Planning Terms

Development Management: The process for a Council to decide on planning applications.

Development Plan: Local Development Plans apply regional policies at the appropriate level and inform the general public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested bodies of the policy framework and land use proposals that will guide development decisions within a specified area.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA): A procedure to be followed for certain types of planning application to ensure that decisions are made in the full knowledge of any likely significant effects on the environment.

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA): An assessment of the likely impact of policies and proposals on the promotion of equality of opportunity. Carried out on all local development plans to fulfil the obligations imposed on the Council by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Independent Examination: The independent examination conducted by the Planning Appeals Commission to test the soundness of the Local Development Plan.

Local Policies Plan: This provides detailed plans and policies for the development of specific geographical area.

Major Development: Large scale developed proposals that meet the thresholds contained within The Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Material Consideration: A material consideration is any planning matter which is relevant to a particular case.

Planning Appeals Commission: The body which provides a Commissioner to carry out an independent assessment of the soundness of a Development Plan Document or Statement of Community Involvement. The Commission also processes planning, listed building consent, advertisement and enforcement appeals.

Planning Committee: the planning committee is responsible for making decisions on the bigger and more sensitive planning applications received by the Council. The planning committee is made up of a number councillors who are responsible for deciding planning applications, listed building and conservation area consents. Which items are considered by the committee is decided through the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

Plan-led System: The principle that decisions upon planning applications should be made in accordance with the adopted development plan, unless there are other material considerations that may indicate otherwise.

Plan Strategy: This is the first part of the development plan and provides a framework or overview to guide the direction of the local plan.

Preferred Options Paper (POP): Ideas, possibilities and alternative proposals produced at any early stage in the production of the Local Plan and issued for public consultation and have not been endorsed by the Council.

Scheme of Delegation: a scheme where decision making on local applications is delegated to an appointed officer rather than through the Council's Planning Committee thereby enabling speedier decisions and improved efficiency. Section 31(1) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires the Council to produce such a scheme.

SEA Scoping Report: A report which sets out how the Council will ensure that the likely significant effects of the development plan will be assessed including the environmental effects and alternatives that need to be considered, the assessment methods to be used as well as the scope and level of detail of information that will be included in the final environmental report.

Simplified Planning Zone: An area in which the Council wishes to stimulate development and encourage development. It operates by granting a specified planning permission in the zone without the need for an application for planning permission and the payment of a planning fee.

Soundness: A Development Plan document is likely to be sound if it meets certain tests at the Examination stage. These tests require that a document is prepared according to the correct procedures, that it conforms to other policies, and its proposals are justified, consistent and effective.

Justified means that the document must be

- Founded on a robust and credible evidence base; and
- The most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives.

Effective means that the document must be

- Deliverable;
- Flexible; and
- Able to be monitored.

Stakeholders: Individuals or organisations who have a strong interest in the issue or may be affected directly by any decisions or plans. The term is used mostly to refer to bodies that will affect the delivery of a planning document's policies and proposals.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): An assessment of the probable environmental impacts of the policies and proposals contained in the LDP. The assessment is carried out to ensure compliance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC on the "assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment" and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations(Northern Ireland) 2004.

Statutory Requirements: Actions required to be undertaken by the Council as a result of legislation.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA): a sustainability appraisal considers the likely social, economic and environmental effects of policies in the development plan documents.

Appendix B Local Development Plan Consultation Bodies⁶

Statutory Consultation Bodies⁷

1. Northern Ireland Government Departments:
 - The Executive Office;
 - Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA);
 - Department for Infrastructure (DfI);
 - Department for the Economy (DfE);
 - Department of Education (DE);
 - Department of Finance (DoF);
 - Department of Health (DoH);
 - Department of Justice (DoJ); and
 - Department for Communities (DfC).
2. Adjoining Councils/Planning Authorities with common boundaries:
 - Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council;
 - Lisburn City and Castlereagh Council;
 - Ards and North Down Borough Council;
 - Louth County Council; and
 - Monaghan County Council.
3. Water and Sewerage undertakers:
 - NI Water
4. Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE).
5. Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).
6. Any person to whom the electronic communication code applies by virtue of a direction given under Section 106(3) of the Communication Act 2003(c).
7. Any person to whom a license has been granted under 10(1) of the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992(a).
8. Any person to whom a license has been granted under Article 8 of the Gas (Northern Ireland) Order 1996(b).

⁶ There may be additional consultations required at specific times throughout the LDP process.

⁷ Statutory consultees are those government bodies or other organisations with whom the Council must liaise as part of the development plan process .

Appendix C – Consultation on the Development Management Process

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

Statutory consultees (listed below) are those government bodies or other organisations with whom the Council must liaise. The need for consultations will vary between applications depending on the nature and scale of the proposal as well as the provision of standing advice from the consultee.

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

Where the Council undertakes consultations on a planning application the consultee will be required to respond within 21 days, or any other date as agreed in writing, after which time the Council may determine the application whether or not a response has been received. The exception is those developments which are subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) where the Council cannot make a determination until 28 days have passed.

Non-Statutory Consultees

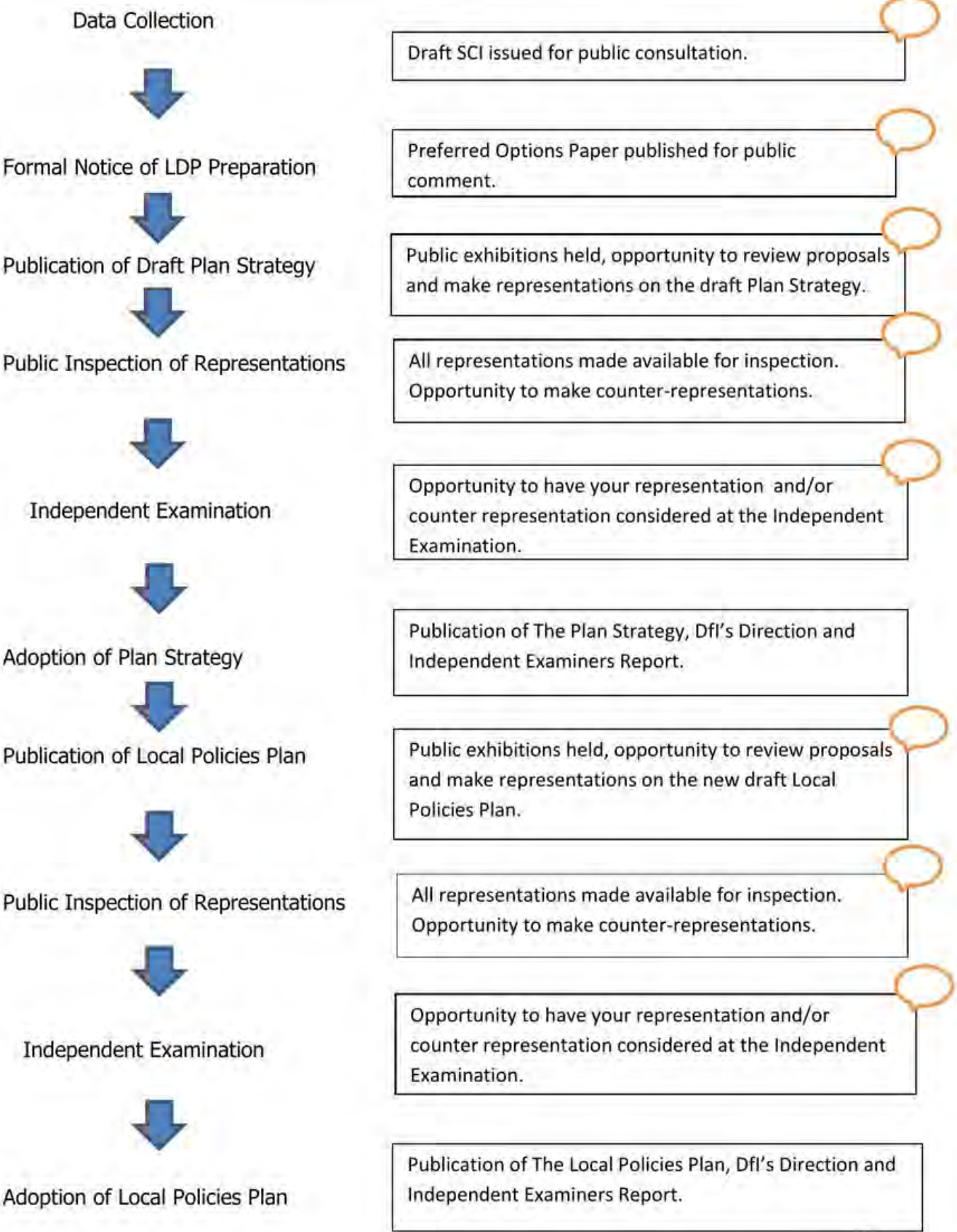
Not all information required to process an application will be from statutory consultees. There will be occasions when non-statutory consultees e.g. the Environmental health section of the Council, need to be consulted.

It may also include external organisations and bodies. These consultees are not bound by the 21 day response time, however, they are encouraged to respond in a timely manner so as not to delay the planning process.

Due to the wide range of development proposals submitted to Council, each application will be carefully considered and consultations will be undertaken in line with statutory requirements. The need for consultation will vary between applications depending on the nature and scale of the proposal.

Appendix D – Local Development Plan Process

The speech bubble indicates when you can have your say.



Appendix E – Planning Application Process

The speech bubble indicates when you can have your say.

Pre-application



Application



Advertising &
Neighbour
Notification



Application
Review



Officer Report



Decision



Decision Notice
Issued

The Council encourages applicants to undertake pre-application community consultation with the community. In the case of major applications community consultation is mandatory.

The Council will accept or decline the application based on validation criteria.

Plans published online on the Planning Portal.
Neighbours notified.
Statutory consultees and other relevant bodies invited to make comments.
Press advert in local newspapers.

Written and emailed comments can be submitted both during the advertising/neighbour notification period and during the consultation period.

When responding it is important that your response relates to planning matters known as material considerations. Some examples of material and non-material considerations can be found in Appendix D.

Consultee comments and any comments from third parties can be viewed online via the planning portal

The case officer prepares a report on the application and provides a recommendation.

The decision will be made by the Chief Planning Officer or the Planning Committee .

If the application is decided by the Planning Committee the applicant and those who have made representations will be afforded the opportunity to speak at the Planning Committee in line with the Planning Committee Operating Protocol.

The decision will be sent to the applicant or agent. It will then be published on the planning portal

Appendix F Material and Non-Material considerations

There is no legal definition for material definitions, however they are held to include all the fundamental factors involved in land-use planning. Essentially a material consideration is one which is relevant to making a planning decision as to whether to grant or refuse an application for planning permission. Material considerations will vary depending on the specific circumstances of each case.

Generally greater weight is attached to issues raised which are supported by evidence rather than solely by assertion.

The lists below provide some examples of material and non-material considerations however it should be noted that these are not exhaustive lists.

<p>Material considerations</p> <p>Can be taken into account</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional and local Planning Policies.• Adopted and emerging Development Plans.• Planning history on the site• Case law.• Loss of sunlight and overshadowing.• Overlooking and loss of privacy.• Roads issues (e.g. increased traffic movements).• Layout, density, design/appearance, character.• Effect on a listed building or conservation area.• Noise, smell or other disturbances.• Cumulative impact.• Capacity of infrastructure.	<p>Non-material considerations</p> <p>Cannot be taken into account</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Private issues between neighbours.• Opposition to business competition.• Loss of property value.• Loss of view.• Moral objection.• History of the applicant.• Matters covered by other legislation.• Restrictive covenants.• Opposition to the principle of development if permission has been granted by an outline application or on appeal.
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Appendix G – List of Local Newspapers for Advertisement

Local Newspapers which the Council currently advertises planning applications in (weekly):

- Armagh & Down Observer
- Crossmaglen Examiner
- Down Recorder
- Mourne Observer
- Newry Reporter

Report to:	Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Newry, Mourne and Down Local Development Plan Preparatory Studies Paper 7: Tourism
Date:	19 January 2017
Reporting Officer:	Anthony McKay, Chief Planning Officer
Contact Officer:	Andrew Hay, Principal Planning Officer

Decisions Required

Note the content of this report.

1.0	<u>Purpose & Background</u>
1.1	A programme of preparatory work is being undertaken as part of the Local Development Plan (LDP) process. Preparatory studies are essential in providing the evidence base for preparing the Local Development Plan (LDP). A reliable and comprehensive evidence base is vital to informing and justifying the 'soundness' of the LDP documents (Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan) and to show how planning policies and proposals help to achieve the social, economic and environmental objectives for the plan area.
1.2	The SPR Committee is responsible for the Local Development Plan. All LDP papers are reported to the SPR Committee for noting or decision. All LDP papers will also be presented to the Planning Committee for noting. Depending on the subject matter, a LDP paper will also be presented to any other relevant Council Committee for noting.
1.3	Given the subject matter of 'Paper 7: Tourism', it has already been presented to the ERT Committee.
1.4	The paper provides members with an overview of matters relating to tourism in the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area, including the area's tourism assets and growth areas.
1.5	The paper builds on the existing evidence base and provides information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The regional policy context for tourism; • The key Government Department, agencies and other bodies with a role in tourism in Northern Ireland and their related strategies and plans; • An overview of tourism policy within the existing local area plans and masterplans; • An overview of the tourism base and growth areas in Newry, Mourne and Down; and • Key findings and conclusions.
1.6	Members are asked to note the content of this report. Any comments received will be considered. The paper will be subject to any changes considered necessary in response to any valid comments received at this or any other Committee to which it is presented.

2.0	<u>Key Issues</u>
2.1	'Paper 7: Tourism' informs members about tourism within the District, by providing information on the existing tourism infrastructure and current and proposed tourism initiatives. This will assist the Council in the development of the LDP.
2.2	The paper allows members to commence consideration of the priorities for formulating a sustainable tourism policy, in the context of planning and the LDP, to grow tourism in a manner which, in line with the Regional Development Strategy (RDS), balances the economic benefits of tourism with the environmental and social impacts.
2.3	Through utilising existing environmental, historical, cultural and geographic assets, tourism can be a key economic driver capable of stimulating further growth and development opportunities. Tourism can benefit the assets on which it depends for example through assisting in the financing of conservation or enhancement initiatives. In towns and cities, tourism can contribute positively to urban regeneration. In rural areas tourism is important to the development of the rural economy by offering, for example, opportunities for farm diversification.
2.4	Sustainable tourism development is brought about by balancing the needs of tourists and the tourism industry along with protecting the assets of the destination. This requires management and the land use planning system has a key role in managing tourism-related development through planning policies that provide a framework for identifying appropriate development opportunities and safeguarding tourism assets from harmful development.
2.5	The information gathered and the key findings will be used to inform the preparation of the LDP. The LDP will also take account of the Council's Community Plan and Tourism Strategy.
2.6	The LDP will contain policies to safeguard tourist assets, together with policies for tourism development such as tourist accommodation and amenity facilities, and the criteria for consideration of such proposals.
2.7	In accordance with the RDS, the LDP will promote a sustainable approach to the provision of tourism infrastructure to conserve, protect and where possible enhance the District's natural environment and built heritage.
2.8	Data gathered as part of this and other preparatory studies will be used to establish the baseline of the social, economic, and environmental characteristics of the plan area and enable the Council to identify the issues which need to be addressed by the LDP. Furthermore, it will provide a sound basis on which to formulate the plan strategy, policies and proposals within the LDP that will be subject to independent public examination.
3.0	<u>Recommendations</u>
3.1	Members are requested to note the content of this report.
4.0	<u>Resource Implications</u>
4.1	N/A
5.0	<u>Appendices</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper 7: Tourism



Comhairle Ceantair
an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin

Newry, Mourne
and Down
District Council

**Local Development Plan
Preparatory Studies**

Paper 7: Tourism

January 2017

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Purpose: To provide Newry, Mourne and Down District Council with an overview of Tourism in the district including the area's tourism assets and growth areas and how this fits in the context of regional and local plans.

Content: The paper provides:

- i. An overview of the regional policy context for tourism.
- ii. Identification of Key Departments, Agencies and bodies with a role in tourism in Northern Ireland and their related strategies and plans;
- iii. An overview of tourism policy within existing local area plans and masterplans;
- iv. An overview of the tourism base and growth areas in Newry, Mourne and Down; and
- v. Key Findings and conclusions

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to inform members about tourism within the District, by providing information on the existing tourism infrastructure and current and proposed tourism initiatives. This will assist the Council in the development of the Local Development Plan (LDP). It also provides an overview of regional planning and policy context in relation to tourism and includes other Government policy objectives in relation to this key sector, namely; the NI Executives Programme for Government 2011-15 (PfG), the Economic Strategy (2012), the Draft Tourism Strategy (2010) and the Council's vision taken from its Corporate Strategy (2015-2019) in addition to the current Draft Community Plan and Draft Tourism Strategy. It also identifies a number of key Departments, agencies and bodies with a tourism role in Northern Ireland and provides an overview of their strategies and plans for the District.
- 1.2 The paper allows members to commence consideration of the priorities for formulating a sustainable tourism policy in the context of Planning and the LDP to grow tourism in a manner which, in line with the Regional Development Strategy (RDS), balances the economic benefits of tourism with the environmental and social impacts.
- 1.3 There was a downgrade to the global Travel & Tourism outlook for 2016, compared to the forecast reported in 2015, with direct Travel & Tourism Gross Domestic Product (GDP) now expected to grow by 3.3%. This is in line with macro economy revisions (the world GDP growth forecast for 2016 is down from 3.1% last year to 2.8% under current forecasts). Despite this downgrade, Travel & Tourism sector growth is still expected to outpace global economic growth for the sixth consecutive year.
- 1.4 Tourism statistics published by NISRA show that in the year to June 2016 visitors spent £789m in the NI local economy with 72% coming from external visitors - making tourism worth £571m as an export business. This is an increase of 5% in overall visitor spend when compared to the year to June 2015. Figures indicate that visitors have generally been staying longer and spending more leading to an increase in overall visitor expenditure in both the first half of 2016 and the year to June 2016. The increases in nights and spend have been driven by a continued increase in external visitors particularly from GB and overseas. Total visitor numbers fell slightly during January to June 2016 driven mostly by falls in domestic overnight trips.
- 1.5 Through utilising existing environmental, historical, cultural and geographic assets, tourism can be a key economic driver capable of stimulating further growth and development opportunities. Tourism can benefit the assets on which it depends for example through assisting in the financing of conservation or enhancement initiatives. In towns and cities tourism can contribute positively to urban regeneration. In rural areas, tourism is important to the development of the rural economy by offering, for example, opportunities for farm diversification.

- 1.6 The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) promotes sustainable tourism and defines this as: *"tourism that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future"*. It goes on to state that: *" the objective of sustainable tourism is to retain the economic and social advantages of tourism development while reducing or mitigating any undesirable impacts on the natural, historic, cultural or social environment."*
- 1.7 Sustainable tourism development is brought about by balancing the needs of tourists and the tourism industry along with protecting the assets of the destination. This requires management and the land use planning system has a key role in managing tourism-related development through planning policies that provide a framework for identifying appropriate development opportunities and safeguarding tourism assets from harmful development.

2.0 Regional and Local Policy Context

(a) Programme for Government 2011-2015 (PfG)

- 2.1 On 12 March 2012, the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) published the Programme for Government: Building a Better Future. Included within the key commitments and strategic priorities set out for the Assembly term 2011 to 2015 is a key commitment to increase visitor numbers from 3.2 million to 4.2 million and tourist revenue to £676 million by December 2014. Through various Government Department Strategies, frameworks have been put in place to achieve the aims underpinning the PfG, which is to grow a sustainable economy, invest in the future, tackle disadvantage, improve health and wellbeing, protect people and the environment, build a strong and shared community and deliver high quality services. The Government therefore recognises the potential of the tourism industry to deliver significant economic growth in the future.
- 2.2 A draft PfG 2016-2021 was published on 28 October 2016 and was out for consultation until 23 December 2016. It recognises the economic importance of tourism and the huge growth potential in the tourism and hospitality industry. One of the key indicators is 'to improve our attractiveness as a destination' and will be measured by the 'total spend by external visitors'.
- 2.3 Aligned with the PfG the former Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) published the 'Economic Strategy: Priorities for Sustainable Growth and Prosperity' on 13th March 2012. The Strategy sets out the economic vision including a framework for growth and key priorities for growth and prosperity.
- 2.4 The Strategy reaffirms the PfG and includes developing the potential of the tourism industry through focusing investment on strategically significant areas and developing the quality of the visitor experience. The Strategy sets a collective goal for the sector to double the income earned from tourism by 2020.
- 2.5 DETI also published a draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020 which is outlined in section 4 of this paper.

(b) The Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)

- 2.6 The Regional Development Strategy 2035 was published in March 2012. It provides an overarching strategic planning framework to facilitate and guide the public and private sectors and ultimately shall influence Council decisions and investments for years to come. The RDS aims to protect and enhance the environment for current and future generations. It recognises that Northern Ireland's environment is one of its greatest assets which benefits in terms of the economy and quality of life. All new plans and planning policies must take account of the RDS. The following Regional Guidance (RG) in the RDS is relevant to this paper:
- 2.7 RG 4 – Promote a sustainable approach to the provision of tourism infrastructure by:
 - Promoting a balanced approach that safeguards tourism infrastructure while benefiting society and the economy;
 - Improving facilities for tourists in support of the Tourist Signature Destinations, including The Mournes and the St. Patrick and Christian Heritage Trail, as identified in the former Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment's draft Tourism Strategy 2010;
 - Encouraging environmentally sustainable tourism development.
- 2.8 RG 11 – Conserve, protect and, where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment – which are key assets for attracting tourism and would continue to make a valuable contribution to our Tourism economy, as well as to the wider environment and society.
- 2.9 The spatial framework of the RDS identifies The Mournes, Strangford Lough and Coast and the Ring of Gullion as Strategic Natural Resources. It identifies Newry as a main hub and as the South Eastern City gateway due to its land border with the ROI and the major port of Warrenpoint which it has potential to cluster with. It also has potential to cluster with Dundalk given that both are located on the Belfast-Dublin corridor.
- 2.10 The RDS also recognises Downpatrick as a key tourism centre of regional significance due to its historical and archaeological interest largely connected to St Patrick. It notes it has potential to cluster with Newcastle which, with its surrounding natural landscape, has year round activity based tourism opportunities for walking, climbing, fishing, cycling and golf. However, it notes that Newcastle's location positioned between 2 Special Areas of Conservation, the Eastern Mournes and Murlough National Nature Reserve means that any development in and around the town needs to take account of the potential environmental impact.
- 2.11 The RDS also recognises that the expansion of rural tourism and associated development that is both sustainable and environmentally sensitive should be encouraged as it can provide further jobs and opportunities in rural areas (SFG13).

(c) Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

- 2.12 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) was published on the 28th September 2015. The SPPS reduces 20 separate planning policy statements to one. This provides the policy on key issues including tourism.
- 2.13 The Regional Strategic Objectives for tourism are:
- 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.
- 2.14 In preparing Local Development Plans (LDPs) the SPPS recommends that Councils should consider how best to facilitate the growth of sustainable tourism in their areas and bring forward a Tourism Strategy. This will be tailored to the needs and assets of their local area and informed by early engagement with relevant stakeholders. Such a strategy should reflect the wider Government tourism initiatives (e.g. Signature Destinations) and may address the following: how future tourism demand is best accommodated; safeguarding the key tourism assets; identification of potential tourism growth areas; environmental considerations; and contribution of tourism to economic development conservation and urban regeneration.
- 2.15 The SPPS states that policies to safeguard tourist assets will be contained in the LDP, together with policies for tourism development such as tourism accommodation, amenity facilities, and holiday parks, and the criteria for consideration of such proposals. There should be a general presumption in favour of tourism development within settlements.
- 2.16 In the countryside there is a need, in the interests of rural amenity, and wider sustainability objectives, to manage the level of new build for tourism purposes. The guiding principle should be to facilitate tourism development where it supports rural communities and promotes a healthy rural economy and tourism sector.

(d) Planning Policy Statements (PPSs)

- 2.17 Planning Policy Statement 16 Tourism (PPS 16) was published in 2013 and is the main planning policy document relating to tourism development. It aims to manage the provision of sustainable and high quality tourism developments in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment and shares the objectives of the

SPPS. PPS16 allows for: appropriate tourism development in settlements; tourist amenities in the countryside where it is in association with a particular tourism attraction or the activity itself requires a countryside location; hotel, guest house and tourist hostels in the countryside where it replaces an existing rural building or new build on the periphery of a settlement; major tourist development in the countryside in defined exceptional circumstances; and self-catering accommodation in a number of scenarios.

- 2.18 Due to the importance of our natural and built heritage assets in relation to the tourism industry both Planning Policy Statement 2 Natural Heritage (PPS 2) and Planning Policy Statement 6 Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage (PPS 6) are frequent key policy considerations in planning applications for tourism. Other Planning Policy Statements that provide scope for tourism development in the countryside are Planning Policy Statement 8 Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation (PPS 8) and Planning Policy Statement 21 Sustainable Development in the Countryside (PPS 21).

(e) Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Corporate Plan

- 2.19 The Council's mission as detailed in the Corporate Plan 2015-19 is to lead and serve a District that is prosperous, healthy, as well as sustainable from an economic, environmental and social perspective. The Council's responsibilities in relation to the environment will also play a key role in contributing to the tourism success of the District as well as making it an attractive place to live. The Corporate Plan recognises that the tourism potential is enormous in this district with three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in Strangford & Lecale, Slieve Gullion, and the Mourne, numerous Blue Flag beaches, and an unrivalled link to St Patrick. The Council's challenge is to increase visitor numbers, dwell time and spend as part of an overall economic growth plan.

- 2.20 The Corporate Plan places a strong emphasis on tourism with a key strategic objective being:

"By 2019 we will have become one of the premier tourism destinations on the island of Ireland". Achievement of this ambitious objective depends, not only on the Council, but also on a wide range of businesses, organisations and individuals within the local area, and on statutory agencies that operate in the area.

- 2.21 The Council's 'Economic Regeneration and Investment Strategy 2015-2020' identifies tourism as one of five integrated themes. The tourism objectives of this strategy are to become the destination of choice in NI, to become NI's premier outdoor/ adventure destination and to become one of NI's finest events destinations.

(f) Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Draft Community Plan 'Living Well Together'

- 2.22 Community Planning came into operation on 1st April 2015 as part of the full implementation of local government reform. The new duty of community planning requires councils as the lead partner to be responsible for making arrangements for

community planning in their areas and it requires statutory bodies to participate in the process. The Council, statutory bodies and local communities will develop and implement a shared vision for promoting the well-being of the area, promoting community cohesion and improving the quality of life of its citizens.

- 2.23 The Community Plan is to be the overarching strategic plan for integrated planning and delivery of services in Newry, Mourne and Down. It provides a framework for the other strategies and plans the Council will put in place to contribute towards the outcomes in the community plan and it is based on a detailed analysis of future risks and opportunities for Newry, Mourne and Down.
- 2.24 A key outcome for the draft Community Plan is that all people in Newry, Mourne & Down benefit from prosperous communities. The level of tourism revenue in the District has been identified as indicator for achieving this outcome with the level of overnight visitors, average spend per trip by visitors and hotel occupancy level being used to measure progress.
- 2.25 The Local Government Act (2014) introduced a statutory link between the community plan and a Council's Local Development Plan. The preparation of the LDP must take account of the community plan. It is intended that the LDP will be the spatial reflection of the community plan and that the two should work in tandem towards the same vision for a council area and its communities and set the long term social, economic and environmental objectives for an area.

(g) Newry, Mourne and Down Draft Tourism Strategy 2017-2021

- 2.26 The Council published its Draft Tourism Strategy for the District in December 2016. It is a 5 year strategy that sets out the strategic direction for the tourism industry within the District. The draft strategy aims to build upon the strengths and opportunities of the district and overcome the challenges by:
 - developing EPIC (Experiential, Personalised, Iconic and Immersive and Creative) moments,
 - Building a unified and entrepreneurial industry that is customer focused,
 - Ensuring the development of tourism is undertaken sustainably and contributes to the enhancement of social, cultural and environmental values.
- 2.27 The vision of the draft strategy is: By 2021 *'NMD is a premier, year-round mountain and maritime destination in Ireland recognised for its EPIC experiences in outdoor adventure, its rich tapestry of cultural heritage, myths and unique stories, and its authentic local life'*.
- 2.28 The strategic framework of the draft strategy seeks to target the GB and overseas market segments that are identified as the best prospects for international tourism growth at NI level and within NMD ie. the 'Culturally Curious', 'Great Escapers' and 'Social Engineers' with the development of the area as a 'destination under the headline of 'Mountains, Myths and Maritime'.

2.29 The Destination Experiences are:

- The Mourne- Gullion Experience- catalyst projects include applying to UNESCO for Geopark designation for Mourne, Slieve Croob AONB and Gullion AONB; Newcastle uplift facility to higher Mournes; Lift assisted access for mountain biking and expanding training facilities and capacity; The Newry Canal 'Blueway' opportunity to open the canal to small boats and canoes between Pontzpass and Lough Neagh (21miles); and connecting with the Great Eastern Greenway to link Newry and Carlingford (approx. 13.8miles).
- The Mourne Coastal Experience- catalyst projects include improving access to water and a focus on coastal flavours.
- Gateway Communities- the strategy recognises the role of towns and villages in the creation of the destination. It identifies Downpatrick, Newcastle, Newry, Warrenpoint/ Rostrevor and Crossmaglen as gateway and hub communities. It aims to build upon the existing masterplans for these communities (which, with the exception of Crossmaglen, are outlined in section 3 below). The draft strategy notes Crossmaglen is a strategic gateway into NMD from South Armagh and has a stronger association with the 'Story of Ireland' and its myths and legends than many other established destinations in NMD or indeed Ireland. It aims to continue to build the local arts, culture and heritage along with outdoor recreation and water based activities.

3.0 Area Plans and Master Plans

- 3.1 The Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 and the Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 are the current statutory plans for the District and provide the framework against which to assess development proposals.

The Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 (ADAP)

- 3.2 The ADAP recognises the District has excellent growth potential which rests firmly on the beauty of the landscapes and variety of interests and heritage features to be enjoyed. One of the Plan's principal objectives was to encourage the development of the District's tourism potential however no specific plan policies with regards to tourism development were included. It refers to the signature projects of St Patrick/ Christian Heritage and The Mournes and identifies Strangford Lough as a growth opportunity. The principal attractions of the District were listed as follows:
- Strangford Lough/St. Patrick's country
 - The Lecale Coast
 - Slieve Croob and the Mourne Mountains

The Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 (BNMAP)

- 3.3 The BNMAPs overall Tourism Strategy includes the promotion of the development of sustainable tourism. This means facilitating tourist development in suitable locations without adversely impacting on environmental and man-made assets

which attract tourists. The Plan has not generally sought to designate local policy areas for tourism as proposals for tourism development will be considered in accordance with the prevailing regional policies. The plan offers no specific plan policies with regards to tourism development in the area. It does however note cross border trade and shopping as a growth opportunity. It also notes development opportunity sites were identified to accommodate tourist and leisure facilities in towns.

- 3.4 Newry City and the five main towns within the District also have their own Town Centre Masterplans which were completed by the former Department for Social Development (DSD) in conjunction with the local government and concerned with urban regeneration initiatives in each respective town centre.

Downpatrick Masterplan

- 3.5 The Downpatrick Masterplan was published in July 2010. The Masterplan focuses on achieving the agreed vision for the town by 2030, which is that *"Downpatrick will be rejuvenated as an energetic, vibrant and forward-thinking Town in which all its residents can take pride. Its unique historic environment, particularly its early Christian heritage, will be leveraged and complemented by exemplary development, establishing Downpatrick as a special visitor destination. The Town and surrounding area will also take advantage of its natural setting. Its buildings, streets and spaces will be attractive, safe and friendly, providing a focus for community life and an attraction to the increasing numbers who visit"*.
- 3.6 The Masterplan states that Downpatrick has an immensely rich heritage and is also blessed with substantial qualities in its natural environment. As such it considers the Town to have enormous potential to become one of the leading tourist destinations in the UK and Ireland. However, it noted that analysis found that visitors stay for very short periods of time and do not explore the historic Town beyond the Cathedral and Saint Patrick Centre. The limited hotel accommodation in Downpatrick was identified and it was deemed necessary to address this to encourage longer visits from tourists. The evening economy was also noted as being in need of improvement.
- 3.7 The Masterplan states that tourism development will be comprehensively supported through the development of the Town's heritage offer as well as wider environmental, transport and retail developments. It intends that tourism should be the primary driver of the rejuvenation of the Town Centre. It recognises that making the most of the Town's rich cultural and historic assets to grow a sustainable visitor economy will be a challenge and it sets out an ambitious plan to achieve this.
- 3.8 The main proposals in the Downpatrick masterplan included:
 - A major new retail development in the Grove area to create a first class shopping environment in the heart of Downpatrick;
 - New people friendly streets to improve linkage throughout the town;
 - Continued support for public realm improvements and development opportunity sites;

- Redevelopment of the Gaol site for schools and a hotel;
- A Quoile River Country Park. This will introduce a network of walking and cycling links between key destinations such as St Patrick's Centre, the Mound of Down and Inch Abbey with wetlands, boardwalks, greenways and linear parks;
- An extension of Quoile wetland and open water;
- Protection and enhancement of the Downpatrick and County Down Railway (NI's only standard gauge heritage railway) with extended railway lines, and;
- A range of proposals to reduce traffic congestion to make the town centre more accessible.

3.9 The Masterplan also notes that Downpatrick is well situated within a wealth of tourism opportunities many of which are located within Newry, Mourne and Down district including the St Patrick's Trail, Strangford Lough and the Mourne Mountains. It recognises the potential to capitalise more fully on this location.

Ballynahinch Masterplan

- 3.10 The Ballynahinch Masterplan was published in October 2014. Like many towns and villages across Northern Ireland, Ballynahinch faces certain challenges such as difficult town centre trading, a lack of high quality public open space and town centre vehicular congestion. On the other hand, the strong sense of community, rich history, attractive main streets and wonderful surrounding landscape presents significant opportunities for this historic town.
- 3.11 The Masterplan was commissioned to help address these challenges and identify opportunities. It provides the format for taking a fresh look at the town in a holistic manner so that key aspects of its social, physical and economic character can be understood and appreciated.
- 3.12 Ballynahinch has a relatively limited tourism market. The pivotal focus of the town is the market square and market house which was built in 1795. A £2million Public Realm upgrade project completed in 2015 included the upgrade of the Square which plays a vital role within the Town.
- 3.13 Further development and expansion of the popular farmer's market provides an opportunity in tourism and food sectors and could attract more visitors and extend dwell time within the town with the promotion of the Town as a premier food destination. The evening economy within Ballynahinch is also somewhat limited.
- 3.14 The masterplan recognised the importance of conserving the built heritage and enhancing Ballynahinch's character. It identified the opportunity provided by the Drumlin landscape to provide public access and create a high quality parkland and a unique visitor attraction.
- 3.15 The main proposals included:
- Providing access to the Drumlins to create a high quality parkland and a unique visitor attraction,
 - Refurbish historic buildings and monuments such as the Old Mill and ruins of the Old Windmill and co-ordinate themed events from them.

- Bypass to reduce congestion,
- Develop and promote an events programme promoting the history of the Town (Battle of Ballynahinch, The historic market and the old railway) to increase footfall and potential spend.
- Improved public realm and frontage improvements,
- New street and river park
- LOTS (living over the shop) to increase vibrancy and occupancy, and;
- Proposes exploring the merit of designating a Town Centre Conservation Area.

Newry City Masterplan

- 3.16 The Masterplan for Newry was published in October 2011 and is a key reference for regeneration and development decisions relating to Newry City Centre over a 10 – 15 year period. It sets out short, medium and long term actions that will enable the City to achieve its aims and objectives. Tourism is key to a number of these including: realising Newry's potential as an international tourist destination as a hub to explore the wider area; capitalising upon its role as a gateway to the island of Ireland from the sea and to NI via its land border; keeping the city centre as vibrant as possible, and; sustaining its role as a retail destination.
- 3.17 It recognises that Newry's location and surrounding rich landscape is ideally suited to tourism. It has excellent transport connectivity with Belfast and Dublin (and their three airports) with both being accessible by road and rail within almost an hour. Warrenpoint Harbour immediately to the south is also becoming an increasingly important freight terminal (following the publishing of the masterplan the port has also been docked at by three cruise ships). While it is set within a particularly attractive landscape with the Mourne, Gullion and Cooley Mountain ranges all within close proximity, along with the dramatic Carlingford Lough a few kilometres to the south. It also notes that the city performs relatively well in retail benefitting from its cross border catchment area.
- 3.18 However, it also noted the city faces a number of challenges such as the survival of independent retail alongside high street chains, the successful accommodation of vehicles whilst maintaining environmental quality and the means by which to prevent its older buildings falling into disrepair.
- 3.19 The Masterplan proposals for the city centre included:
- Creating a world class waterfront by capitalising on the Clanrye river and the Newry canal that runs through the city centre. This was to include the re-opening of the Newry Canal to boat traffic as part of a national connection between Lough Neagh and Carlingford Lough with a view to bringing an influx of visitors and building upon the success of the canals towpath which is recorded as one of Ireland's most visited attractions;
 - Nurturing a unique, creative quarter for the arts and culture around the Town Hall, Basin Quay and the Arts Centre;
 - Regenerating Newry's primary streets including Hill Street and Abbey Way with public realm upgrades and improving the connections from attractions such as Bagenal's Castle and St Patrick's Cathedral with the rest of the city centre;

- Revitalising key areas through health and education at Monaghan Street and Upper Edward Street;
- Establishing a new network of city parks to include commissioning archaeological works at Heather Park with a view towards a potential tourist attraction based on its location on Gallows Hill where public hangings traditionally took place;
- Integrating the Buttercrane and the Quays into the city centre as evidence suggests visitors fail to visit other parts of the city centre, and;
- Developing a new flagship city quarter comprised of high-quality mixed-use development in the Albert Basin.

3.20 Other city wide proposals included:

- Developing a policy to afford a degree of protection to the setting of Newry's City Centre from inappropriate development given the visual prominence of the valley slopes;
- Newry super greenway to link the majority of Newry's neighbourhoods with each-other and the city centre, and;
- A number of initiatives aimed at reducing congestion in the city e.g the Southern Relief Road to link Warrenpoint Road and A1 bypass, city centre gateway car parks and additional signage.

South East Coast Masterplan

3.21 The Masterplan for the South East Coast was published in January 2013. It provides guidance on the future strategic development of the South East Coast as well as specific guidance on the location and form of development in the Town Centres of Newcastle, Kilkeel and Warrenpoint over the next 20 years.

3.22 The South East Coast Masterplan vision is *"to become an area with a strong national and international reputation for being a high quality coastal landscape of great scenic, natural, historic and leisure value; and an area that provides an enjoyable place to live, to work, to explore, and to play in"*.

3.23 The delivery of this statement is to be achieved by enabling the key towns of Newcastle, Kilkeel and Warrenpoint to collectively and individually embrace and prosper from their association with both their coastal setting and the wider character of the Mourne Mountains as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It takes account of the Mourne Coastal Trail which is part of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and former DETI's strategic approach to developing the Mournes as a signature destination and aims to develop a distinctive proposition for each of the centres to entice visitors.

3.24 The proposals included:

- In Newcastle, the plan proposes to build on the success of the new promenade by expanding the range of beachside activities available, showcasing local arts and crafts talents, introducing new play areas and establishing a programme of annual events; all of which will be designed to encourage overnight stays and extend the tourism season. It also notes the

development of the proposed 'Donard Gondola', as a premier tourist attraction will allow all visitors to explore and enjoy the Mourne Mountains.

- In Kilkeel, home to one of the largest fishing fleets on the island of Ireland, the plan proposes to promote the working harbour as an attraction for tourists to visit and experience the fish market for themselves. The redevelopment of the Nautilus Centre which incorporates a seafood cookery school, a maritime visitor attraction and tourist office will be complemented by the promotion and development of the profile of Kilkeel's seafood to international recognition. Creating a new improved state of the art play park and improved esplanade and access points to the beach will help to drive year round interest in the town.

The masterplan also references 'Sustainable Kilkeel 2020' that identifies new opportunities for fishing and engineering sectors. It states that developments in the fishing, renewable energy and aquaculture sectors should take account of Kilkeel as a centre for tourism and help the region develop as a centre for eco-tourism.

- In Warrenpoint, the plan seeks to promote and develop the town's reputation as a hub for watersports and activities, utilising its location on Carlingford Lough. Developing a marina would be a major attraction for the town as it would support boat trips and visiting cruise ships. While extending the promenade would link the Town Square and retail hub to the water's edge. The plan also seeks to revitalise the public spaces within the town centre, creating event space and making it more attractive, people friendly and less car dominated.

- 3.25 The town centre initiatives detailed in the Masterplan include shop front improvement schemes, retail performance programmes, development of vacant and derelict sites, introduction of town centre markets, restore projects, town centre revitalisation projects, urban development grants, vacant unit animation schemes, and a purple flag programme focusing on entertainment and hospitality.
- 3.26 The potential of the proposed Narrow Water Bridge to open up the entire South East corner for tourism was noted as significant while the potential for additional cross border tourism generated from plans for a new car ferry from Greencastle, Co. Down to Greenore, Co Louth was noted.

4.0 Departments, Agencies and Organisations with roles regarding tourism

(a) Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) now Department for the Economy (DfE).

- 4.1 The Department for the Economy is the key player in the formulation and delivery of economic development policy in terms of tourism in Northern Ireland as it hosts Tourism NI (trading name of the NI Tourist Board). In February 2010, it published 'A Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020'. The aim was to provide strategic direction and targets for the development of NI's tourism experience to the year 2020 and a targeted Action Plan to deliver it. At the core of the strategy was the intention to grow income from visitor numbers with tourist revenue increased from £536 million in 2010 to £1 billion by 2020.
- 4.2 The Draft and associated Action Plan set out priorities for action under three pillars of People, Product and Places, and Promotion along with a cross-cutting theme of Partnership through a multi-stakeholder approach to lead and partner each action.
- 4.3 The Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020 identified nine key tourism destinations, two of which are applicable to the District:
 - Mourne Mountains
 - Strangford Lough (St. Patricks Trail)

Each of these destinations also has a Management Plan. Both '*The Destination Mourne Mountains Management Plan 2013 – 2018*' and '*The Destination Strangford Lough Management Plan 2013 – 2018*' objectives are to maximise the potential to attract and encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more, by strengthening tourism performance and appeal across the whole of the plan areas.

- 4.4 The Draft Tourism Strategy for NI to 2020 was due to come into effect on 1st April 2011; however, it has not yet received clearance from the Executive due to the instigation of the Hunter Review- an independent review of the NI Tourist Board and wider tourism structures commissioned by DETI.
- 4.5 The Hunter Review was published in June 2014 which resulted in a rebranding of the NITB has since been rebranded to Tourism NI. The Review made a number of recommendations which fell into 3 themes:
 - i. Setting the strategic direction for tourism
 - ii. Building closer relationships within the tourism sector; and
 - iii. Closer alignment with Invest NI.
- 4.6 It was anticipated that Tourism NI will have a much greater presence at local level, developing strong relationships and increasing its knowledge of the needs of local tourism partners particularly in light of the recent changes in local government which has seen Councils assume increased powers and responsibilities for Community Planning and Local Development Plans, including local economic development. Collaborative working with the new Councils and the establishment of

strong partnerships are considered essential ingredients for Tourism NI in order to maximise the tourism potential of each of the 9 Key Tourism Destinations.

(b) Department for Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) now Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

- 4.7 Other Government Departments also play an important role in Tourism Development. DAERA is the overarching body responsible for the Forestry Service of NI and the Loughs Agency, each of which hold a role in the promotion of tourism in Northern Ireland through their management of important natural assets.
- 4.8 Forestry Service encourages access to, and the use of, forests within Northern Ireland, while at the same time protecting and conserving them and associated areas of special natural and heritage interest. Such uses include the sustainable use of timber but also includes maintenance of open access to forests for both recreational and tourism purposes.
- 4.9 DAERA also manage the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014 – 2020. The latest Rural Development Programme for Northern Ireland will run from 2014 – 2020 and a budget of up to £623 million has been agreed with the Northern Ireland Executive for its implementation. The RDP evaluates the current economic and social situation within the rural areas of Northern Ireland and as a result the document identifies key areas for support. One such area that is deemed worthy of support is the promotion of economic growth in rural areas by supporting rural businesses and rural tourism. This should be enabled by the observation and support of the following priorities as indicated in the RDP:
 - Encouraging farm diversification in rural areas as a way of stimulating further income generation. The incidence of diversification is considerably lower in NI (10%) than is the case for England where, using a similar definition, about 18% of farms were found to have some diversified activity in 2010 (Source: DARD 2007 EU Farm Survey).
 - Encouraging tourism in rural areas.
 - Increasing recreational access to woodland.
 - Help preserve the cultural and social uniqueness and beauty of rural villages.
 - Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

(c) Department of the Environment (DoE) now Department for Communities (DfC) and DAERA.

-NIEA

- 4.10 The Department of the Environment (DoE) was responsible for the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) which has a role to play in regards to tourism given

their role in the protection of our monuments and built heritage which are important tourism assets. This responsibility has now transferred to DfC while others noted below have transferred to DAERA.

- 4.11 The District has more than 280 scheduled sites and monuments protected under planning policy for their historical value. In addition, there are 42 State Care Monuments that are maintained for both public amenity and conservation. Monuments and sites in both urban and rural environments are a tangible link to our past; they hold information on how our predecessors lived. For this reason, they are fascinating places that we need to protect and cherish for future generations.

In Newry, Mourne and Down, these sites include:

- Ballykeel Dolmen and Cairn
- Slieve Gullion Passage Tomb
- Jordan's Castle, Ardglass
- Ballynoe Stone Circle
- Dundrum Castle
- Inch Abbey
- Narrow Water Castle
- Struell Bath Houses and Wells
- Loughinisland Churches

-Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy (NIBS)

- 4.12 The DoE's Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy (NIBS) 2005–2009, set out the Executives commitment to conserve and enhance Biodiversity whilst striving to halt Biodiversity Loss by 2016. The NIBS 2002 set out three recommendations for the Tourism Sector in Northern Ireland in regards to setting and impact on Biodiversity assets. These were;
- Prepare and implement integrated rural development, tourism development and environmental conservation strategies, where wildlife interests and tourist potential coincide.
 - Implement Integrated Sensitivity Zones and carrying capacity estimates into all strategic and area planning

- Ensure that the impacts of recreational activities are well understood and that these impacts are ameliorated through the development of codes of conduct for individual recreational activities or bylaws.
- 4.13 The DoE published a new Biodiversity Strategy for Northern Ireland in July 2015. The mission statement of the strategy is *'To make progress towards halting overall biodiversity loss, establish an ecosystem approach and help business and society in general have a greater understanding of the benefits that nature can bring to everyday life in Northern Ireland'*. A number of the associated actions are due for completion by 2016 therefore the intention is to review the strategy following this. The review will look at what has been achieved, what has been successful and changing circumstances. It will identify key challenges and any new initiatives or threats that have emerged. Newry and Mourne Council published a Biodiversity Plan in 2009 and Down District Council published a plan in 2012.
- 4.14 The District contains a plethora of environmental assets. Among these assets are the Mourne, Strangford and Lecale and Ring of Gullion Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the sand dune landscape at Murlough Nature Reserve and the wetland habitats and species found on Carlingford Lough. With 62 Areas of Special Scientific Interest, this region contains some of Northern Ireland's most precious natural environment features, habitats and wildlife. There are many more valuable assets located throughout the district, including those that are not given special protection. Magnificent beaches, such as Murlough, sensitive coastal habitat, forests like Tollymore – these and the area's many other open spaces all require similar attention so that we sensitively manage and utilise these assets to their full potential.

- Outdoor Recreation NI

- 4.15 The NIEA also supported (through competitive Natural Environment Fund Grant Programme) Outdoor Recreation NI, an umbrella organisation for Walk NI, Mountain Bike NI, Canoe NI and NI Orienteering to deliver a number of activity tourism projects which adds to the quality of the regions reputation as an activity holiday destination.

(d) Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) now Department for Communities (DfC)

- 4.16 The former Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) was the Government Department responsible for arts and creativity, museums, architecture and built environment policy and through its role in these fields has a direct hand in influencing cultural tourism to Northern Ireland and also through its role in the organisation of festivals and events. Many of its responsibilities have now transferred to the Department for Communities. The District benefits from facilities such as The St. Patrick's Centre in Downpatrick and Bagenals Castle in Newry,

which each have a dedicated Visitor Centre providing information about opportunities to explore the heritage and culture of the region and wider afield.

(e) Department for Social Development (DSD) now Department for Communities (DfC)

- 4.17 The former Department for Social Development (DSD) now Department for Communities (DfC) has strategic responsibility for urban regeneration and community and voluntary sector development amongst other roles. The Regional Development Office, a Department within DfC, is responsible for developing, promoting and implementing programmes to help regenerate towns and villages outside Belfast and the North West. Its responsibilities include town centre reinvigoration including comprehensive development schemes and environmental improvement schemes.

(f) Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) now Department for the Economy (DfE)

- 4.18 The Department for the Economy is responsible for the promotion of learning and skills in Northern Ireland and for policy in Further to Higher Education, Training and Employment Rights. The Department has a direct role in the provision of employees and employment opportunity in terms of appropriate skills and training, which in turn directly influences all aspects of the economy, including the Tourism Sector.
- 4.19 In recognition of the growth in the tourist sector, DEL established a "Future Skills Action Group" which brought together key stakeholders from the industry, to identify current and future skill trends and growth requirements for the industry. In April 2010, the "Hospitality and Tourism future Skills Action Group Review" was released. This document sets out an action plan to increase skills and training relating to tourism employment within Northern Ireland.

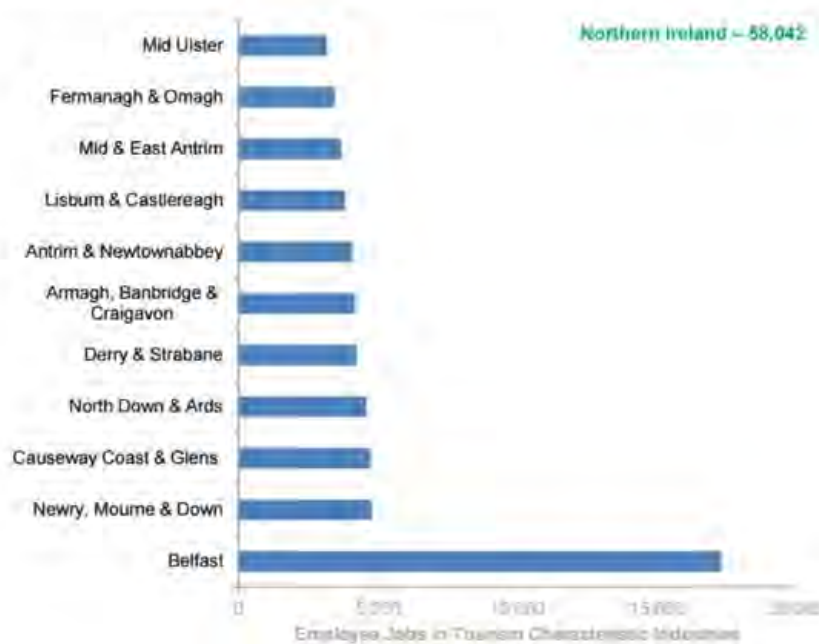
(g) National Trust

- 4.20 The National Trust is a conservation organisation with charitable status that works to preserve and protect historic places and spaces in the public interest. The Trust owns a number of heritage properties including historic houses, gardens and estates. It is one of the largest landowners in the UK, owning many beauty spots, many of which are open to the public free of charge. The Trust owns a number of properties in the District- Rowallane Gardens, Castle Ward, Strangford Lough, Murlough National Nature Reserve, The Mournes, and Derrymore House. (Additional information on these properties is included in Appendix 1).

5.0 Northern Ireland and Newry, Mourne and Down Tourism Industry

- 5.1 With a population of around 171,500 and a coastline of approximately 100 miles, the District is the third largest Council area in Northern Ireland. Although primarily made up of the former Newry & Mourne and Down District Council areas, the new Council also includes the electoral ward of Ballyward which has transferred from the former Banbridge District Council area.
- 5.2 The District is an area rich with tourism assets, natural beauty and cultural heritage. The juxtaposition of the Mourne Mountains and the sea is unique. The area also contains many of the provinces main tourist attractions; including the Mourne Mountains, Ring of Gullion, Slieve Croob, Kilbroney Park and Strangford Lough/St. Patrick's country.
- 5.3 The District has a great variety of places to visit including forest parks, historic houses and gardens, historic monuments and visitor centres. These offer opportunities for touring and diverse individual and recreational activities. As a result tourism within the area is based on both the natural and built heritage, which ranges from countryside, forest and coastline to conservation areas, historic buildings and ancient sites.
- 5.4 Tourism is an integral part of the local economy with the sector generating £54m in 2014 and £47.7m in 2015. In 2013 there was an estimated 4,780 tourism related jobs across the District accounting for 9.3% of total employee jobs within the District. Figure 1 below shows how this compared to the other Local Government Districts (LGDs) with the District being second only to Belfast in terms of the number of jobs in Tourism Characteristic Industries.

Figure 1: Employee Jobs in Tourism Characteristic Industries in LGD's 2013



Source: NISRA

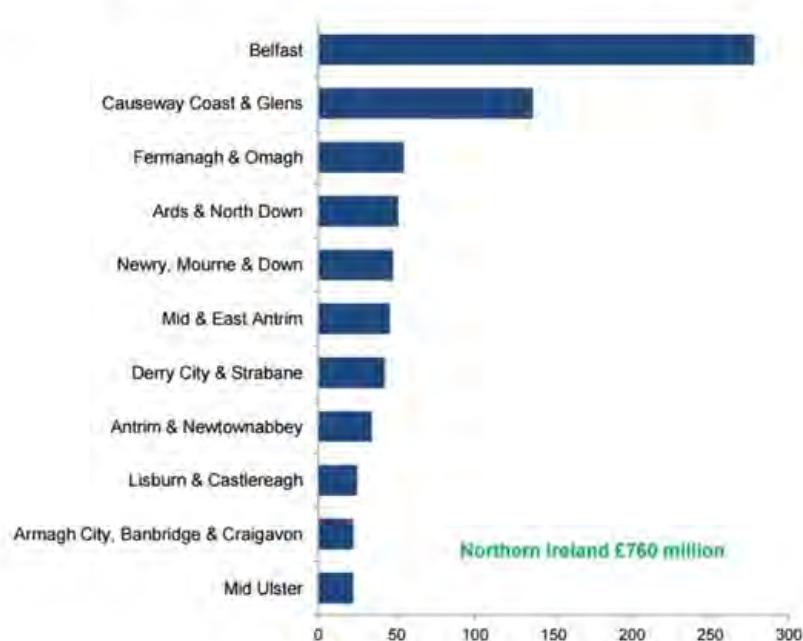
- 5.5 Figures released by the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA), coupled with Tourism NI research, show that 2015 was positive for the tourism sector. In 2015 there were 4.5 million overnight trips in Northern Ireland. This figure includes trips to Northern Ireland by external visitors and domestic trips taken by local residents. The number of overnight trips shows no change on 2014. Expenditure associated with these trips was £760million, up 1% on 2014. In 2015 overnight trips to Northern Ireland by external visitors stood at 2.3 million. This is the highest number on record and a 5% increase on 2014.
- 5.6 More than 400,000 visitors from overseas came to Northern Ireland during the first quarter of 2016, according to Tourism Ireland. The figures were compiled by NISRA and represent an 8% growth on figures from the same period last year. As well as the increase in overseas visitors, there has been a marked increase of 10% in revenues, which meant that £93m was brought into the local economy.
- 5.7 The strength of the tourism market in the District can be measured in terms of the number of trips, nights and spend. Figure 2 (below) shows the number of overnight trips, nights and expenditure in the District for 2012-2015. It shows that expenditure from overnight trips accounted for £47.7m in the District in 2015. Figure 3 (overleaf) shows how this compared to the 11 Local Government Districts (LDGs) with the District being ranked fifth. It also accounted for 6% of the overall spend in Northern Ireland. However, the average spend per overnight trip in the District was £118.03 compared to the Northern Ireland average of £168.60. As a result the District ranked last of the 11 Local Government Districts in terms of overnight expenditure per trip (NISRA, 2015). This suggests that the District attracts lower spending markets. Figure 4 (overleaf) shows that the District performed well in terms of the number of overnight trips with it being ranked third of all LGDs. However, despite having a high number of trips the average length of the trips at 2.6 nights is lower than NI average of 3.25 nights.

Figure 2: Estimated no. of Overnight Trips/ Nights & Expenditure in Newry, Mourne and Down and Northern Ireland 2012-2015

	2012		2013		2014		2015	
	NI	NMD	NI	NMD	NI	NMD	NI	NMD
Trips	4,024,505	454,092	4,069,440	453,109	4,513,136	571,000	4,531,618	404,442
Nights	13,857,763	1,424,090	14,393,835	1,464,543	15,082,371	1,488,281	15,470,769	1,056,896
Spend	£686.3m	£64.8m	£715.2m	£49.8m	£744.9m	£54m	£764.1m	£47.7m

Source: Northern Ireland Passenger Survey

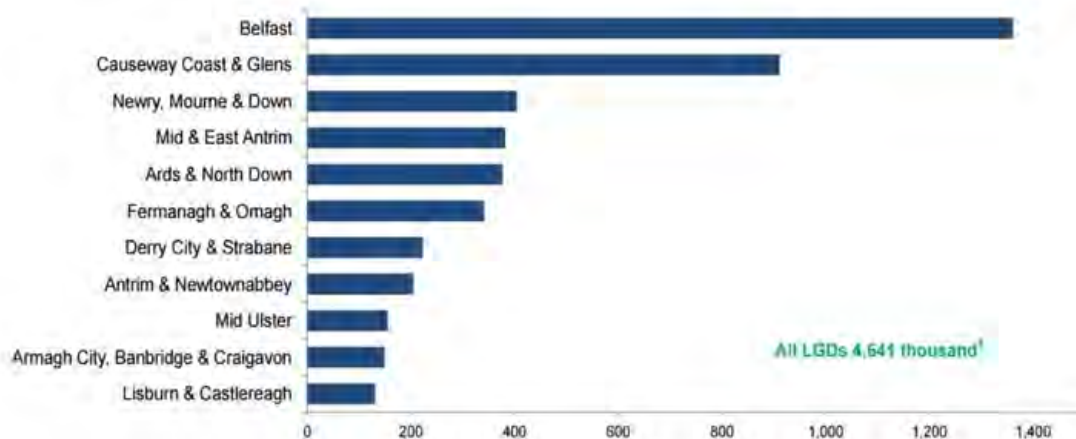
Figure 3: Expenditure (£) on Overnight Trips by Local Government District, 2015



Expenditure (£Million)

Source: Local Government District Tourism Statistics 2015, NISRA

Figure 4: Overnight Trips by Local Government District (thousands), 2015

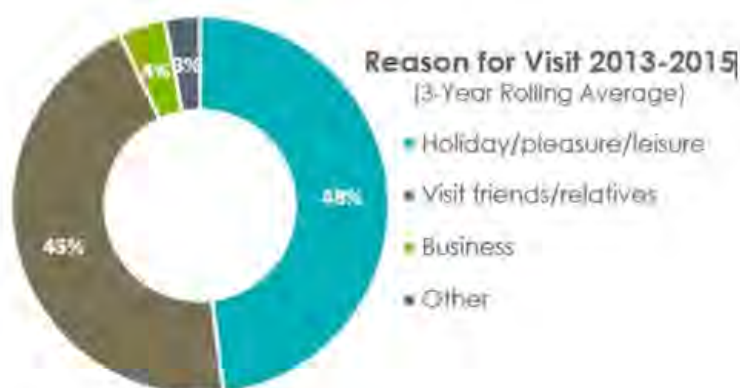


Overnight Trips (Thousands)

Source: NISRA, Northern Ireland Passenger Survey 2015

- 5.8 Figure 5 below shows the breakdown of the trips taken in the district and the reason for them. It shows that the top reason for an overnight stay in the District was for holiday/pleasure/leisure purposes with 48% of people visiting the District between 2013 and 2015 staying for this reason. This was above the Northern Ireland average of 44%. The second biggest reason for visiting was visiting friends or relatives at 45% again above the Northern Ireland average of 41%. The figure also shows that the District had a lower than the NI average number of people visiting for business purposes with only 4% of overnight trips being for this purpose compared to the NI average of 9%.

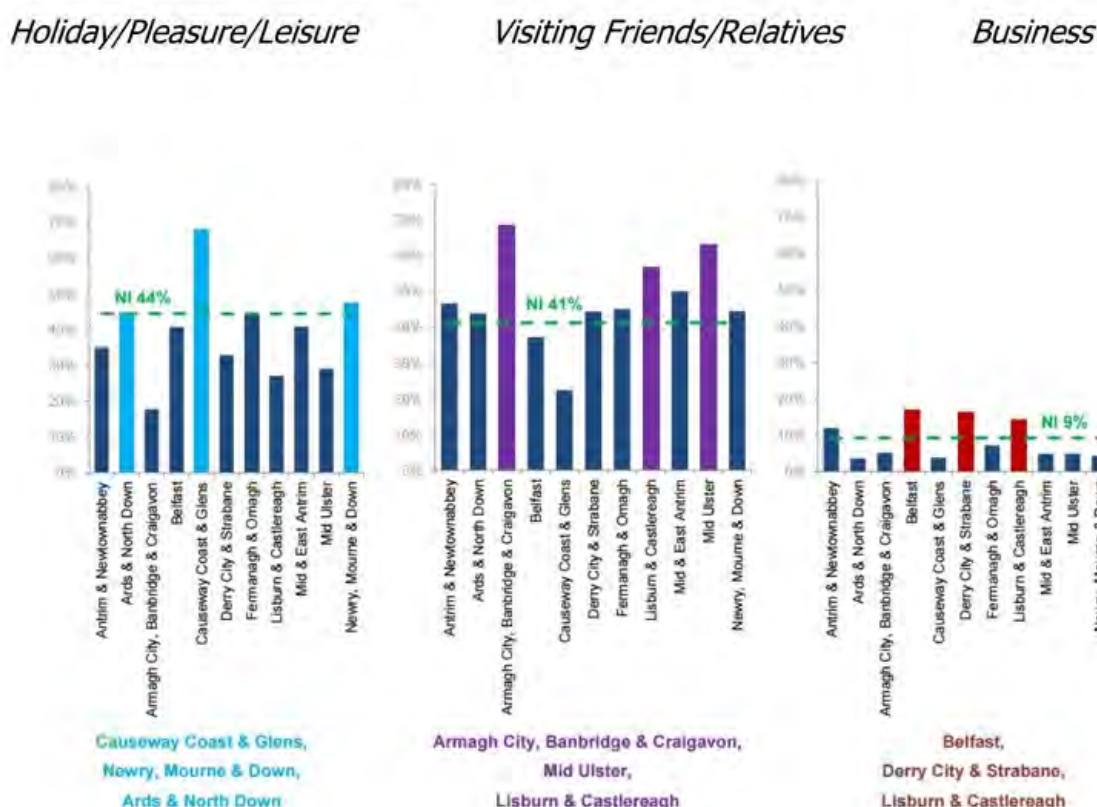
Figure 5: Reasons for visiting in Newry, Mourne and Down, 2013-2015



Source: NITB

- 5.9 The graphs overleaf (Figure 6) show the breakdown of the trips taken and the reasons for them for the 11 LGDs. It shows that the region is clearly a popular destination with people visiting for holiday/ pleasure/ leisure purposes with the district being ranked 2nd only to Belfast in this category. It also shows the district is ranked 7th and 9th respectively for the number of trips taken for visiting friends/relatives and business purposes.

Figure 6: Reason for Overnight Trips in Northern Ireland within Local Government District (3 year rolling average)



Source: Local Government District Tourism Statistics 2015, NISRA

- 5.10 As shown in Figure 7 below tourists from within NI account for the majority of the tourism market in the District with 66% of visitors during the period 2012-2015 coming from NI. It also shows 16% coming from GB, 13% from ROI and the remaining 6% share being from mainland Europe and North America combined.

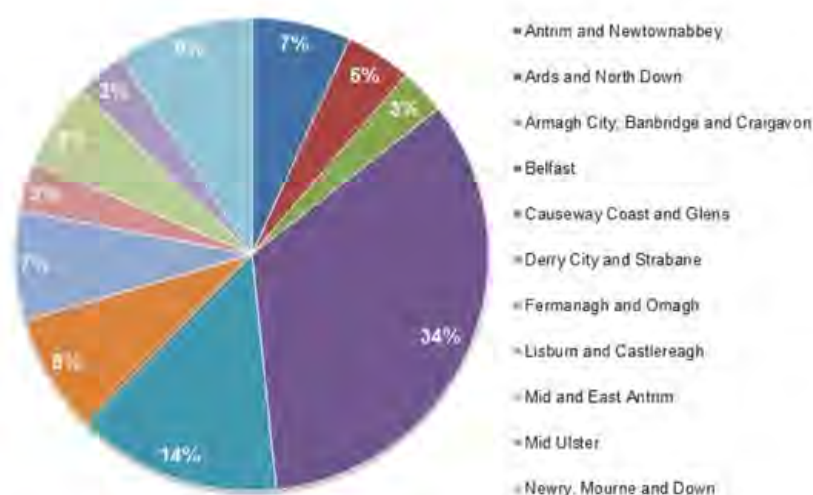
Figure 7: Origins of visitors to Newry, Mourne and Down, 2013-2015



Source: NITB

- 5.11 The availability of commercial accommodation is an indicator of the supply side of tourism. Figure 8 below shows that Belfast accounted for the highest share of accommodation rooms with 34% of the rooms stock in Northern Ireland. Causeway Coast and Glens accounted for the second highest room stock (14%) with Newry, Mourne and Down third (9%).

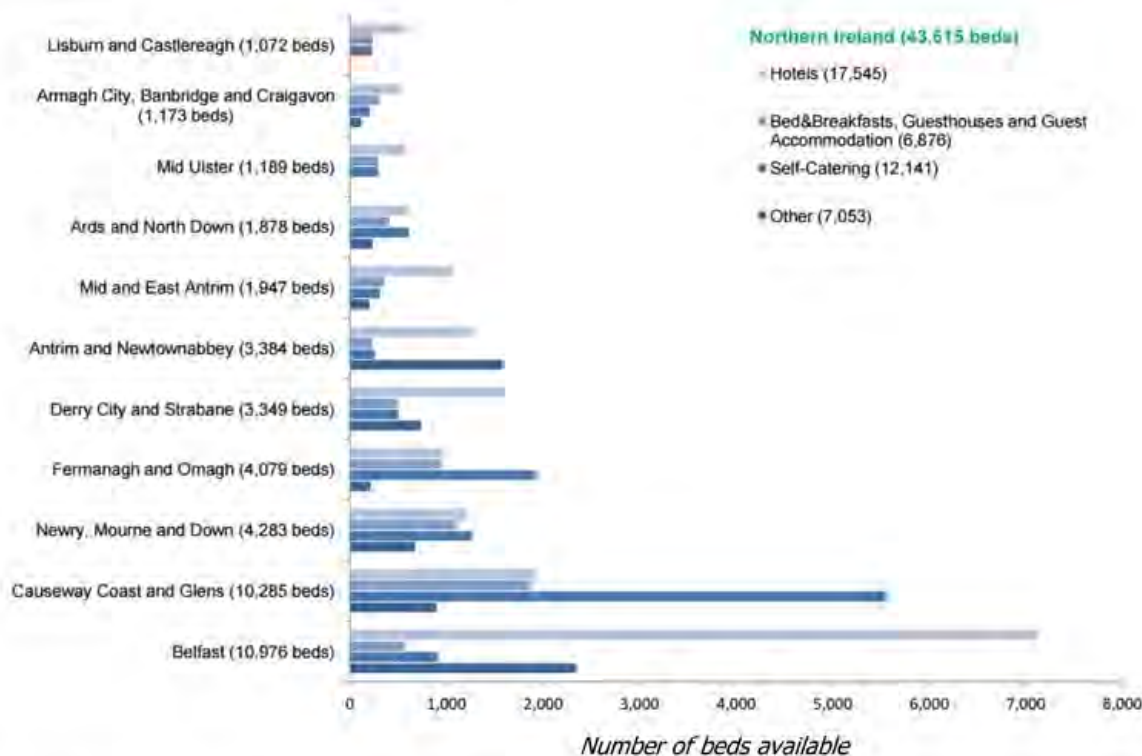
Figure 8: Room Stock within Local Government Districts, 2015



Source: Local Government District Tourism Statistics 2015, NIRSA

- 5.12 Figure 9 (overleaf) shows the number of beds available in licensed accommodation by type for the LDGs. It shows that the District has the second highest number of beds available in Bed and Breakfasts, Guesthouses and Guest Accommodation of all Government Districts. Using the figures in the graph below shows that the District accounts for 9.8% of the total number of beds available in licensed accommodation in NI in 2015.

Figure 9: Number of Beds available in Licensed Accommodation by Accommodation Type and Local Government District, 2015



Source: Local Government District Tourism Statistics 2015, NISRA

- 5.13 Accommodation occupancy rates are an indicator of the demand for accommodation in the District. The average annual hotel room occupancy rate for the District in 2015 was 55% and in 2014 it was 52% (NISRA). During 2015, the demand for hotel bedrooms in the district was broadly on a par with the Northern Ireland average in the summer season (May to September). However, outside of these months, the demand for bedrooms in the District lags some way behind the benchmark results. There was a significant decline in bedroom demand in the District, such that the average annual occupancy rate was 55% as against 67.3% across Northern Ireland.
- 5.14 Figure 10 (overleaf) shows the breakdown of accommodation stock in the District by type up to the end of 2015.

Figure 10: Accommodation Stock by type in the District- Year End 2015

NEWRY, MOLURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL	TOTAL	UNITS	ROOMS	BED-SPACES
HOTELS				
5 STAR/4 STAR	3		358	827
3 STAR	2		37	87
2 STAR	1		18	49
1 STAR	1		16	33
UNCLASSIFIED	5		100	231
TOTAL	12		529	1,227
GUESTHOUSES	16		147	349
BED & BREAKFASTS	81		246	534
SELF-CATERING	173	254	625	1,267
HOSTELS	10		177	645
GUEST ACCOMMODATION	17		92	227
BUNKHOUSE	2		7	34
TOTAL	311		1,823	4,283

Source: NITB

- 5.15 The Council commissioned an Accommodation Needs Analysis Study (September 2015) in which consultations were carried out across the District with current accommodation service providers, attractions, Council senior management, DETI, Tourism NI, Tourism Ireland and selected Tour operators, along with an assessment of current visitor trends. The following accommodation recommendations were made based on the findings on this report:
- More licensed guest inns required
 - Mid-market hotel – Downpatrick with Spa
 - Killeavy Castle, Hotel and wellness Centre – Ring of Gullion
 - Multi-choice accommodation options (i.e. in forest parks)
 - Budget hotel in Newcastle or upmarket hostel
 - Possible budget hotel in Newry
- 5.16 The accommodation needs analysis and the recommendations are important to identify where gaps exist in terms of accommodation provision and to assist, where possible, in order to provide the right conditions for people to set up businesses in terms of planning, locations, job creation, rates, and incentives to encourage people to invest in the area.

6.0 Newry, Mourne and Down Tourism Assets

- 6.1 The potential to attract tourism and to sustain interest and investment has been historically based on a mixture of both private and public interests and investments. Natural and built heritage resources are often deemed to be the key players in the ability to generate and attract tourism and revenue; however the ability to attract visitors through cultural tourism such as the hosting of events and activities also plays an important role. This section of the paper will provide an overview of the districts tourism assets and growth areas.

-Activity Tourism

- 6.2 Activity Tourism was identified by the NI Tourism Strategy as a key target market. It is estimated to be worth £90-100million per annum in revenue for NI tourist businesses (Source: Activities Tourism-Sharing Success, NITB 2011). It covers a range from active holidays involving canoeing, climbing, horse riding and mountaineering, to the less physical, yet still activity-focused areas of nature walking, food trails, or local culture and heritage trails. DETI and Tourism NI identify Activity and Special interest breaks as a key target market worthy of support in NI. Activities include golf, angling, walking and cycling amongst others. A number of these activities will be further investigated below. First it is important to note that the country parks, parks and forests in the district have an important role to play in the provision of activities and as an attraction for visitors. NISRA (2015) showed that country parks, parks and forests accounted for 43% of all visitors in NI 2015. Delamont Country Park which features an adventure playground, walking trails, boat trips, a shop, bbq area and visitor centre had 212,000 visits in the same period meaning it was one of the top 10 visitor attractions in this category in NI. (Additional information on this and other parks and forests in the district is included in appendix 1).

-Golf

- 6.3 The Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland 2020 highlights the opportunity for growing golf tourism nationally and internationally to position NI as a premier golf destination. There are currently eleven Golf Courses in the District; Ardglass, Downpatrick, Kilkeel, Warrenpoint, Royal County Down, Cloverhill, Mayobridge, Bright Castle, Crossgar, Spa and Ashfield.
- 6.4 Tourism NI developed a golf tourism strategic plan in March 2015 focusing on the success of golfing in Northern Ireland which aims to maximise the potential of Golf Tourism in NI by 2020. Golf tourism currently generates £33m a year for the economy, but the Tourism NI Golf Strategy aims to boost that figure by at least £17m.
- 6.5 The Dubai Duty Free (DDF) Irish Open, hosted by the Rory Foundation, returned to Royal County Down, Newcastle in May 2015 for the first time in 76 years. This is a prime example that demonstrated that Newry, Mourne and Down Council, in partnership with others, have the capacity to host major events within the District.

- 6.6 The Irish Open in Newcastle had an audience of over 100,000 and was seen by an estimated 400 million people around the world. It generated over £11 million into the local economy, particularly into the hospitality sector. By providing a visitor experience, which included accommodation, food and drink, culture, a quality natural environment and local hospitality, the District experienced increased visitor numbers as a result of hosting this professional golfing tournament.

-Angling

- 6.7 Angling represents a key product to deliver growth and competitiveness for tourism in Northern Ireland and the District. Angling is the 6th biggest sport in the UK according to the "A Strategic Review of Angling in Northern Ireland, 2013" commissioned by DCAL. Although angling does not have the visibility of many other activities, such as walking and cycling, based on the number of licences issued, the number of visiting anglers from outside NI appears to be slowly increasing. Evidence shows that the visiting angler is as valuable to the NI economy as a visiting golfer, walker, cyclist or horse-rider and all these groups spend more than the average 'non sporting' visitor.
- 6.8 The District has some of the country's best waters for angling which places it in a prime position to avail of the tourism opportunities that angling can bring. The main beneficiaries of increased angling tourism in the District would be service providers including pubs; restaurants; hotels; holiday lets; and B&Bs. With some notable exceptions there is a lack of awareness among these providers of the potential opportunities to service visiting anglers which would attract new summer business and also extend their season.
- 6.9 Fishing communities in Kilkeel and Ardglass received a major boost in October 2015 through a Maritime Heritage Tourism initiative with the project providing benefits such as Heritage guide training, signage, seating, information panels, free Wi-Fi and media Apps. The aim of the project was to attract and retain visitors who will bring revenue into the ports and their wider communities.

-Hiking and Walking

- 6.10 The district offers numerous locations and opportunities for hiking and walking while enjoying the distinctive landscape. The most well-known location within the district is likely to be the Mourne which contains 12 peaks and includes Slieve Donard, NI's highest mountain. The area is partly owned by the National Trust and sees a large number of visitors every year for hiking, cycling and rock climbing. Walk NI identifies the Mourne Mountains as one of six top walking destinations in NI. (Strangford Lough is also identified making the District particularly popular for this activity).
- 6.11 The Mourne tourism profile is made up mostly of day visitors and visitors from within NI with 61 % of visitors being families while 21% are couples and 30% of all those visiting participates in hiking/ walking.

- 6.12 The Destination Mourne Mountains Tourism Management Plan 2013-2018 aims to achieve the vision of the Mournes as 'The Outdoor Playground for the North of Ireland'.
- 6.13 Tollymore Forest Park is an example of how parks are important in the provision of activities. There are four official walking trails within the forest. All trails start and end in the car park. They offer a range of distances and difficulties from the Arboretum Path which is half a mile long to the Mountain and Drinns Trail which can be combined to a total of 8.5miles. The Ulster Way also passes through the forest.
- 6.14 An example of a tourism project in the District is Bunkers Hill, Castlewellan. Bunkers Hill is a small, recently felled forest at the edge of Castlewellan Town. In November 2014 a new 2km multi-use trails and play trail was officially opened at Bunkers Hill Forest. The project was developed by Outdoor Recreation NI on behalf of Down District Council. The new trail is designed for use by the local community and visitors from further afield, and takes in the most glorious views of Dundrum Bay, Slieve Croob and the Mourne Mountains.

- Mountain biking

- 6.15 Mountain biking and cycling generally is experiencing a surge in popularity. There are now approximately 100km of official purpose built mountain bike trails across Northern Ireland with an estimated visitor usage of some 100,000 people a year. (Source: "Mountain Biking Guide" as produced by NITB in January 2013).
- 6.16 Two of Northern Ireland's three National Mountain Bike Trails are located in the District; Rostrevor Mountain Trails which offer a 27km red trail and 19km black loop, both packed full of technical trail features and panoramic views of mountains and coast; and the Castlewellan Mountain Trails which offer 9km red trail and a 4km green trail, 4.5km blue and purpose-built pump track making it the ideal destination for all ages and mountain biking abilities. There is also a Regional Trail located in Castle Ward as well as a local facility based in Tollymore.

-Watersports

- 6.17 With over 100 miles of coastline the District is home to Strangford Lough, Carlingford Lough and a number of beaches that offer water-based activity opportunities. Strangford Lough is the largest sea lough in the British Isles, covering an area from Angus Rock to the sand flats at its northern end, some 20miles (33km) away. It is one of only three Marine Nature Reserves in the UK and is a popular tourist destination offering activities such as leisure sailing, kayaking, fishing, bird watching and diving. It is one of nine canoe trails in NI (Source: Canoe NI) and covers 80 nautical miles taking in the beautiful surroundings, heritage and wildlife. The District also benefits from the South East Coast Canoe Trail.

- 6.18 Beaches are popular tourist attractions as they offer family friendly activity. Beaches in the District include Murlough, Cranfield, Tyrella, Warrenpoint and Newcastle. (Additional information on these beaches is included in Appendix 3). Murlough is the most visited beach in the District with 241,000 visitors in 2014 making it one of the top 10 tourist destinations in NI (excluding country parks, parks and forests, NISRA 2014). The blue flag beach is 5 miles in length and is a key attraction that is popular for swimming, sunbathing and other forms of recreation. The beach is backed by ancient sand dunes that are designated as a National Nature Reserve.
- 6.19 There are a number of other water-based activities that are available at the other beaches for example kayaking, banana boating, jet skiing, pier jumping and canoeing.
- 6.20 The inland rivers and lakes also provide opportunities for water based activities such as wet bouldering, open canoeing, kayaking and canyoning.
- 6.21 Access to Strangford Lough, Carlingford Lough and a number of beaches in the District is limited and as a result prevents the potential for activities such as boating and yachting from being fully realised.

-Activity Centres

- 6.22 There are numerous facilities within the District offering a wide selection of activities in the Mourne and Ring of Gullion area. These range from climbing, coasteering and bouldering, high ropes and zip lines to mountain biking, 4 x 4 off road driving, zorbing, paintballing orienteering and archery. These facilities offer activities to youth/ sports groups, hen/ stag groups and corporate team building. (A list of popular facilities can be found in Appendix 4).
- 6.23 The District has plenty on offer to suit children and families. With many activities throughout the District, suitable for all age groups, such as canoeing, climbing or kayaking there are also centres that cater for children and families. (Additional information on some of the facilities available is in Appendix 5).

-Cultural tourism

- 6.24 Cultural tourism has been described by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development as 'one of the largest and fastest growing global tourism market... [it is] increasingly being used to promote destinations and enhance their competitiveness and attractiveness'. Cultural tourism is said to include movements of people 'to specific cultural attractions such as heritage sites, artistic and cultural manifestations, arts and drama outside their normal place of residence (Richards, 1996). Some examples of the districts cultural tourism assets are noted below.

-built heritage

- 6.25 Built heritage refers to Listed Buildings, Monuments, Parklands, Gardens, Demesnes, Conservation Areas and Local Landscape Policy Areas. The district has an abundance of built heritage assets which are a strong attraction for outside visitors to come to the area. There are a total of 2016 archaeological sites and monuments, 643 listed buildings, 35 historic parks, gardens and demesne, 924 industrial heritage sites, 33 Areas of Significant Archaeological Interest/ Areas of Archaeological Potential, 10 Conservation Areas, 27 Areas of Townscape Character and 216 LLPAs in the district.
- 6.26 Examples include the National Trust estate of Castle Ward House and Demesne which is located on the Shore of Strangford Lough. It includes an eccentric 18th Century mansion and estate with 820 acres of landscaped gardens, a fortified tower, Victorian laundry, theatre, restaurant, shop, saw mill and a working corn mill. The estate was the No. 1 destination in the District in 2015 (NISRA, 2015) which demonstrates the importance and draw of built heritage assets in generating visits.

-natural heritage

- 6.27 The District enjoys a wealth of natural assets, many of which have special designations afforded to them to protect their distinctiveness and quality. As previously noted the Mourne Mountains and the Strangford Lough (St Patrick Trail) were identified as two of the nine key destinations within the Draft Tourism Strategy for NI to 2020. The Mourne Mountains, Strangford Lough and the Ring of Gullion were also identified as Strategic Natural Resources in the RDS 2035.
- 6.28 In addition to these there are a number of sites that are significant in terms of their natural heritage value and as a result have various designations in order to protect their distinctive character. These designations are noted in more detail in the Environmental Assets preparatory Environmental Assets paper. In brief they include 3 Special Protection Areas (SPAs), 11 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), 4 Ramsar Sites, 62 Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs), 2 National Nature Reserves, 5 Nature Reserves, 1 Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) (Strangford Lough), 1 proposed MCZ (Carlingford Lough) and 3 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).
- 6.29 The ability of natural heritage to attract visitors is evident in the number of visits to some of the Districts assets. For example Murlough National Reserve which is a fragile 6000 year old sand dune system at the edge of Dundrum Bay and the Mourne Mountains was the No. 1 attraction in the District in 2014 (NISRA). It consists of a network of paths and boardwalks through the dunes, woodland and heath. It is an excellent area for walking and bird watching due to its spectacular location.

-Christian Heritage

- 6.30 The District enjoys an unrivalled link to St Patrick and Christian heritage which offer significant tourism potential. The St Patricks Trail is a 92 mile signed tourist driving trail that connects the key sites with strong links to St Patrick's life, landscape and legacy. It is an excellent way of telling the story of St Patrick's journey and is identified as one of five signature destinations identified by Tourism NI as offering the best opportunities for tourism growth and to create world class excellence for Northern Ireland. The attractions along the Saint Patrick's Trail for the District area include;
- 6.31 St. Patrick's Centre is a permanent interpretative exhibition centre featuring interactive displays on the life and story of Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. It provides the only permanent exhibition centre in the world devoted to Saint Patrick. In the exhibition, entitled *Ego Patricius*, Saint Patrick's own words are used to illuminate the arrival of Christianity in Ireland and its development through his mission. It also reveals the artwork and metalwork which were features of the Early Christian period, as well as the major impact of Irish missionaries in this period in Europe. The St Patrick centre acts as a hub for tourism in the area, and a focal point for a wide range of educational, religious and cultural interest.
- 6.32 Down Cathedral is a Church of Ireland cathedral located beside the St Patrick Centre. It stands on the site of a Benedictine Monastery, built in 1183. St Patrick's remains are buried in the graveyard. The Cathedral hosts major festivals and services for the Diocese, the highlight being the annual St Patrick's Day celebrations on 17th March.
- 6.33 Down County Museum is located in the restored eighteenth century County Gaol of Down. The museum collects, conserves and interprets those objects which best illustrate the history, culture and environment of County Down. Every year the museum also organises, a range of special exhibitions on a variety of topics. The museum also has an extensive education programme with activities for school and community groups.
- 6.34 Inch Abbey and Quoile Pondage. Inch Abbey is a large, ruined monastic site situated on the edge of the Quoile River with the buildings mainly dating back to the 12th and 13th centuries. Quoile Pondage, where the river joins Strangford Lough, is a freshwater nature reserve with a visitor centre next to the ruined Quoile Castle.
- 6.35 Struell Wells is a remarkable complex of holy wells, set in a secluded rocky valley along the line of a flowing stream. Though known as St Patrick's Wells, the association is traditional rather than historical, arising from their nearness to Saul, 1.5 miles away. The waters were believed to have curative powers and the site has a ruined church, 2 bath-houses (one for men, one for women) and two roofed wells, all fed by the stream.

- 6.36 Saul Church is a restoration building on the site to commemorate the 1500th anniversary of the landing of St Patrick and was opened on All Saint's Day 1933. Throughout the year visitors and pilgrims, intrigued by the history and beauty of this locality are welcomed. The high point each year is the celebration of St Patrick's Day on 17th March when the Church welcome visitors of all Christian backgrounds to worship.
- 6.37 Bagenal's Castle is a sixteenth century fortified house and adjoining nineteenth century warehouse located in Newry. The legacy of Patrick's work can be found in Bagenal's Castle. It was at this site, in 1157, that the Cistercian abbey was founded. Little remains of the abbey today, but excavations have revealed human remains, pottery and a 12th century slab of granite bearing a Celtic cross. In 2015 Bagenal's Castle were awarded a Silver Award in the Green Tourism Business Scheme.

-Festivals and Events

- 6.38 Festivals and events are very useful tools to help drive tourism, extend the tourism season and enhance the District's profile; they are also good at facilitating networking and links with global brands. The showcasing of events, such as home-grown festivals, to major international events such as the Irish Open 2015 is a major driving force at attracting visitor numbers to an area. In terms of the impact of the economy, there is a direct correlation between the ability to attract visitor numbers to the generation of increased spend. In terms of lasting legacies and social impact, such forms of tourism also provide platforms for the visitor to interact with the local culture, local people and explore our scenic landscapes and settlements.
- 6.39 The district delivered an extensive programme of events last year (2016) with highlights including the staging of the Skiffie World Rowing championships on Strangford Lough, the annual Festival of Flight in Newcastle and a new 'Wake the Giant' event in Warrenpoint based on a myth of a sleeping giant reposing on the Cooley Mountains.
- 6.40 The season of 'Giant Adventures' also played host to a number of other music and cultural gatherings across the district including the Mourne International Walking Festival, Fiddlers Green International Music Festival, Blues on the Bay, Soma Arts and Cultural Festival, Lur Cinn Fleadh, Rostrevor Choral Festival, Ballynahinch Game and Harvest Festival, Hans Sloane Chocolate Festival and Hallowtides. (Additional information on some of the festivals and events held is included in Appendix 6).

-Food Tourism

- 6.41 Food is a vital part of the tourism experience for visitors coming to Northern Ireland. In 2008, the Northern Ireland Passenger Survey indicated that more was spent on food and drink than on any other category, including accommodation with 33% of the £540 million spent by overseas and domestic tourists being spent on food and drink. Actions have already been taken to boost food tourism with the launching of the Mournes Food Cycle Trail, the Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership' Seafood Report and the work of the Mourne Seafood Cookery School.
- 6.42 Tourism NI has sought to benefit from the growth of this category by designating 2016 as the NI Year of Food and Drink. As part of this campaign the District showcased its fantastic range of local food and drink through its own 'Taste Junction' Initiative.

-Screen

- 6.43 According to statistics published by DCAL in 'Experience of the arts by adults in Northern Ireland 2013/14', the most popularly attended art form in NI was to a film at a cinema or other venue (58% of respondents).
- 6.44 There are two multi-screen cinemas in the District, namely at Downpatrick and Newry. There is also a voluntary run non-profit led cinema based in Newcastle that screens lesser known films and older movies.
- 6.45 The District has also provided a number of filming locations for the Game of Thrones (one of the most popular and successful fantasy TV series ever made) including Leitrim Lodge, Tollymore Forest, Inch Abbey, Quoile River, Castle Ward and Audrey's Field. Guided and self-guided tours now operate and act as a draw to these and to other filming sites throughout NI.

-Theatre

- 6.46 Theatre is Northern Ireland's most popular art form, accounting for 60% of all ticket sales from 6,661 art form performances in NI in 2010-2011. The Arts Council of NI annual contribution to the entire arts sector is approximately £13 million a year. Theatre, as one part of that sector, annually accounts for ticket sales revenue in excess of £10 million.
- 6.47 The District has several hubs for theatre activity which include;
- The Down Arts Centre and Down County Museum;
 - Sean Hollywood Arts Centre;
 - Newry Town Hall;
 - Warrenpoint Town Hall; and
 - Newry & Mourne Museum.

- 6.48 These venues are host to various arts, drama, music, theatre and dance programmes and performances as well as being a centre for arts and craft workshops. Unlike other sectors of the Creative Industries, Professional Theatre and Performing Arts, make a further economic contribution to night-time economies.

-Literature

- 6.49 Literature was identified as one of seven sectors of significance by Tourism NI. C.S Lewis is possibly the most well know author to have connections to the District. He is believed to have found the inspiration for his Narnia depicted in 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' from the Mourne Mountains. He is also reported to have said 'that part of Rostrevor which overlooks Carlingford Lough is my idea of Narnia' (source: Discover NI). This connection is built upon with the Narnia Trail through Kilbroney Forest Park in Rostrevor where the story of Narnia is brought to life in a short family loop trail. The trail is entered like the magical world itself, through a Wardrobe, and leads to several interpretative stations with themes including The Tree People, The Beavers' House, the Citadels and many more.

-Pubs and Nightclubs

- 6.50 The night time economy of the Districts larger towns are largely fuelled by the popularity of pubs and nightclubs in the region. The Purple Flag project was initiated in Northern Ireland by Pubs of Ulster and the Association of Town Centre Management with funding support through NITB's Tourism Innovation Fund. Purple Flag is a new accreditation scheme that recognises excellence in the management of town and city centres at night. Purple flag status is similar to Blue Flag for beaches. Purple flag towns and cities must be welcoming to everyone, offer safe ways for visitors to travel home, provide a good mix of venues and be appealing in the evenings.
- 6.51 Newry was granted Purple Flag status in December 2013 and joined the four other Northern Ireland towns and cities of Belfast, Enniskillen, Bangor and Derry-Londonderry. Newry was particularly recommended for their approach to planning and policy, as it has implemented a shared data based planning tool which allows all of the different partners in the community, including local businesses and the Council, to feed into the planning tool and identify opportunities for collaboration. The centre was also commended for having an excellent dining offer, late night venues, high levels of co-ordination between partners and clear leadership.

-Visitor Information Centres

- 6.52 Visitor Information Centres (VIC) provide access to a wealth of detailed, up-to-the-minute information, as well as numerous useful services such as accommodation and tour bookings. All the offices perform to national and regional standards and offer free help and advice from trained tourism experts. There are a number of important VIC's found in the District:

- Newry VIC is situated in Bagenal's Castle, a 16th century house and adjoining 19th Century warehouse sympathetically restored to house the Museum and the VIC.
- Downpatrick VIC is situated in the St Patrick Centre, Market Street. In addition to providing visitor information the centre is also a local distributor of DAERA Fishing Licence & Permits.
- Newcastle VIC is located on Central Promenade in the centre of the town.
- Kilkeel VIC is located in the Nautilus Centre which also houses the Mourne Maritime Visitor Centre, Tracing your Mourne Roots Exhibition and the Mourne Seafood Cookery School.

7.0 Key Findings and Conclusions

7.1 Below is a summary of the key findings that will be used to inform the Local Development Plan.

The District:

- benefits from a wealth of built, natural and cultural heritage assets including an unrivalled link to St Patrick which are strong incentives in attracting visitors.
- is a popular destination but primarily with domestic visitors from NI who visit the area for holiday/ pleasure/ leisure purposes.
- experiences a high number of visits however, a lower than average number of nights are spent per stay and the lowest average spend per trip of all LGDs.
- ranked second of all LGD in terms of the number of jobs in tourism characteristic industries in 2013.
- is recognised for its adventure and outdoor based recreation and its world renowned golf courses and further potential for growth exists particularly as this is a highly seasonal market.
- has the potential to grow boating and yachting opportunities that are currently limited by poor access to waterways and coastline.
- is strategically located between Belfast and Dublin and has port access at Warrenpoint which has further potential to attract the cruise market.
- accounts for 9.8% of available beds in licensed accommodations in NI and although it experiences lower than the NI average occupancy research has indicated that there is a need for additional accommodation in the District including a hotel in Downpatrick to enable visitors to stay and explore the Town and surrounding area.

7.2 These key findings will be used to inform the preparation of the LDP. The LDP will also take account of the Council's Community Plan and Tourism Strategy that are currently in draft form.

7.3 As previously noted the LDP, in line with the SPPS, will contain policies to safeguard tourist assets, together with policies for tourism development such as tourism accommodation, amenity facilities, and holiday parks, and the criteria for

consideration of such proposals. It can also give consideration to identifying potential growth areas.

7.4 In accordance with the RDS 2035 the LDP will promote a sustainable approach to the provision of tourism infrastructure to conserve, protect, and where possible enhance the District's natural environment and built heritage.

7.5 There are many benefits to be gained from adopting a more sustainable approach to tourism:

Environmental Benefits:

- Safeguarding the resource for the benefit of future generations, and
- The protection and enhancement of the special landscapes and features that together form much of Northern Ireland's appeal to visitors.

Community Benefits:

- Real opportunities for community involvement in tourism and the creation of a better climate for development.
- Supporting the local economy and local services – for example, helping to support local transport systems in rural areas.
- Creating new business opportunities.

Benefits to the Tourism Industry:

- Enhanced appeal of Northern Ireland for visitors from those market areas which have a high proportion of discerning and ecologically aware consumers, for example North European countries.
- Opportunities for the development and promotion of environment friendly activity tourism such as cycling, walking, birdwatching, many water based activities, and newer interests including conservation holidays.

Benefits to the Visitor:

- The development of a quality tourist service;
- Better relationships with the local community, and
- Closer involvement with, and better understanding of, both the people and the holiday destination.

(Source: NITB - A Sustainable Approach)

7.6 Proper management and conservation of the resources of the District in a sustainable way is vital if future generations are not to be denied the opportunity to use and enjoy them. This is of particular relevance in the context of sensitive landscapes such as the Ring of Gullion and other locations, which are being threatened by a combination of visitor pressure and an associated demand for

development. The District contains some of Northern Ireland's most dramatic scenery, and has a rich natural and man-made heritage. If the potential of these resources is tapped successfully, there could be a substantial spin-off to other sectors of the local economy.

Appendix 1: National Trust Assets

Rowallane Garden

- A1.1 Rowallane Garden is located immediately south of Saintfield, County Down. The gardens are a mix of formal and informal spaces with many unusual vistas and unique plants from across the world. The Garden, of some 50 acres in total, features a walled garden, a natural Rock Garden Wood, wildflower meadows, a Farmland Walk (taking in the summit of Trio Hill) and a Woodland Walk, as well as a tea-room in the old farm stables, which features a bell-tower. The estate house is the headquarters of the National Trust in Northern Ireland.

Castle Ward

- A1.2 Castle Ward is an eccentric 18th-century mansion and estate looking out over the tranquil waters of Strangford Lough. Castle Ward is open to the public and includes 332 hectares (820 acres) of landscaped gardens, a fortified tower house, Victorian laundry, theatre, restaurant, shop, camping pods, saw mill and a working corn mill. It has a shore on Strangford Lough. Castle Ward was the Winner of Highly Commended Best Visitor Experience, NI Tourism Awards 2014. Events held at Castle Ward include: Pumpkinfest, International Bread Festival, Santa's Grotto and many various Craft Fairs.
- A1.3 Castle Wards sprawling medieval walls and castle gate entrance together with stunning surrounding landscapes have attracted many Hollywood film production companies to film onsite, namely; Game of Thrones TV show, Dracula Untold movie and Frankenstein Chronicles TV show.

Strangford Lough

- A1.4 The largest sea lough in the British Isles, covering an area from Angus Rock at its mouth on the Irish Sea, to the vast sand-flats at its northern end 20 miles (33 kilometres) away. It is one of only three designated Marine Nature Reserves in the United Kingdom. Strangford Lough is a popular tourist destination noted for its fishing and scenery. Strangford Lough is used for activities of leisure - sailing, kayaking, bird watching and diving. There are canoe trails in place and a 'Strangford Lough Activity Map' has been launched as a part of a series of maps produced by the Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland.

Murlough National Nature Reserve

- A1.5 Murlough National Nature Reserve is a fragile 6000 year old sand dune system located at the edge of Dundrum Bay and the Mourne Mountains. It consists of a network of paths and boardwalks through the dunes, woodland and heath. It is an excellent area for walking and bird watching due to its spectacular. In 2014, Murlough attracted 241,000 visitors making it the No. 1 visitor attraction in the Newry, Mourne and Down Council area. There are two car parks at Murlough, one public with no facilities and the other owned by the National Trust. The National Trust car park includes a toilet block and café. Although a very popular destination,

the National Trust's priority for the site is conservation and consequently there are no plans to increase the site's facilities. The existing facilities provide a welcome destination and point of interest for walkers.

The Mournes

- A1.6 The Mourne mountains contain twelve peaks and include Slieve Donard, Northern Ireland's highest mountain. The area is partly owned by the National Trust and sees a large number of visitors every year. The Mournes are visited by many tourists, hill walkers, cyclists and rock climbers. The Mournes are also one of the nine designated destinations within Northern Ireland.

Derrymore House

- A1.7 Derrymore House is an 18th-century thatched cottage and estate located in Bessbrook. Derrymore is surrounded by unique parkland of magnificent oaks and is full of history, beauty and enchantment. Part of the Ring of Gullion waymarked trail, there are a number of walks to enjoy and breath-taking vistas of the Newry Viaduct and the Mourne Mountains.

Appendix 2: Country Parks, Parks and Forests

Slieve Gullion Forest Park, Adventure Playpark and The Giant's Lair

- A2.1 Slieve Gullion Forest Park covers an area of 2500 acres. The Forest Park offers walking trails, a scenic drive, an Adventure Play park, Giant's Lair children's story trail and Courtyard with coffee shop. The area has some of the best biodiversity in the region and has a multitude of protected areas and visitors have the chance to see wildlife on the Red Squirrel Safari.
- A2.2 The Slieve Gullion Forest Adventure Park provides award winning play facilities for children and young people and has also attained the 'Green Apple Environment Award' and 'NITB Best Tourism Partner Initiative Award'.

Also located within the forest park is The Giant's Lair. The Giant's Lair is an innovative magical living storybook. The Trail takes visitors on a journey of intertwined fairy house and arts features creating a fantastical childhood land of mystery, dragons, giants, witches and fairies. The art in the Giant's Lair is all inspired by the rich tapestry of local legend and mythical folklore on over a mile of woodlands within the Forest Park.

Kilbroney Park

- A2.3 Kilbroney Park is 92 acres in area and offers a wide range of facilities and services, which includes tennis courts, children's play area, playing fields, an arboretum, barbeque and picnic areas and cafe and a well serviced caravan and camping site. There are three waymarked trails, which vary in length from two kilometres to seven kilometres, and take the visitor to various areas within the forest to enjoy the many magnificent views and beauty of the woodlands.
- A2.4 These trails in Kilbroney Park bring to life the story of Narnia and other stories, myths and legends associated with this special area of the Mourne. The Narnia legends are interpreted along a short family loop trail, entered like the magical world itself, through a Wardrobe, and leading the visitor to several interpretative stations with themes including, The Tree People, The Beavers' House, The Citadels and many more. A more challenging walk has been created to the legendary Cloughmore Stone, linking another important legend - that of the Giant Fionn McCumhaill - to the Narnia theme.
- A2.5 The Council produced a draft Masterplan (August 2015) for the park which identifies proposals for the development of Kilbroney Park and Rostrevor Forest. The Masterplan draws focus on projects which have a spatial dimension and sets out how different areas of Kilbroney Park and Rostrevor Forest will work together to provide an enhanced resource for local people and a compelling experience for visitors.

Donard Forest Park

- A2.6 There are currently no facilities for recreational activities provided in Donard Forest but the public are welcome to visit this forest on foot. Donard Forest was planted in 1927 and consists of scots and corsican pine, with herbaceous plants and woody shrubs hidden below the tree canopy. This area is the habitat for the Holly Blue butterfly and a wide range of bird species. The Glen River Bridge provides a picturesque viewpoint for the many cascades and waterfalls. Nearby are some ornamental trees including monkey puzzle and giant red wood.

Tollymore Forest Park

- A2.7 Tollymore Forest Park was the first state forest park in Northern Ireland, established on 2 June 1955. Tollymore Forest Park caters for many outdoor activities including walking, caravanning/camping, horse riding and orienteering and the park has designated areas for camping and caravans.
- A2.8 There are four official walking trails within the forest each marked with different coloured sign posts. All the trails start and end in the main car park. The blue trail (Arboretum Path) is half a mile long and passes through the arboretum. The red trail (River Trail) is three miles long and follows the Shimna River up one side as far as Parnell's bridge and then back along the other side. The black trail (Mountain Trail) is five and half miles long and the black trail 1 (The Drinns Trail) adds another three miles to the black trail by passing behind The Drinns (two forested hills) and following the boundary wall. The Ulster Way also passes through the forest.
- A2.9 In March 2015 Tollymore opened a new Nature Play Space for the kids called the 'Big Deer' which is designed for four to eleven year olds. It consists of an impressive wooden play space featuring a giant timber Fallow Deer, castle turret, folly tower and hollow tree all connected through a series of rope-bridges, tunnels, spider webs, basket swings and slides. There are also picnic facilities available.

Castlewellan Forest Park

- A2.10 Castlewellan Forest Park caters for many outdoor activities including walking, caravanning and camping, horse riding, orienteering and many others. The park offers camping and caravanning sites with tarmac and grass pitches for the caravan or camping enthusiast.
- A2.11 One of the Forest Park's key attractions, the Peace Maze, is one of the world's largest permanent hedge mazes, representing the path to a peaceful future for Northern Ireland. Planted in 2000 with community involvement, it is maturing quickly and visitors attempt to solve their way to the peace bell in the centre of the maze.

- A2.12 A brand new play structure has recently been installed in the forest park (March 2015). 'Animal Wood' is designed for four to eleven year olds and is located beside the Peace Maze. Featuring a short path, Animal Wood provides lots of opportunities for playing on wild woodland animals including a badger and its den, a red squirrel and a giant spider. In addition it boasts a wooden play structure with a tower in the image of The Moorish Tower where children can enjoy the climbing wall, fireman's pole and rope-bridge over to a hollow tree stump slide and Red Kite nest.

Delamont County Park

- A2.13 The Park features an adventure playground, walking trails, boat trips, a shop, bbq area and visitors centre. It also features a miniature Thomas the Tank Engine Railway. There are five waymarked walks: Mullagh Walk 1km; Garden Walk 1.2km; Strangford Walk 2km; Corbally Walk 4km; and Longwalk 7km. It also provides all year round events such as Magnificent Birds of Prey Display, Silly Tilly Magic Show, Model Aircraft Display, Medieval Artisan Food & Craft Market and Crossgar Vintage Tractor Club. Statistical figures show that Delamont was rated within the top 10 for Country Park/Park/Forest/Gardens in Northern Ireland, attracting 221,000 visitors in 2014.

Drumkerragh

- A2.14 There are currently no facilities for recreational activities provided at Drumkerragh but the public are welcome to visit this forest on foot. Drumkeeragh Forest is seven miles south west of Ballynahinch on the lower slopes of Slieve Croob. The forest has mixed coniferous trees. From the forest there are extensive views across County Down. An extensive forest road system allows walkers to access most of the forest.

Mournes

- A2.15 The Mournes are visited by many tourists, hillwalkers, cyclists and rock climbers. The Destination Mourne Mountains Tourism Management Plan 2013-18 was published by the Destination Forum Group made up of public and private stakeholders including the former Down District Council, Newry and Mourne District Council and Banbridge District Council. It outlines a collective vision and set of actions to grow tourism at a local level within the signature destination and also fulfil national targets set out in the draft 2020 Tourism Strategy.
- A2.16 The Mournes tourism profile is made up of mostly day visitors and visitors from within Northern Ireland with 61% of visitors being families while 21% are couples and 30% of all those visiting participate in hiking/walking. The Tourism Plan identifies that the Mourne Mountains' strengths are:

- Walking and Climbing,
- Scenery, beautiful landscape and views,
- Mountain biking and cycling,
- Seaside, beaches and Newcastle,
- The Mourne and other mountains,
- Silent Valley and
- Outdoor recreation and activities.

A2.17 Playing on these strengths, the vision for the Mourne is “The Outdoor Playground for the North of Ireland” and the objective is to “maximise the Mourne potential to attract and encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more”.

To achieve this vision, key actions are listed under 4 strategic themes:

1. Investment & Infrastructure,
2. Marketing & Promotion,
3. Distinct Visitor Experiences and
4. Building Business Engagement & Sustainability.

A2.18 Key locations in the Mourne Signature Destination are;

- Newcastle
- Silent Valley and Ben Crom
- Tollymore Forest Park
- Dundrum Castle
- Slieve Croob
- Castlewellan Forest Park
- Slieve Donard Resort & Spa Slieve Donard
- Rostrevor Forest
- Tollymore Mountain Centre
- Dundrum Bay Murlough
- Nature Reserve
- Kilbroney Forest Park

Appendix 3: Beaches

Murlough National Nature Reserve

- A3.1 This 5 mile stretch of golden sands is still a key attraction and is hugely popular for swimming, sunbathing and other forms of recreation. In 2014, there were 241,000 visitors to Murlough, a drop of 33% on the previous year figures. However, as detailed in section 6.18, Murlough is still the current most popular beach in County Down and is also rated in the top 10 tourist destinations within Northern Ireland in the NISRA 2014 statistics.

Cranfield Beach

- A3.2 Cranfield beach is an attractive sandy beach with Blue Flag status. Due to the estimated 4000-5000 caravan users who stay in the area over the summer, the beach, the café and local amenities are well used. On many days in the summer Cranfield struggles to cope with the number of visitors. East Coast Adventure host outdoor activities at Chesnutt Caravan Park every summer at the weekends but this is open to the public as well as people staying in the caravan park. Tourists regularly walk from Cranfield to Greencastle on an informal path but few go north towards Kilkeel.

Tyrella Beach

- A3.3 Tyrella Beach is a small, enclosed beach within Dundrum Bay, Downpatrick, County Down. It is a wide, flat, sandy beach two kilometres long and backed by 25 hectares of mature dunes in a conservation area offering scenic walks and an insight into the habitat of local flora and fauna. Tyrella Beach has been awarded the prestigious Seaside Award annually since 1997 and has also maintained the Blue Flag award in 2011 due to the management and cleanliness of the beach. It has also retained its Green Coast Award since 2008. An ideal destination for locals and visitors alike, the clean waters invite water sport enthusiasts and the beach provides a safe haven for families and groups who wish to picnic in a clean environment. The beach boasts a car free zone, off-beach parking facilities and a lifeguard on duty for safe bathing in the summer months and holidays. There is also a tourist information centre nearby offering advice to visitors on the immediate and surrounding area.

Warrenpoint Beach

- A3.4 Warrenpoint Beach is located alongside the Mourne Mountains on the shores of Carlingford Lough. It is a gently sloping shingle beach with well-developed facilities that include shopping and a promenade popular with all types of walkers. It is host to a range of activities including Kayaking, Banana Boating, Jet Skiing, Pier Jumping and canoeing. It is also home to a large salt water swimming pool, one of the last remaining in Northern Ireland.

- A3.5 A planning application, LAO7/2015/0369/F, was submitted on 29th May 2015 for the proposed refurbishment of the saltwater swimming pool. The proposal includes the restoration of the Edwardian kiosks with a new public event space, units for a café, additional space for water sport activities and modernised changing facilities. No decision has been made on the application but it is currently recommended for approval (correct as of 9th January 2016).

Newcastle Beach

- A3.6 Newcastle Beach is a popular tourist destination located on the South Down coast. Newcastle Beach comprises of sand, pebbles and larger stones and is approximately 2.5 km in length. The major part of Newcastle Beach is backed by a promenade and the seaside town of Newcastle, which has lots of shops, amusements and other attractions. The beach has a very gentle slope with the Mountains of Mourne in the background.

Appendix 4: Activity Centres

East Coast Adventure Centre

- A4.1 East Coast Adventure Centre has a mountain centre nestled just outside the village of Rostrevor, a water sports centres on the shores of Carlingford Lough in Warrenpoint, a Mountain Bike Hire and Uplift service located at the Rostrevor MTB Trails in Kilbroney Forest Park and a Driving Range, Archery and Zip Line Centre located on the grounds of Mourne Park, Kilkeel.

Tollymore National Outdoor Centre

- A4.2 Tollymore National Outdoor Centre is Sport Northern Ireland's National Outdoor Centre. It offers a range of one day and weekend courses in rock climbing skills, learning to lead and multi pitch climbing, Canadian canoeing, kayaking and sea kayaking, mountain biking, orienteering and coasteering. The centre also offers accommodation.

Acton Adventures, Poyntzpass

- A4.3 Acton Adventures was established in 2005 to open the game of paintball to the people of Northern Ireland. However over the past number of years it has expanded and now offers a full range of corporate and team building activities. Action Adventures offer packages for clubs and team, stags and hens, corporate events and group of friends. Catering and accommodation can also be provided.

Greenhill Y.M.C.A. National Centre

- A4.4 Greenhill YMCA is an outdoor education and residential centre set in a 17 acre site on the slopes of Slieve Donard. Greenhill deliver programmes for schools, colleges, youth groups, cross community groups and church groups and have been established for over 100 years. Activities take place either in the extensive grounds on site or the surrounding area: i.e. The Mourne Mountains, Castlewellan Forest Park and Lake and Tollymore Forest Park. Greenhill has been awarded the Adventure Activity Associations 'Adventuremark' which is awarded only to those Activity Centres that have been inspected and proven to have met the necessary standards for the safe delivery of Adventure Activities as defined by the Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee. Accommodation can also be provided within this centre.

Life Adventure Centre, Castlewellan

- A4.5 Life Adventure Centre provides activities such as canoeing and Kayaking, Hill Walking and Rock Climbing, Trail and Mountain Biking, Wet Bouldering and Coasteering, Archery and Clay Pigeon Shooting, Raft Building and Team Quests and camping. The Centre is an 'Adventure Mark' accredited provider, members of the

Institute of Outdoor Learning, affiliated to the 'Association of Mountaineering Instructors' and Silver Recipients in the 2015 'Irish Responsible Tourism Awards' for Best Adventure Provider. They have also been awarded Gold in the Green Tourism Awards 2014.

26 Extreme, Warrenpoint

- A4.6 26 Extreme specialise in the planning of some of the largest outdoor events in Ireland including the Causeway Coast Marathon, The Mourne Way Marathon and the Coast to Coast Multisport Race across Ireland.
- A4.7 On 12th June 2016, the Council in association with 26 Extreme, presented a new Mountain Bike event 'In the Red' for the Rostrevor Trails, as part of the Northern Ireland Festival of Cycling 2016.

Rock and Ride Outdoors, Kilcoo

- A4.8 Rock and Ride Outdoors is Ireland's leading outdoor company providing Mountain Biking, Rock Climbing and Mountaineering courses, coaching and qualifications throughout Northern Ireland and beyond. It is located in Kilcoo and is comprised of three of Ireland's most qualified instructors, Rock and Ride Outdoors offers programmes for anyone from total beginners looking to start a new sport to aspiring instructors looking to make their living in the outdoor industry.

Flagstaff Adventures, Newry

- A4.9 Flagstaff Adventures provides the following Outdoor Activities located in the beautiful Ring of Gullion. It is set on a 120 acre site offering activities such as 4 x 4 Off Road, Clay Pigeon Shooting, Archery and Paintballing. The centre provides these activities for Large Youth / Sports Groups, on a Hen or Stag parties, or Corporate or Team Building activities from work.

Clearsky Adventure Centre

- A4.10 Clearsky Adventure Centre is an outdoor pursuits centre located in the medieval 'Old Castle Ward' area of the Castle Ward Estate on the shoreline of Strangford Lough. A vast range of outdoor activities are on offer at the activity centre for schools, groups, family fun days, businesses & individuals. These activities include; archery, rock climbing, raft building, laser clay pigeon shooting, orienteering, climbing and abseiling, coasteering, Kayaking and safari boat tours are also on offer. The Centre has recently been awarded the 'Adventuremark' Accreditation.

Appendix 5: Children and Family

Sheepbridge Family Entertainment Centre, Newry

- A5.1 Sheepbridge centre has a state of the art children's indoor play area, called Cheeky Monkeys with a 4 tiered climbing frame, ball pools, bumper boats, battery operated go karts and slides. There is also a Space Quest laser tag arena and the centre has the only bowling alley in Newry and the surrounding area with 10 state of the art, glow in the dark lanes and a retro bowling theme.

Newcastle Rock Pool

- A5.2 The Rock Pool in Newcastle has been open for more than 80 years and is the last open-air sea water swimming pool in Ireland. The pool is open for eight weeks during the summer months.

Coco's Adventure Playground, Newcastle

- A5.3 Coco's consists of an adventure playground, sports court, snake slide, Free Fall, tube slides, assault course and toddlers area including bouncy castle. Coco's is open all year round and is popular for hosting kids birthday parties.

Funky Monkeys, Downpatrick

- A5.4 Funky Monkeys combines a fun playground with a yummy "healthy-eating" cafe offering stay and play, birthday parties and weekly educational classes. The centre is specifically for children aged 0-8 years old, and has an arts and crafts area, and a separate toddler area too.

Funny Farm Adventures, Castlewellan

- A5.5 Funny Farm Adventures is a park with a 6 acre themed Maize Maze, which is the only one of its kind in Northern Ireland. Also available, Mini Digger, Football Wall, Rope Maze, Garden Games, Barrel Train, Laser Clay Shooting, Archery etc.

Mourne Archery Centre, Castlewellan

- A5.6 A place where you can learn the sport of archery with the help of trained archery leaders.

Seaforde Gardens and Tropical Butterfly House

- A5.7 The Tropical Butterfly House is set in beautiful grounds, with hundreds of free flying tropical butterflies, also parrots, reptiles and insects. There are avenues of mature trees, a maze set in the middle of an old walled garden and a children's play area.

Formula Karting: Indoor Grand Prix Kart Racing, Newry

- A5.8 Formula Karting, Newry is one of the biggest indoor karting track in Europe. It has tracks on 2 Levels available for racing with overpasses, tunnels, underpasses, ramps, bridges and banked corners. Suitable for teen parties, kids parties, youth or school groups, family day out or just an evening out with friends.

Appendix 6: Festivals and Events

B/E Aerospace Festival of Flight

- A6.1 The B/E Aerospace Festival of Flight is one of the major highlights in Northern Ireland's event calendar, attracting many thousands of visitors. The Festival is a full programme of events in Newcastle that take place in August. The airshow is the centre piece of the Festival where the crowds watch as the sky over Dundrum Bay is filled with the roar of engines.

St Patrick's Day

- A6.2 St. Patrick has been identified as a key signature destination by Tourism NI that will give stand out for Northern Ireland in out of state tourism markets. Downpatrick has been identified as a core hub for this project. Downpatrick boasts a seven day programme of events for the St Patrick's Celebrations including the St Patrick's Day Cross-Community Carnival Parade which attracts over 30,000 spectators. With over 50 events to choose from and a wealth of free entertainment on offer, Downpatrick's St Patrick's Celebrations has something for everyone including a range of concerts, exhibitions, sporting and family events. Tourism NI has recently agreed to award 3 years financial assistance in connection to the St. Patricks festival to the District, in partnership with Armagh, Craigavon and Banbridge Borough Council.
- A6.3 St. Patricks Day in Newry also provides family entertainment with live music, street entertainment, street theatre, comedy, and street performances of Irish Dancing.

Kingdom of Mourne Festival, Kilkeel

- A6.4 This is a two-week festival that is held annually mid-July and mid-August. This festival improves local community relations and it is also a major attraction for holidaymakers. Events include sheep dog trials, street hockey, children's fancy dress, sand castle competitions, vintage vehicles, live open air & pub entertainment, tennis coaching, exhibitions and demonstrations, fishing competitions and a fireworks display.

Warrenpoint Blues on the Bay Festival

- A6.5 The Blues on the Bay Festival takes place in Warrenpoint over the last bank holiday weekend in May. It attracts Blues & Jazz performances and includes many acts throughout the weekend in the selected bars. Music workshops also feature throughout the weekend.

Walking festivals

- A6.6 The Mourne International Walking Festival in June and the Wee Binnian Walking Festival in September offer a wide variety of walks ranging from excellent road and track walks to guided mountain rambles and hikes.

Fiddler's Green Festival, Rostrevor

- A6.7 Fiddler's Green Festival is a family-established annual celebration of Irish music and culture with an international flavour, which takes place in the village of Rostrevor. The Festival includes the annual Hall of Fame award, presented to the person or group who has made a significant contribution to Irish music or culture. The nightly folk club features the best of Irish & International Folk performances.

Hallowtides

- A6.8 Hallowtides is a programme of events with both private and public organisations getting behind the successful and popular festival. It runs in both Newcastle and Downpatrick. The programmes include live music and entertainment, fancy dress completions, pumpkin contests and fire work displays.

Warrenpoint International "Maiden of the Mourne" Festival

- A6.9 This is a two-week festival that happens somewhere between mid-July and mid-August. This festival offers something for all the family, with a range of events including band concerts, outdoor entertainment, sporting events & top celebrity performances, parades, children's events and The Maiden of the Mourne Competition featuring entrants from across the world.

Felie Chamlocha

- A6.10 The South Armagh village of Camlough hosts an action packed festival of music, dancing, storytelling, as well as a series of fun events for all including a tug-of-war, waiter races, duck derby, and of course a fancy dress donkey derby. There are also traditional music workshops, children's art workshops, bus trips, and street parties and are lots of sporting events, including soccer & GAA tournaments, lake swims, road bowls, fishing and shooting contests.

Annalong Harbour Hooley

- A6.11 Annalong Harbour Hooley is a weekend festival beginning mid-August. The main event is the Mackerel Massacre (a fishing competition), followed by a raft race, street theatre, vintage car show, talent competition for children and the Solid Gold Show. This event attracts people on a local and national basis.

Sticky Fingers Festival 'A celebration of Arts for Early Years'

- A6.12 Sticky Fingers Annual Festival based in Newry runs throughout the month of October and offers a whole month full performances, workshops and music. The Festival is offered to children from 0 to 12 years old and it has become a landmark event.

Boley Fair Hilltown

- A6.13 The Boley Fair celebrates rural traditions and aims to bring rural skills and past-times of a bygone era to a wide audience of local people and visitors alike. Over the five-day period, fair goers can participate in a wide variety of events including music, dancing, sports, traditional skills and family events. The annual festival is centred on the Sheep Show that traditionally takes place on the second Tuesday in July.

Kilbroney Vintage Show

- A6.14 The Kilbroney Vintage Show has been running since 1985, and is now recognised as the premier event of its kind in Ireland. Over 1,500 old vehicle enthusiasts descend on Kilbroney Park with their vehicles; there is also a funfair and novelty shows for children, including Clowns, Magic Shows and Face Painters. 2015 marked the 30th Anniversary of the Kilbroney Vintage Show.

Circuit of Ireland

- A6.15 In March 2015, Downpatrick held the launch of the Circuit of Ireland, one of the top five sporting events in Northern Ireland. Large crowds gathered to see off the 140 rally cars in the morning followed by rally competitors arriving in St Patrick Square. There was a full programme of entertainment, including a bouncy castle, face painters, balloon modellers, live music and a climbing wall.

Ballynahinch Harvest and Country Living Festival

- A6.16 This event, set up to celebrate the pig, potato and pageantry, which Ballynahinch town was once popular for gives children the chance to get up close and personal with their favourite animals. Visitors are entertained by live music, street performers, and face painting. This year's festival took place on Saturday 19th September 2015, and included The Great Ballynahinch Bake Off which saw baking enthusiasts compete for the best apple tart and scones in town.

International Clowns Festival, Downpatrick

- A6.17 This event has been held in different locations all over Europe in recent years but this is the first time it has come to Ireland and arrived in Downpatrick for 2015. More than 40 acclaimed clowns descended on the town, entertaining locals and visitors. In addition to the clowns, there were also be pantomimes, jugglers,

magicians, puppeteers, acrobats, bubble artists, stilt walkers, balloon sculptors and face painters.

A6.18 Herring Gutters Festival, Harbour Inn, Newcastle

This local festival is suitable for all the family and runs for one weekend over the summer months July or August. The entertainment includes, The Big Wheaten Bread Bake-off, craft stalls, car treasure hunt, Irish dancers and live traditional folk music.