

Local Development Plan Timetable

Revised May 2026



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

Ag freastal ar an Dúin agus Ard Mhacha Theas
Serving Down and South Armagh

1.0 Local Development Plan: Timetable

The Council's Timetable for the Newry, Mourne, and Down Local Development Plan has been prepared in accordance with the legislative requirements of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. In accordance with Section 7 (2) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and Regulation 7 the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, the Local Development Plan: Timetable was first approved by the Council on 3 July 2017 and agreed by the Department for Infrastructure on 20 October 2017.

Since 2017 and in monitoring progress the Timetable has been revised to take account of delays in preparation of the draft Plan Strategy. The Council approved this revision to the Timetable on 1 June 2026 which was agreed by the Department for Infrastructure on 12 June 2026.

1.1 Getting in Touch

Should you have a Development Plan query, you can contact the Development Plan Team in the Council's Planning Department in the following ways:

By email: ldp@nmandd.org

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

By telephone: Council: 0330 137 4000
Planning: 0330 137 4036

This document can be viewed and downloaded from the Council's website at www.newrymournedown.org/local-development-plan or requested using the contact details above.

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.

1.2 Introduction

- 1.3 The purpose of Local Development Plan Timetable (Timetable) is to set out the key stages of and an indicative timescale for the production of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's new Local Development Plan (LDP).
- 1.4 The Timetable meets the legislative requirements of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. In response to the consultation requirements of Regulation 5 of the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, the Council has also consulted with the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC).

2.0 Purpose of the Local Development Plan

- 2.1 The purpose of the Local Development Plan (LDP) is to inform the general public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested parties of the policy framework and land use proposals that will guide development decisions within the district up to 2035.
- 2.2 The new LDP will be prepared in the context of the Council's Corporate Plan and will take account of the Council's Community Plan to enable us to plan for the future of the district.
- 2.3 The LDP must also take account of the regional policy context set by the Northern Ireland Executive and Central Government Departments. This includes amongst others, the Programme for Government, Sustainable Development Strategy, Regional Development Strategy and Strategic Planning Policy Statement.
- 2.4 The Plan will be produced in two stages consisting of two separate documents which will shape development within our District in the period to 2035. The first stage will be a Plan Strategy followed by the Local Policies Plan.
- 2.5 Prior to the preparation of the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan the Council will identify the key issues in the Plan area and will formulate a series of options for dealing with them. The information will be published as a Preferred Options Paper (POP) which will indicate the Council's preferred options for growth and development across the district and will form the basis for consulting with the public and

stakeholders who will have an opportunity to put forward views and have an influence on the LDP from the outset.

- 2.6 The Plan Strategy will establish the strategic direction of the plan in order to provide a level of certainty on which to base key development decisions across the District as well as the necessary framework for the preparation of the Local Policies Plan. The Strategy will set the aims, objectives, overall growth strategy and associated strategic policies applicable to the Plan area.
- 2.7 Once the Plan Strategy is adopted a Local Policies Plan will be prepared which will be consistent with the Plan Strategy. In contrast to the Plan Strategy the Local Policies Plan will deal with site specific policies and proposals associated with settlement limits, lane use zonings and environmental designations required to deliver the Council's vision, objectives and strategic policies.
- 2.8 Once adopted, the LDP will replace the current development plans for the District, produced by the Department of the Environment, namely the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 (ADAP) (adopted March 2009) and the Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 (BNMAP) (adopted October 2013), in so far as they relate to Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.
- 2.9 The Council will undertake an on-going Sustainability Appraisal (SA) throughout the life of the LDP. This will run in parallel to the preparation of the Preferred Options Paper, the Plan Strategy and the Local Policies Plan. The SA process aims to ensure that the policies and proposals contained within the LDP are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. Relevant reports will be published at each of the key stages of the plan making process.
- 2.10 As referenced above, the preparation of the LDP involves a number of key stages each presenting opportunities for community involvement. The Council has produced a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in accordance with the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. The SCI serves as a guide to community engagement in the planning process and sets out the Council's policy for involving the community in the production of the LDP. It describes who, together with how

and when the community will be invited to participate in the different stages of the LDP. The SCI can be viewed on the Council's website at www.newrymournedown.org/planning

3.0 The Timetable

3.1 In accordance with Regulation 6 of the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 the Timetable contains indicative dates for the various stages of the plan preparation process; these are set out at Appendix 1. A brief outline of the key stages is set out below:

- **Preferred Options Paper (POP)** – The POP is a public consultation document which will set out the most significant planning issues currently affecting our District, as well as those likely to become relevant in the future. It will include the Council's preferred options to address them.
- **Draft Plan Strategy** – The Plan Strategy is the first of two 'Development Plan Documents' in the LDP process. The draft Plan Strategy is a public consultation document which will set out in draft terms the proposed broad aims, objectives and the overall future growth strategy and associated generic planning policies applicable across the District.
- **Independent Examination (IE)** – An IE will be held to determine the soundness of the draft Plan Strategy, taking into account a consideration of the representations and counter representations received during the draft Plan Strategy consultation period. After the IE, an Independent Examination Report of its findings and recommendations will be issued to Central Government (currently the Department for Infrastructure).
- **Direction** – Following consideration of the Independent Examination Report, Central Government will issue a Direction to the Council requiring it to adopt the draft Plan Strategy as originally prepared or with modifications. The Council must incorporate any changes outlined in the Direction into the final Plan Strategy.

- **Adoption of the Plan Strategy** – Following the IE and Direction from Central Government, the Council will formally adopt the Plan Strategy.
- **Draft Local Policies Plan** – The Local Policies Plan is the second of the 'Development Plan Documents' within the LDP process. The draft Local Policies Plan is a public consultation document and will contain the Council's detailed land use proposals for the District.
- **Independent Examination (IE)** - An IE will be held to determine the soundness of the draft Local Policies Plan, taking into account a consideration of the representations and counter representations received during the draft Local Policies Plan consultation period. After the IE, an Independent Examination Report of its findings and recommendations will be issued to Central Government.
- **Direction** – Following consideration of the Independent Examination Report, Central Government will issue a Direction to the Council requiring it to adopt the draft Local Policies Plan as originally prepared or with modifications. The Council must incorporate any changes outlined in the Direction into the final Local Policies Plan.
- **Adoption of the Local Policies Plan** - Following the IE and Direction from Central Government, the Council will formally adopt the Local Policies Plan.

3.2 The Council is also required to carry out a number of assessments in the preparation of the LDP. These include:

- **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** - This will help the Council to assess the sustainability of the LDP proposals and how the plan will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, especially with regard to social, economic and environmental factors. This is required in relation to both LDP documents.

- **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** – A procedure to follow that contributes to the integration of environmental considerations in the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes. It will be undertaken in relation to both LDP documents as an integral part of the SA process above. Prior to commencing an SEA an initial screening exercise will be undertaken at the POP stage to determine if the LDP requires a full SEA.
- **Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)** – This considers the potential impact of LDP policies and proposals on designated European nature conservation sites.
- **Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)** – In line with the Council’s Equality Scheme, an Equality Screening exercise will be undertaken at the POP stage to assess if the LDP is likely to have an impact on specific groups identified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. If required a full EQIA will be undertaken for both the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan.
- **Rural Proofing Assessment (RPA)** – This is a process by which all major policies and strategies are assessed to determine whether they have a detrimental impact on rural areas. The Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 imposes a statutory duty on local councils to consider rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans and designing and delivering public services.

4.0 Delivery of the Local Development Plan

- 4.1 There are a number of factors outside the Council’s control that may impact on the delivery of the Council’s LDP within the indicative timescales indicated. This can include unforeseen events (e.g., emergency crisis), input from statutory consultees, the duration of the Independent Examination and reporting period, subsequent consideration by Central Government and the potential for legal challenge.
- 4.2 To help identify the full range of factors that may impact on the delivery of the LDP, a Risk Management Log has been developed which highlights the risks and outlines how the Council will seek to mitigate the impact of these. Details are contained in

the Council's Risk Management Strategy/Register.

4.3 To further assist with the effective management of the timetable a range of steps and safeguards will be put in place to manage the LDP decision making process and provide early warning of potential time slippage. Such steps include:

- Papers presented to the relevant Council Committee on a regular basis regarding LDP matters, including key planning topics and findings as they emerge.
- A Steering Group, comprising elected Members of the Council and Senior Council Officers to ensure overview and strategic input on behalf of the whole community as well as planning professionals.
- A Project Management Team comprising Senior Council Officers and representatives from the key statutory/government departments who will be invited to provide input on policies/proposals at the relevant stages.
- Post-adoption, an Annual Monitoring Report will be produced to inform Members and the Central Government on our progress in meeting the published timetable.

5.0 Review

5.1 In the event that the LDP Timetable requires amendment, the Council has the power under the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to publish a revised timetable. Any such amendments must be published and made available on the Council website.

Appendix 1: LDP Timetable (Revised May 2026)

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Local Development Plan: Timetable		
Local Development Plan process: Key Stages	Sustainability appraisal & other assessments	Indicative Timeframe
Stage 1 – Plan Preparation	Statement of Community Involvement & LDP Timetable	
	Publication of SCI and LDP Timetable	Complete SCI published November 2017 SCI revised May 2025 and September 2025 Timetable published November 2017 Timetable revised March 2019, January 2021, September 2022 and September 2023
	Preferred Options Paper	
Publication of Preferred Options Paper (POP)	Publication of SA Interim Report comprising Scoping Report and appraisal of alternative options Screening for HRA, EQIA and Rural Proofing	Complete POP published June 2018
Stage 2 – Plan Strategy	Plan Strategy	
	Publication of draft Plan Strategy (dPS) and associated documents: - statutory public consultation specified as 8 weeks in legislation which may be extended - 8-week period for counter representations - Consideration of representations - Consideration of any proposed changes and further public consultation (8 weeks)	Publication of SA Appraisal Report, Incorporating SEA; Publication of draft HRA, EQIA and Rural Proofing
Independent Examination		

	<p>Independent Examination (IE) of draft Plan Strategy (dPS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Submission of dPS to Central Government (DfI) for IE and publication of Public Consultation Report - IE hearing - Submission of IE Independent Examination Report to Central Government (DfI), - Receipt of Direction from Central Government (DfI) to the Council. <p>Council considers Direction and incorporates any changes into the final PS</p>	<p>May require further consultation with statutory bodies</p>	<p>Quarter 4 2026 – Quarter 3 2027</p>
	<p>Adoption of Plan Strategy</p>	<p>Publication of SA Adoption Report (incorporating SEA) Publication of HRA, EQIA and Rural Proofing</p>	<p>Quarter 4 2027</p>

Stage 3 – Local Policies Plan	Local Policies Plan		
	<p>Updating of evidence base and statutory consultee engagement on site specific policies/proposals</p>	<p>Invite comments from Consultation Body (NIEA) on draft SA (incorporating SEA) Scoping Report. Publication of SA Interim Report comprising Scoping Report and appraisal of alternative options.</p>	<p>2028</p>
	<p>Publication of draft Local Policies Plan (LPP) and associated documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Statutory public consultation specified as 8 weeks in legislation which may be extended - 8-week period for counter representations - Consideration of representations - Consideration of any proposed changes and further public consultation (8 weeks) 	<p>Publication of SA Appraisal Report, Incorporating SEA, Publication of drafts of HRA, EQIA and Rural Proofing.</p>	<p>2028 – 2029</p>
Independent Examination			

	<p>Independent Examination (IE) of draft Local Policies Plan (draft LPP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Submission of draft LPP to Central Government (DfI) IE and publication of Public Consultation Report, IE hearing - Submission of IE Independent Examination Report to Central Government (DfI) - Receipt of Direction from Central Government (DfI) to the Council. <p>Council considers Direction and incorporates any changes into the final LPP.</p>		2029 - 2030
	<p>Adoption of Local Policies Plan</p>	Publication of SA Adoption Report (Incorporating SEA)	2030
Monitoring and Review of LDP			
Stage 4 – Monitor & Review	<p>Monitoring and Review of LDP</p> <p>Annual Monitoring Report Review every 5 years</p>	Monitoring of SA and other assessments.	Ongoing

Notes:

- This is an indicative Timetable and may be subject to change due to factors outside the Council's control.
- There is no statutory timeframe for the progress of each of the Development Plan Documents (PS and LPP) through the respective IE stage. The timeframe from submission to, and receipt of Direction from, Central Government is dependent on both Central Government and the Independent Examiner. The indicative timeframe of 12 months for each IE stage is based on current Central Government advice (5-2-5 i.e. 5 months from submission to IE, 2 months for IE, 5 months from IE to issue of Direction).
- The current Central Government department is the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). The current Independent Examiner is the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC). Please note DfI has secured funding to bring forward alternative Commissioners under Section 10(4) of The Planning Act (NI) 2011.
- The indicative timeframe refers to quarters of the calendar year.

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