

Plean Forbartha Áitiúla an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin Newry, Mourne and Down Local Development Plan 2030

Plépháipéar Tosaíochta Preferred Options Paper

Public Consultation Report November 2019

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Executive Summary

Publication of the Preferred Option Paper (POP) in June 2018 represented the Council's formal commencement of work on the preparation of a new local development plan (LDP) for the district. The purpose of the POP was to stimulate debate and encourage feedback to inform the development of the LDP. The POP set out the proposed vision and strategic objectives for the LDP along with 24 key strategic issues

This report sets out the process involved in preparing the consultation on the POP, and the findings. It provides a summary of the submissions to the POP both statutory consultees and the general public. It is not intended to be a comprehensive report on every issue raised. Rather it provides a summary of the key issues raised and the Council's interim response to these issues. The Appendix to the report provides additional detail on each representation received however again these are summaries and should not be considered to be a comprehensive list of all issues raised in each representation.

Following the three introductory chapters of the Report, chapters 4 to 8 reflect the structure of the POP. The Executive Summary below therefore relates to each of these chapters. The focus of the Executive Summary is on headline statistics emerging from the responses.

Chapter 4: Plan Vision and Strategic Objectives

Public responses generally welcomed the Vision however some felt however there was a need to expand on the reference to sustainable development and the role of the natural environment. Statutory responses also welcomed the Vision and suggested that consideration be given to the natural and historic environment.

In terms of social objectives it was suggested that a reference to blue as well as green spaces be included as well as a reference to the biodiversity benefits of green spaces. A number of submissions suggested the inclusion of reference to a sufficient '*deliverable*' supply of housing land and affordable housing.

DfI Strategic Planning highlighted the absence of any reference to retailing and town centres, public utilities and waste management under the economic objectives. DfC Historic Environment Division suggested an objective should be included which focused on promoting heritage led regeneration.

In respect of the environmental objectives DfI strategic planning stated that only 5 of the strategic objectives covered environmental objectives and the SPPS required planning authorities to deliver on all three pillars of sustainable development in a balanced way. DAERA highlighted that there was no strategic objective to protect and enhance the landscape character and quality of the plan area.

Chapter 5: Spatial Growth Strategy: Promoting Urban Centres and Supporting Rural Development

Key Issue 1 – Settlement Hierarchy

The majority of public responses on this issue (49 submissions (59%)) supported the revised hierarchy as set out in the POP and the Council's preferred option to re-examine the settlement hierarchy to consider reclassification and the potential identification of new small settlements. A number of representations suggested that the city/main town should be a new fifth tier within the hierarchy whilst others proposed uplifting a number of villages to town status.

A number of statutory consultees (4 submissions (29%)) supported the Council's preferred option while the remainder (10 submissions (71%)) had no comment to make on the options provided. The Department for Infrastructure suggested the Council carefully consider the implications of identifying a number of candidate small settlements.

Key Issue 2 – Quantity of Housing Land

The majority of public responses on this issue, 39 submissions (80%), mostly planning agents, disagreed with the Council's preferred option to retain the current level of housing land, and adopt a phased approach to surplus lands, informed by full review of all housing land and its potential for delivery. There was a general consensus that the DfI HGI figure of 15,092¹ was too restrictive. The need for a full review of housing land including deliverability was however strongly supported by most agents.

The majority of statutory consultees (11 submissions (79%)) made no comment on the options provided. Amongst those that did, 1 submission (7%) supported the preferred option while 2 submissions (14%) supported the preferred option in part. DfI queried whether additional land would be zoned in tandem with a phased approach which would see surplus land held as a long term reserve. Similarly to agents responses statutory consultees highlighted that existing uncommitted sites be robustly tested for suitability, availability and deliverability.

Key Issue 3 – Distribution of Housing Land

Public responses whilst not agreeing with the quantity of housing land, were generally supportive on this issue with 30 responses (54%), including most planning agents, agreeing with the Council's balanced approach to distribution of housing land. A further 8 responses (14%) supported parts of the Council's preferred option. A number of public responses regarded the 21% allocation of housing to the

¹ DfI published revised HGIs on the 25th September 2019. The HGI for the Newry, Mourne and Down District now stands at 10,000 for the 2016-2030 period.

countryside as excessive and unsustainable and indeed suggested the Council should seek to meet the RDS brownfield target of 60%.

Whilst comments from statutory consultees were broadly split between non-committal (9 submissions (64%)) or mixed (4 submissions(29%)) there was a general concern that too much housing would be allocated to the countryside under the Council's preferred option.

Key Issue 4 – Quantity of Employment Land

The majority of public responses on this issue (17 submissions (61%)) agreed with the Council's preferred option to uplift the amount of zoned land by 20%. Those that were neutral or indicated they did not support the preferred option stated a full review of zoned lands should be undertaken.

There was limited degree of support from statutory consultees, with 2 submissions (14%) supporting the preferred option and 1 submission (7%) indicating support in part. The majority of consultees (11 submissions (79%)) were non-committal while no consultees disagreed with the Council approach. DfI highlighted that some information used to calculate the economic land requirement was dated and the Council they need to have a robust evidential context.

Key Issue 5 – Distribution of Employment Land

The majority of public respondents on this issue (18 submissions (75%)) agreed with the Council's preferred option to retain the broad balance of remaining employment land across the district.

There was limited degree of support from statutory consultees (2 submissions (14%)), the majority of consultees (12 submissions (86%)) were non-committal while no consultees disagreed with the Council approach. DfI Strategic Planning directed the Council to the Employment Land Evaluation Framework set out in the RDS and the requirement to assess the suitability of existing employment land before quantifying future land requirements and identifying new sites.

Chapter 6: Social: Accommodating People, Improving Health and Wellbeing

Key Issue 6: Social Housing Need

The majority of public respondents on this issue (16 submissions (59%)) disagreed with the Council's preferred option to set out a strategic policy requiring all sites over a certain threshold to provide a proportion of social housing, zone sites for social housing and facilitate social housing provision through key site requirements. There

was concern that such an approach would impact on the viability of the housing market and negatively impact on the deliverability of housing schemes.

This issue appears to be both divisive and contentious with responses from those involved in the property market highlighting the need to consider the impact of such a requirement on the viability of the housing market and the negative impact this would have on the deliverability of schemes. Other responses from an environmental and community perspective highlighted the benefits of developing mixed tenure schemes and the need for social housing to be delivered to settlements other than the main towns.

12 submissions (86%) of statutory responses made no comment on the options provided.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) agreed with the preferred option, however they suggested that the threshold for sites which provide a level of social/affordable housing should be lowered from the proposed figure of 50 units.

Key Issue 7: Housing in the Countryside

The majority of public respondents on this issue (18 submissions (78%)) agreed with the Council's preferred option to adopt the existing policy approach but in addition provide clarification and minor changes to current policies to address a number of shortfalls.

A number of groups and agents responded to this issue, and one aspect highlighted was the fact that the number of rural housing approvals had dropped significantly under PPS21 and therefore a similar strategy should be developed which sought to maintain the quality and character of the rural landscape

The majority of statutory consultees (10 submissions (71%)) made no comment on the options provided.

While DfI welcomed the acknowledgement that any changes should support the Council's strategic housing allocation for the district. They did however consider that the opportunities provided within the SPPS provided the appropriate balance between managing growth to achieve sustainable patterns of growth and supporting a vibrant rural community and economy.

Key Issue 8: Future Proofing and Housing for All

The majority of public respondents on this issue (15 submissions (58%)) disagreed with the Council's preferred option to introduce a new strategic policy covering

lifetime homes and wheelchair accessible housing². Concerns were expressed amongst some planning consultants that it would discourage development and inflate house prices.

The responses from the building industry generally indicated that this policy was very onerous and that additional regulations would have a negative impact on the house building industry as it could discourage development, inflate house prices and lead to land banking. Responses from a community perspective felt that the Preferred Option should have gone further and increased the proposed percentage allocations for wheelchair accessible and lifetime homes.

The majority of statutory consultees (10 submissions (71%)) made no comment on the options provided.

While the Housing Executive agreed with the principle detailed within the preferred option they stated they would like to see this option strengthened to require all new housing to be developed to Lifetime Homes standards.

Key Issue 9: Integrated Renewable Energy and Passive Solar Design

There were mixed views from public respondents on this issue, 14 submissions (44%) disagreed, 10 (31%) agreed while 8 (25%) held mixed views.

Comments received under this issue highlighted the need for further consideration to be given to the proposed development thresholds over which renewable energy and passive solar technologies will be a requirement.

The majority of statutory consultees (11 submissions (79%)) made no comment on the options provided while DfI Strategic Planning highlighted the need for the Council to be satisfied that their evidence base supported the preferred approach.

Key Issue 10: Open Space Provision

A significant number of representations to the POP (98 out of 222) raised a site specific issue requesting that the Albert Basin be rezoned as open parkland space.

The majority of public respondents on this issue (17 submissions (53%)) agreed with the Council's preferred option to identify and evaluate current open space provision in the district as well as protect existing and any additional land required for open space, sport and recreation.

Comments associated with this responses suggested that consideration should be given to the suitability of the current open space provision and the benefits it

² It should be noted that 8 out of the 15 responses which disagreed with the Council's preferred option were submitted by a single planning consultant.

provides to the community while also taking into account that in some instances areas may add to anti-social behaviour and increased pollution.

A limited number of statutory consultees (4 submissions (29%)) supported the Council's preferred option, 1 (7%) disagreed, the majority (8 (57%)) had no comment to make. NIEA Natural Environmental Division highlighted their concerns that provision for green and blue infrastructure had not been brought forward as an option within this Key Issue.

Chapter 7: Economic: Creating Jobs, Promoting Prosperity and Supporting the Transportation Network and Other Infrastructure

Key Issue 11: Economic Development in the Countryside

The majority of public respondents on this issue (20 submissions (77%)) agreed with the Council's preferred option to consider the scope under the SPPS for a more flexible approach which would allow small scale workshop style development in the countryside which was ancillary to an existing dwelling. The National Trust and Woodland Trust both supported the preferred option whilst highlighting the importance of balancing this against the impact on the natural environment. Others disagreed stating the existing policy should be maintained or the environment should be given greater recognition.

The majority of statutory consultees on this issue (10 submissions (72%)) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did comment agreed (2 submissions (14%)), disagreed (1 submission (7%)) or had mixed views (1 submission (7%)). DfI Strategic Planning highlighted that the SPPS seeks to restrict new building for economic proposals in the countryside in the interests of rural amenity and wider sustainability objectives and sought further information on the nature of economic proposals likely to be considered acceptable by the Council.

Key Issue 12: Alternative Uses on Land Zoned for Economic Development

The majority of public respondents on this issue (14 submissions (56%)) disagreed with the Council's preferred option to allow a limited number of alternative compatible uses/businesses falling outside Part B Industrial and Business Use of the Planning (Use Classes) Order 2015 within zoned economic land. A minority (7 submissions (28%)) agreed with the Council's preferred option. Some submissions considered that safeguarding land for economic development in line with current policy reduced the potential for impact on existing business operations.

The majority of statutory consultees on this issue (10 submissions (72%)) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did comment agreed (1 submission (7%)), disagreed (1 submission (7%)) or had mixed views (2 submission (14%)).

DfI Strategic Planning emphasised the importance of protecting land and buildings for economic development to ensure a sufficient and appropriate supply.

Key Issue 13: Tourism Development

The majority of public respondents on this issue (13 submissions (53%)) agreed with the Council's preferred option to retain the policy led approach as set out within PPS16 and bring forward Tourist Opportunity Zones (TOZs). The National Trust suggested that TOZs should only be identified in appropriate locations where there was pre-existing development and infrastructure proposals. Some concern was raised regarding the environmental impact while others felt TOZs were unnecessary and could be addressed through policy.

The majority of statutory consultees on this issue (10 submissions (71%)) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did comment agreed (1 submission (7%)), disagreed (1 submission (7%)) or had mixed views (2 submission (14%)). The NIHE disagreed suggesting Council tourism development be focused in urban areas while the DfC Historic Environment Division emphasised the need to consider the historic environment under this policy.

Key Issue 14: Minerals Development

The majority of public respondents on this issue (9 submissions (60%)) agreed with the Council's preferred option to adopt a policy led approach and identify Mineral Safeguarding Zones (MSZs). However the National Trust did not support the identification of MSZs, while both the RSPB and Woodland Trust supported the identification of MSZs and Areas of Constraint on Mineral Development.

The majority of statutory consultees on this issue (8 submissions (57%)) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did comment disagreed (5 submissions (36%)) or had mixed views (1 submission (7%)). DfI Strategic Planning suggested that the Council should be satisfied that the evidence base supported only the introduction of MSZs.

Key Issue 15: Proposed Transportation Schemes

A small majority of public respondents on this issue (11 submissions (52%)) disagreed with the Council's preferred option of protecting non-strategic transportation schemes which had been justified by DfI through a Local Transport Plan. Most of this group wished to see all identified transport schemes protected regardless of status. The remainder consisted of those who supported the preferred option (10 submissions (48)).

The majority of statutory consultees on this issue (11 submissions (79%)) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did comment agreed (2 submissions

(14%)) or had mixed views (1 submission (7%)). DfI Strategic Planning sought clarification on the reference to the private car being the dominant means of transport over the plan period and how this reflected strategic objectives.

Key Issue 16: Park and Ride/Share Sites

The majority of public respondents on this issue (19 submissions (90%)) agreed with the Council's preferred option to identify and protect existing and proposed park and ride sites across the district and consider the potential for additional park and ride/share sites. There was strong support for this issue with the problem of all day parking by commuters in city/town centres being raised.

The majority of statutory consultees on this issue (11 submissions (79%)) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did comment (3 submissions (21%)) supported the preferred option. DfI Roads agreed with the Council's approach for protecting and developing park and ride sites. They also suggested that these should connect with other proposals to promote sustainable modes of transport.

Key Issue 17: Sustainable/Active Travel and Identification of Greenways

The majority of public respondents on this issue (16 submissions (62%)) agreed with the Council's preferred option to retain the existing policy approach toward sustainable transport and active travel and identify and protect community greenways. This option also included the introduction of a new policy promoting active travel (walking, cycling and integrating with public transport) in new development. There was broad support from environmental groups including the National Trust, Mourne Heritage Trust, Woodland Trust and RSPB. The importance of including consideration of blueways was also highlighted by some.

A majority of statutory consultees did address this issue with 6 submissions (43%) supporting the preferred option and a further 2 submissions (14%) expressing mixed views. A minority of the statutory consultees, 6 submissions (43%), had no comment to make. DfI Roads agreed with the Council's approach and suggested this issue should link with open space provision.

Key Issue 18: Renewable Energy

The majority of public respondents on this issue (15 submissions (63%)) agreed with the Council's preferred option to adopt the current policy based approach as set out in PPS18 and the SPPS subject policy for renewable energy projects. There was however a general consensus amongst environmental groups that serious consideration be given to the identification of Areas of Constraint (AoC) for certain types of renewables as proposed under Option 2.

The majority of statutory consultees on this issue (10 submissions (71%)) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did comment disagreed (3 submissions (21%)) or had mixed views (1 submission (7%)). In the absence of Areas of Constraint NIEA Natural Environment Division expressed concern as to how the Council proposed to control renewable energy development within the Mourne and Ring of Gullion AONB.

Key Issue 19: Telecommunications

The majority of public respondents on this issue (7 submissions (70%)) agreed with the Council's preferred option to adopt current policy as set out in PPS 10 and the SPPS subject policy for telecommunications. Others supported both AoCs as well as the identification of areas where telecommunications would be acceptable. The issue of mast design was raised with a suggestion that they should be coloured to blend in with the landscape.

The majority of statutory consultees on this issue (11 submissions (79%)) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did comment agreed (1 submission (7%)) or disagreed (2 submissions (14%)). A number of statutory consultees queried why only one option has been presented under this issue.

Chapter 8: Environmental

Key Issue 20: Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Character

The majority of public respondents on this issue (19 submissions (79%)) agreed with the Council's preferred option to review existing Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Character designations to consider whether they should be extended, reduced, removed or re-graded.

In relation to this issue it was suggested that any re-grading of designations should be accompanied by up-dated design guidance. A number of groups and agents also responded to the associated supplementary questions and were in agreement that consideration should be given to the removal of certain permitted development rights within Conservation Areas.

The majority of statutory consultees on this issue (10 submissions (71%)) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did comment agreed (4 submission (29%)) with the Council's preferred option. DfC Historic Environment Division supported the Preferred Option and recognised the high proportion of existing Conservation Areas within the district. Consideration was also given to the connection between the historic environment and its pivotal role within the district's tourism industry.

Key Issue 21: Non-Designated Heritage Assets

The majority of public respondents on this issue (16 submissions (70%)) agreed with the Council's preferred option to carry forward existing policy and consider the scope to strengthen existing policy to afford further protection to non-designated heritage assets.

Amongst the comments received it was highlighted that the local development plan should safeguard the district's existing heritage but not unduly restrict or potentially hinder development which would also help act as a catalyst for heritage led regeneration.

The majority of statutory consultees on this issue (10 submissions (71%)) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did comment agreed (1 submission (7%)) or disagreed (3 submissions (21%)). Whilst welcoming the Council's desire to protect the non-designated heritage assets of the district DfI Strategic Planning, DfC Historic Environment Division and the Historic Monuments Council considered that Option 2 may be a more robust option and would deliver better results.

Key Issue 22: Sensitive Upland Landscapes

Within the 25 public responses received comments were almost evenly split with 13 submissions (52%) agreeing with the Council's preferred option to review and extend Special Countryside Areas while 12 submissions (48%) disagreed.

Comments in relation to this issue were split between those supporting this additional layer of protection while others believed it to be more restrictive and unnecessary.

The majority of statutory consultees on this issue (9 submissions (64%)) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did comment agreed (5 submission (36%)).

While DfI Strategic Planning Division provided a neutral response they raised a number of points for further consideration while also recognising that one of the benefits associated with the preferred option would be the establishment if any further designations are required within the district.

Key Issue 23: Coastal Erosion and Land Instability

The majority of public respondents on this issue (13 submissions (54%)) disagreed with the Council's preferred option to adopt a targeted and measured approach to addressing coastal erosion and land instability. Within the representations that did not agree with the preferred option different approaches were identified as to the most appropriate course of action.

The majority of statutory consultees on this issue (9 submissions (64%)) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did comment agreed (4 submissions (29%)) or disagreed (1 submission (7%)). DfI Strategic Planning Division disagreed with the favoured approach and within their response were critical of some of the elements included within the Preferred Option while also highlighting a number of points for further consideration.

Key Issue 24: Flood Risk Management

Opinion on this issue was divided with 12 submissions (48%) agreeing, 9 submissions (36%) disagreeing and 4 submissions (16%) offering mixed views on the Council's preferred option to adopt a precautionary approach to development in flood prone areas and the introduction of SuDS.

The majority of statutory consultees on this issue (9 submissions (64%)) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did comment agreed (4 submissions (29%)) or disagreed (1 submission (7%)). While the comments made by DfI Strategic Planning and DfI Rivers were positive in relation to the options surrounding SuDS they queried why other aspects of flood risk were omitted from the Preferred Options Paper.

1.0 Introduction

The Local Development Plan

Background

- 1.1 The LDP is part of the reformed planning system introduced by the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the 2011 Act) and the transfer of the majority of planning powers and responsibilities from central government to the eleven new councils in April 2015. The 2011 Act provides for the preparation of a local development plan by a council for its district, which will, when adopted, replace current development plans produced by the former Department of the Environment (DOE). The 2011 Act transferred responsibility for the preparation of development plans from the then DOE to the new councils and establishes a plan-led system which gives primacy to the development plan in the determination of planning applications unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 1.2 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is now new responsible for the preparation of a Local Development Plan for the district. The new development plan will replace the existing development plans in so far as they apply to district:
- Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 (BNMAP) [adopted October 2013]
 - Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 (ADAP) [adopted March 2009]
- 1.3 The existing plans will remain in force as the statutory development plans for the district until such time as they are replaced by the Newry, Mourne and Down Local Development Plan when it is adopted.

What is the LDP?

- 1.4 The LDP is principally a land use planning policy document that will guide the future use of land in the district. It will allocate appropriate land for differing types of land use, and set out the main planning requirements to be met in respect of particular zoned sites and designations. The purpose of the LDP is to:
- Apply regional planning policies at the local level;
 - Inform the general public, communities, statutory authorities, public bodies, developers, representative organisations and other interests of the policy framework and land use proposals that will be used to guide development decisions and determine proposals in the district up to 2030; and be the

- Primary consideration in the determination of planning applications for the development or use of land.
- 1.5 In preparing the LDP the Council must take account of the regional policy context set by the Northern Ireland Executive and Central Government Departments. In applying regional policies at the local level, the LDP will be a fundamental tool in the implementation of central government policies and strategic objectives, particularly those set out in the Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).
 - 1.6 The RDS represents the overarching regional planning framework, while the SPPS provides an overarching statement of the general planning principles underlying the planning system.
 - 1.7 While the LDP will provide the essential framework for planning decisions with in the district, the SPPS provides a robust planning policy framework within which the Council will prepare the LDP and manage development.
 - 1.8 The function of the LDP is to:
 - Provide a 15 year plan framework to support the economic and social needs of the district in line with regional strategies and policies, while providing for the delivery of sustainable development;
 - Facilitate sustainable growth by co-ordinating public and private investment to encourage development where it can be of most benefit to the well-being of the community;
 - Allocate sufficient land to meet the district's needs;
 - Provide an opportunity for all stakeholders, including the public, to have a say about where and how development within their local area should take place;
 - Provide a plan-led framework for rational and consistent decision making by the public, private and community sectors and those affected by development proposals; and
 - Deliver the spatial aspects of the Council's Community Plan.
 - 1.9 The local development plan system aims to move away from a narrow land use focus towards a 'place shaping' approach. It provides an opportunity for the Council to shape places for local communities and will enable it to adopt a joined up approach, incorporating linkages to other functions such as local economic development and community planning. The 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.

- 1.10 The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 introduces a statutory link between the Community Plan and the LDP, in that 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 working in tandem towards the same vision for the Council area and its communities and set the long term social, economic and environmental objectives for the district.
- 1.11 The reformed development plan process has introduced a two stage approach to plan production. The LDP will consist of two development plan documents, the Plan Strategy and the Local Policies Plan which will shape development within our district in the period to 2030. The first stage will be the Plan Strategy followed by the Local Policies Plan.



- 1.12 Plan Strategy will establish the strategic direction of the LDP for the future development of the district. This will provide a level of certainty on which to base development decisions across the district as well as the necessary framework for the preparation of the Local Policies Plan. The Plan Strategy will set the aims, objectives, overall growth strategy and associated strategic policies applicable to 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 and should be located, and those areas, that are more sensitive and vulnerable, where development, or certain types of development, may be restricted.
- 1.13 Once the Plan Strategy is adopted a Local Policies Plan will be prepared which will 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. In contrast to the Plan Strategy the Local Policies Plan will deal with site specific policies and proposals associated with settlement limits, land use zonings and environmental designations required to deliver the Council's vision, objectives and strategic policies.

- 1.14 Both the Plan Strategy and the Local Policies Plan will be subject to public consultation, and Independent Examination prior to adoption.
- 1.15 Once adopted, in its totality, the LDP will replace the current development plans, the BNMAP and ADAP, in so far as they relate to the district. The Plan Strategy, on adoption, will replace those regional operational policies currently retained within the various topic based Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (PSRNI) published by central government, as relevant and currently applicable to the district, which will no longer be material considerations in the determination of planning applications. It will also replace the corresponding parts of the existing development plans. The remaining provisions of the existing development plans will be replaced upon adoption of the Local Policies Plan.
- 1.16 Following adoption the Council will monitor the implementation of the LDP annually to ensure progress in meeting its objectives. An annual monitoring report will focus on key indicators and any other relevant information regarding the implementation of the LDP such as take up of housing and employment land. The Council will also undertake regular reviews of the LDP at least every 5 years from the date of adoption of the Local Policies Plan.

The Preferred Options Paper

- 1.17 The Preferred Options Paper (POP) represents the Council's formal commencement of work on the Local Development Plan (LDP) for the Newry, Mourne and Down district. It is also the first public consultation document in the LDP process. The POP has been prepared in accordance with the legislative requirements of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations 2015.
- 1.18 The purpose of the POP is to set out the vision, strategy and objectives for the district up to 2030 and to identify key planning issues of strategic significance that are likely to influence the shape and future development within the district.
- 1.19 The POP does not cover every issue, policy and proposal that will be included in the LDP, but seeks to address the main planning issues that have emerged or been identified through the work undertaken in developing the evidence

base for the LDP, from consultation with statutory consultees, council officials, elected members, and through the Community Plan process.

- 1.20 As set out in our Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) the intention of the POP is to stimulate a wide-ranging yet focused, debate on the key issues and encourage feedback from a wide variety of interests.
- 1.21 The public consultation on the POP allows the public, communities and stakeholders to get involved with the development of the LDP from the outset and provides an opportunity to put forward views and have an influence on how the future of the district is shaped.
- 1.22 The POP was published on 1st June 2018 and was open for public consultation for a period of 12 weeks until 24th August 2018. This time period is in accordance with Part 3 Regulation 11 (3) of the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 which states that the consultation period 'must be a period of not less than 8 weeks or more than 12 weeks'.
- 1.23 The POP identified 24 Key Issues and for the majority of these Key Issues it presented a range of options. The Councils preferred option was justified and a range of questions were posed which sought public opinion on planning policy, and to stimulate the debate. A questionnaire was made available to assist respondents to structure their responses to the Key Issues.
- 1.24 There were 222 representations received during the POP consultation exercise (6 responses were received outside the consultation period). Of these, 14 were received from statutory bodies.
- 1.25 Alongside the publication of the POP a number of key documents were published including a Sustainability Appraisal Interim Report, Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report (SA) incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), an Equality Impact Assessment Progress Report (EQIA), and a Preliminary Review of Operational Planning Policy.

2.0 Purpose of the Consultation Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this Consultation Report is to summarise the responses received by the Council in response to the consultation on the Preferred Options Paper and supporting documents. This report has been prepared in accordance with Part 3 Regulation 11 (4) of the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 which states that the Council must take account of any representations received before it prepares the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan.

- 2.2 The report will demonstrate that all representations submitted to the Council have been recorded, summarised, and considered and in so doing demonstrate 'soundness'. The report will be made available to respondents and the general public³.
- 2.3 This report will be added to the Local Development Plan evidence base and be subsequently used to inform the LDP Plan Strategy.

3.0 Consultation Process

Pre-Publication Engagement

- 3.1 Prior to the publication of the POP the Council engaged with key stakeholders by letter or email. A series of meetings were held with statutory and non-statutory consultees, and other key stakeholders in preparation of the POP. Part 3 Regulation 9 (1) of the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, requires that the Council must engage the consultation bodies, for the purpose of generating alternative strategies and options for the POP and to inform its contents.
- 3.2 The statutory consultation bodies the Council engaged included:
- Northern Ireland Government Departments
 - Adjoining Councils
 - Water or Sewage Undertakers
 - The Northern Ireland Housing Executive
 - The Civil Aviation Authority
 - Electronic Communications Code Operators
 - Electricity Operators
 - Gas Operators
- 3.3 The Council also identified and wrote to a large number of stakeholder groups within the district to engage with a wide range of interests at an early stage of the LDP process. This was facilitated through the Councils DEA co-ordinators, a Strategic Stakeholder Forum, and existing Council database.

Publicity

Advertisement

- 3.4 A public notice was placed in 4 local weekly newspapers for 2 successive weeks in accordance with the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations

³ Initially an Intermediate Public Consultation Report will be presented to Members. This will subsequently be made available to the general public following publication of the draft Plan Strategy.

(NI) 2015 Regulation 10 (d), beginning on the week commencing Monday 21st May 2018. These newspapers include:

- The Down Recorder
- The Examiner
- The Newry Reporter
- The Mourne Observer

- 3.5 The public notice outlined the content & purpose of the POP, and the key supporting documents. It detailed where the POP and supporting documents could be inspected and set out the dates of the launch and public consultation period. It clearly explained how to respond and make comments on the document. The notice detailed the programme of public drop-in events over the consultation period and listed their times and locations. A copy of the public notice is provided in Appendix A
- 3.6 A press release following the launch of the POP was published widely in local newspapers.

Council Website

- 3.7 The POP was posted on the Council's website (www.newrymournedown.org) prior to the beginning of the consultation. The webpage in relation to the Local Development Plan provides a background to the LDP and the key stages of the process.
- 3.8 A separate web page is dedicated to the POP and provides an overview of the document, its content and purpose, the launch date and consultation dates. Comments were invited and details were provided on how responses could be made by email or post. A questionnaire was provided to assist the respondent in structuring their comments; however use of the questionnaire was not mandatory.
- 3.9 Links to the POP and POP questionnaire were provided as well as links to the supporting documentation including the Sustainability Appraisal Interim Report, Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, Equality Impact Assessment Progress Report, and Preliminary Review of Operational Planning Policy.
- 3.10 Details were provided on how the documents could be viewed in hard copy in Council offices in Newry and Downpatrick. Alternative formats were available upon request. Where an exact request could not be met a reasonable alternative would be provided.
- 3.11 A list of the dates of information sessions was provided, detailing the dates, times and locations of the sessions.

Social Media

- 3.12 The Councils communications department carried out a social media campaign during the consultation exercise to raise awareness of the POP consultation and to stimulate engagement and debate around the key issues. Use of social media was employed to reach a wide range of people and in particular the younger generations. Social media platforms used include Facebook and Twitter.

Email & Letter

- 3.13 The Council issued a letter or email to key stakeholder groups prior to the launch and publication of the POP which explained the form, purpose, and content of the POP and provided details on how it could be viewed, the dates of the consultation, and how comments could be submitted. Email or letters were sent to statutory and non-statutory consultees, stakeholder groups through DEA co-ordinators, groups identified through the Councils database, the Economic Forum, the Strategic Stakeholder Forum, Post Primary Schools, MP's, and MLA's.

NMD Business E-Zine

- 3.14 An article was published in the Councils Business E-zine with a readership of 2,600, to coincide with the launch of the POP. The article explained the purpose and content of the POP, consultation dates, and how to get involved.

Consultation Launch Event

- 3.15 A launch event for the POP was held on the 29th May 2018 at 10am in the Carriage Rooms of the Montalto Estate, Ballynahinch. The event was attended by 38 people consisting of elected members, council officials, adjoining council officials, statutory consultees, and key stakeholders. A presentation was given by the Councils Chief Executive and the Mayor of the district, and hard copies of the POP were distributed to those in attendance.

Drop-in Events

- 3.16 A series of drop-in information events were held in various locations throughout the district between 5th June and 21st June 2018. There were 14 events in public venues spread across the district. The events were held in either the afternoon or evening in order to ensure maximum engagement and accessibility. Planning Officers were available to discuss the POP and hard copies were provided upon request, along with associated documents and questionnaire. Display boards were exhibited detailing relevant information to the POP and a variety of key issues.

Responding to the POP Consultation

- 3.17 In an attempt to focus responses to the POP key issues, Sustainability Appraisal and Preliminary Review of Operational Policy respondents were encouraged to use a questionnaire response form which could be submitted electronically or by post. The questionnaire was available to download from the Councils website and was distributed at the public drop-in events.

4.0 Plan Vision and Strategic Objectives

General comments on the Plan Vision and Strategic Objectives

- 4.1 The RSPB highlighted that the POP did not contain any reference to or identification of 'Overarching Principles' and recommended the use of the SPPS 5 core principles with additional consideration of the need for sustainable development.

Plan Vision

- 4.2 The LDP shares the Community Plan Vision:

Newry, Mourne and Down is a place with strong, safe and vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices, and high quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people's needs.

Public Response

- 4.3 The RSPB welcomed reference to sustainable within the LDP Vision but felt that this did not go far enough in furthering sustainable development in the plan making process. They also pointed to the absence of any protection and enhancement of the natural environment within the vision.
- 4.4 The Woodland Trust stated there was a lack of recognition of the importance of a resilient environment and the POP did not reflect the role of the natural environment in providing ecosystem services such as improving air quality, water management, flood alleviation, urban heat island mitigation etc.
- 4.5 Mourne Heritage Trust highlighted the lack of reference to a high quality environment.
- 4.6 It was suggested that the existing Vision Statement was too long (Matrix Planning) and should simply read:

"Newry, Mourne and Down is a safe, vibrant and diverse place to live, work, and visit, with opportunities for all".

- 4.7 By contrast other submissions made reference to omissions within the Vision Statement and suggested including reference to:
- The enhancement, protection and sharing of marine and terrestrial heritage.
 - 'Inclusiveness', 'fairness' and 'equality'.

Statutory Response

- 4.8 DfI Strategic Planning whilst welcoming the shared vision stated that consideration should be given to reflecting the built and natural environmental objectives of the LDP. The Vision could be further refined to make it locally distinct through reference to the future vision for key settlements or unique assets within the district.
- 4.9 DfC HED noted that there was no direct reference to the historic environment within the Vision Statement and this should be addressed given the unique heritage offering within the district.
- 4.10 The NIHE welcomed the LDP vision based on the Community Plan Vision which would help to ensure that both plans were aligned

Our Consideration

- 4.11 The purpose of a vision is to outline a broad aspirational goal, by its very nature therefore it cannot be too prescriptive or detailed. Whilst consideration will be given to the range of comments received there is a need to ensure that the vision delivers an overarching message in a clear and concise form.
- 4.12 We believe the alignment of the LDP Vision with the Community Plan is appropriate given the statutory link between the two processes and we will continue to refine the LDP vision to ensure that it captures a balanced view of the aspirations of the LDP.

Strategic Objectives

General

Public Response

- 4.13 The deliverability of the strategic objectives was questioned by Planning agents given the following:
- The absence of retail information;

- Dependency on age related data to inform options; and
 - The limited consideration of cross border relationship Newry enjoys with Dundalk.
- 4.14 Translink indicated their support for both the vision and strategic objectives in promoting sustainable travel and reducing reliance on the private car.
- 4.15 The RSPB whilst welcoming the three strategic objective pillars considered there was a need for greater inter-relationship and integration.
- 4.16 Other submissions proposed amendments to the wording of the strategic objectives by providing greater detail and clarification on terms such as recognising, supporting, protecting, managing and accommodating.

Statutory Consultees Responses

- 4.17 DFI Strategic Planning advised that the Council should satisfy itself that the overall number of objectives was manageable and consider the key indicators and any other relevant information which would assist in successful monitoring to achieve the identified objectives. They also suggested that the Linkage of objectives to a monitoring framework setting out key indicators would be useful.
- 4.18 DfC HED considered that the historic environment should be better reflected across all three strategic objectives.
- 4.19 The Historic Monuments Council reflected DfC HED comments and suggested that linkages between the environmental pillar and social and economic themes were not drawn on

Social Objectives

Public Response

- 4.20 Regarding the reference to accommodating 15,092 homes by 2030 planning agents highlighted the need to provide a sufficient 'deliverable' supply of housing land and ensure delivery of affordable housing. By contrast others questioned the need for the proposed quantity of housing and evidence to support this need.
- 4.21 The RSPB felt there should be a reference to blue as well as green spaces and the biodiversity benefits drawn out in respect of protecting and enhancing open space.
- 4.22 Some submissions stated that the LDP should define a hierarchy of centres, in line with the SPPS, and aim to improve vitality and viability of the city and

main town. The provision of local centres and services was highlighted in some submissions as it was felt this would reduce the need for travel and promote social interaction. Encouraging a more vibrant evening economy was also proposed in some responses.

- 4.23 The need for new housing schemes over a certain threshold to include community facilities such as retail, health, shared amenities and leisure was also proposed.

Statutory Consultees Responses

- 4.24 The NIHE stated that they would like to see the role of city and town centre living in regenerating city and town centres highlighted. They requested that supporting health be included as a social objective. They also suggested that the LDP should support community cohesion as a social objective through new shared housing developments.
- 4.25 DfC HED suggested a reference to building sustainable communities from the historic environment.

Economic Objectives

Public Response

- 4.26 Business start-ups and homeworking are crucial, need for policies to support small scale enterprise (Matrix Planning).
- 4.27 The RSPB expressed disappointment that the only reference to heritage assets was with regards to tourism, and this was considered weak. The objective used the word 'respect' which does not address protection and enhancement of the natural environment. The RSPB also suggested the need for an additional objective which refers to the economic importance of fully functioning ecosystem services or natural capital of the environment, as required by the SPPS.
- 4.28 A number of submissions put forward revised/additional wording for the economic objectives including:
- "To recognise and accommodate entrepreneurship and innovation.....", this should include promotion and support for new technological industries.
 - "To support the district as a whole.....*through recognising, enhancing and sharing heritage and landscapes for all.*
 - Reference to renewables should include reference to self-sustaining energy systems.

Statutory Consultees Responses

- 4.29 DfC HED suggested an objective which focused on providing opportunities for promoting heritage-led regeneration.
- 4.30 DfI Strategic Planning made a number of comments on the economic objectives:
- It highlighted the absence of options in relation to retailing and town centres, public utilities and waste management;
 - Any subsequent policies brought forward for town centres and retail development should be consistent with its strategies for growth;
 - The linkage between retailing and tourism and the absence of this interdependency within the POP. Consideration of the district's cross border potential in this regard.

Environmental Objectives

Public Response

- 4.31 The RSPB welcomed the environmental objectives but were of the view that they required strengthening and extending. Drawing out the biodiversity value in a number of the environmental objectives was highlighted. In the case of the objective to protect sensitive upland landscapes, this should include all sensitive landscapes and seek the conservation of biodiversity and enhancement of species or habitats. They also considered that the biodiversity value of old, vacant and underutilised buildings should also be highlighted. An additional objective should steer development to less environmentally sensitive areas.

Statutory Consultees Responses

- 4.32 DfI Strategic Planning stated that only 5 of the strategic objectives covered environmental objectives and the SPPS required planning authorities to deliver on all three pillars of sustainable development in a balanced way.
- 4.33 The NIHE suggested that additional objectives relating to the generation of energy from renewable sources in appropriate locations and to promote sustainable, high quality design should be included.
- 4.34 DfC HED suggested the historic environment played an important role through respecting, maintaining and strengthening local identity, distinctive character and authentic places. They also suggested that the existing built heritage objective within the POP should reflect the wording within the SPPS in terms of *'protecting, conserving and enhancing.'*

- 4.35 DAERA highlighted that there was no strategic objective to protect and enhance the landscape character and quality of the plan area. They also questioned the absence of any reference to waste management, contaminated land or groundwater. They suggest a specific reference to water quality should be included.

Our Consideration

- 4.36 We welcome the support for the LDP objectives. Further consideration will be given to the extent of the Economic and Environmental objectives and the need to expand on those currently identified. It should be noted that any consideration will also take account of the need to avoid overly detailed objectives and those objectives which extend beyond the remit of the LDP.

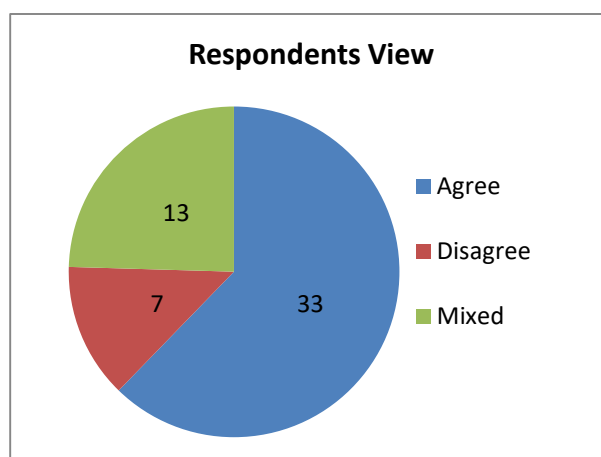
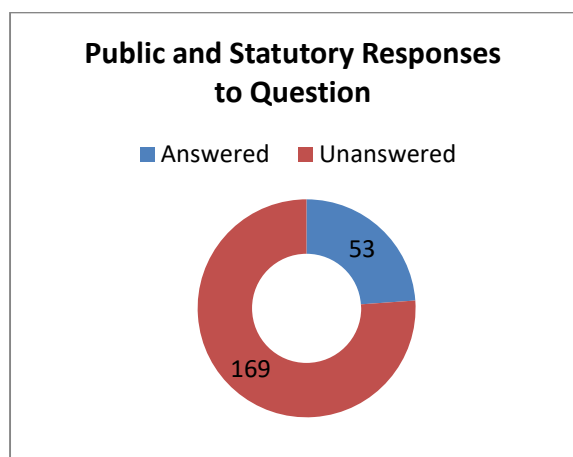
5.0 Spatial Growth Strategy: Promoting Urban Centres and Supporting Sustainable Rural Development

General Comments on the Spatial Growth Strategy

- 5.1 The Plan Strategy should articulate Drogheda-Dundalk-Newry cross border network and wider Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor (Louth County Council). The POP is light on place making (Newry Business Improvement District (BID)). Concerns expressed over the use of only one option (Woodland Trust and others).

Key Issue 1: Settlement Hierarchy

- 5.2 Council's Preferred Option – Option 3 - *To re-examine the existing settlement hierarchy in order to consider if any settlement should be reclassified while also considering the potential for identifying a number of new small settlements.*



Public Responses

5.3 The majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on the settlement hierarchy, 49 responses (24% of all public responses) did address this issue. Within this group 29 respondents (59%) agreed with the Council's preferred option, 7 respondents (14%) disagreed and 13 respondents (27%) held mixed views.

5.4 Comments received focused on a number of issues:

- Support for the proposed settlement hierarchy and position of individual settlements within that hierarchy.
- Comments on methodology included:
 - All settlements should be 4 levels as per the RDS infrastructure wheel:
 - Tier 1: More than 10,000 population
 - Tier 2: Local/Regional Town less than 10,000
 - Tier 3: Small Towns of less than 4,000.
 - Tier 4: Villages of less than 1000 pop (incl. clusters).
 - Tier 2 should be split into two with local and small towns separated.
 - Hierarchy should be split into 5 tiers as follows:
 - Tier 1 – City/Main Town
 - Tier 2 – Large Town
 - Tier 3 - Small Town
 - Tier 4 – Villages
 - Tier 5 – Small Settlements
 - Allow cluster development in rural areas. Small clusters that should be classified include: Killowen, Kilfeagan and Rostrevor; Dunavil, Cranfield, Greencastle and Millbay; Warrenpoint and Burren.
- Proposals for changes to individual settlements included:
 - Warrenpoint/Burren should be moved into Tier 1.
 - Burren and Warrenpoint should remain unified as recommended by the Planning Appeals Commission in the BNMAP 2015 Public Examination Report. There is an existing functional inter-relationship. If kept separate growth opportunities for Warrenpoint will be restricted due to topography and its coastal location (Turley).
 - Rostrevor (village) should be reclassified as a town.
 - Bessbrook should be elevated to its former status as being part of Newry.
 - Based on population size Crossmaglen (town) should be reclassified as a village (Strategic Planning). Contrary case also put forward to

maintain Crossmaglen given the services it provides to the surrounding area.

- Newtownhamilton (village) should be retained as a town given its range of services.
- Crossgar should be re-classified as a town, its acts as a local service centre as highlighted by the NISRA report⁴, serving a wider catchment of smaller settlements (including Kilmore, Annacloy and Derryboye). Its service provision is consistent with level 2 within the RDS wheel (RPS).
- Council assessment of settlements and findings (referenced in Paper 1(2nd Revision) are not available to comment on, without availability of this evidence it is not possible to fully support or oppose the preferred option. (Turley).
- The NT agreed with the Council's preferred option and highlighted that any future growth for Bessbrook the importance of Derrymore House, its wider setting and surrounding parkland should be identified and protected from inappropriate development.
- The RSPB were disappointed that no reference was made to SFG 12 of the RDS and the disproportionate amount of growth in smaller settlements. They urged that the Council be cautious in its approach to growth within the smaller settlement hierarchy and outlined need for a robust assessment of any new small settlement.
- Similarly RPS recommended that greater consideration be given to SFG 10, 11 and 12 of the RDS but also further cognisance be taken of the Spatial Framework guidance as contained in SFG 13 and 14 relating to sustaining rural communities in small settlements and improving accessibility.
- Housing in rural areas should be directed to small settlements.
- Provision should be made for dispersed rural communities (O'Callaghan Planning).

Statutory Consultee Responses

5.5 A number of Statutory consultees (4) supported the Councils preferred option while the remainder (10) had no comment to make on the options provided.

5.6 DfI Strategic Planning Division welcomed the proposed review of the hierarchy and raised a number of points for further consideration:

- They supported the Planning Appeals Commission view, outlined under the Councils Preferred Option 3, that a collection of houses in the countryside without accompanying services was not a sustainable basis for settlement

⁴ Nisra 'Review of the Statistical Classification and Delineation of settlements' Report.

status and suggested that criteria should be used to designate any additional settlement.

- They suggested that the Council should consider the implications for the spatial growth strategy of the number of candidate small settlements identified for further consideration.
- They highlighted that whilst the RDS refers to the importance of vibrant rural communities, the emphasis at a strategic level is on focusing on development larger settlements and hubs.

5.7 The NIHE supported the Council's preferred option and proposed settlement tiers. They welcomed the opportunity of identifying new small settlements to reduce rural sprawl and one-off housing however expressed concern that removal of settlement limits could hinder future community uses and services.

5.8 DfC Historic Environment Division accepted the Council's preferred option and suggested that their Gazetteer of Nucleated Historic Urban Settlements could aid the review of the settlement hierarchy.

Our Consideration

5.9 The Council welcomes the general support for its proposed settlement tiers and settlement hierarchy review.

5.10 The comments regarding tiers and population thresholds are noted. Further consideration will be given to the need for an additional tier. The Council consider that classification on the basis of the census data, the RDS wheel and Housing Evaluation Framework represents a robust approach to assessment of the settlement hierarchy.

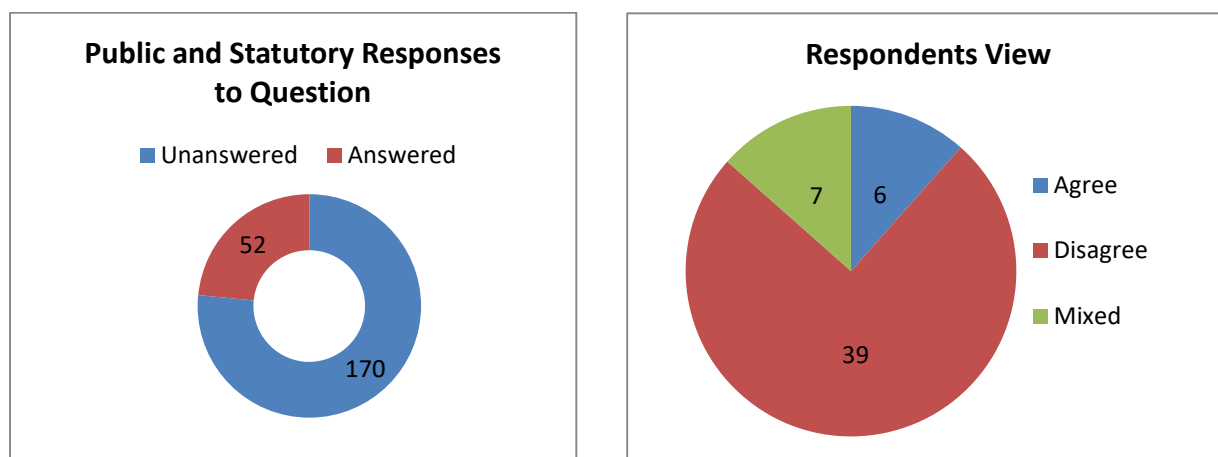
5.11 The Council notes DfI Strategic Planning's comments regarding the methodology for identification of new small settlements and subsequent implications for the spatial growth strategy. These issues will be further considered and the Council will follow up with DfI Strategic Planning.

5.12 The concern of NIHE regarding the removal of settlement limits is also noted, and will be considered as part of the review of existing small settlements.

5.13 The submission requesting that Bessbrook be elevated to its former status is based on a misunderstanding of its current position. Within BNMAP 2015 Bessbrook is designated as a village and is detached from Newry. The POP proposes elevating Bessbrook from a village to a town and retaining its position detached from Newry City.

Key Issue 2: Quantity of Housing Land

5.14 Council's Preferred Option – Option 1 - *To retain the current level of zoned housing land. A phased approach to the release of housing land would be introduced with surplus zoned land held in reserve to meet long-term housing need.*



Public Responses

5.15 The majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on the quantity of housing land, however 49 submissions (24% of all public submissions) did address this issue. Out of this group the majority (39 submissions or 80%), mostly agents, disagreed with the Council's preferred option. Comments on the proposed approach to the quantity of housing land included:

- HGIs were for guidance and did not represent a cap. There was general consensus that the projected DfI HGI figure of 15,092 was too restrictive:
 - The 2016 HGIs were based on data from a period of recession.
 - No account has been taken on the impact of Brexit and the potential relocation of workers and business (Turley/CMcIlvar)
 - Changing demography, with a growing aging population need for more specialist accommodation.
 - Historical growth should be relied upon and showed 2,404 units above the projected GHI would be required. Similarly other comments requested an uplift of 15% in the HGIs.
 - Revised HGI of 16,422 proposed (based on 1998-2013 build out rates)
- Whilst some agents stated that a phased approach was wrong and was akin to de-zoning others felt that de-zoning should be considered.
- In terms of the quantity of housing in the countryside comments ranged from reducing the current level of housing in the countryside, to classifying

all housing in the countryside as windfall which should be excluded from the HGI figure.

- The need for a full review of housing land, including deliverability was strongly supported by most agents. To this end it was recommended that the Council should seek confirmation from landowners on the availability, timeframe for delivery and any known impediments to the delivery of housing on all sites prior to being formally zoned (O'Toole & Starkey).
- POP has been informed by datasets drawn on a time period marked by recession and following years of low growth. This is a flawed approach as it does not provide a balanced representation on which to formulate future growth estimates (Turley).
- There is little acknowledgement of the importance of the cross border relationship with Dundalk (Turley/CMcIlvar).
- The POP notes that de-zoning will not be required, without having assessed the reasons why sites zoned have not been developed (Turley)
- LDP end date should be 2035, this will ensure a period of at least 10 years between the LDP being fully adopted and its notional end date (Clyde Shanks Planning).

5.16 Other issues raised by the general public included:

- Evidence in the form of urban capacity studies, a review of uncommitted sites was needed, an audit of empty buildings/houses required and the general need for robust evidence base.
- An overprovision of existing zoned housing land should not in itself be justification for an increase in HGI figures (RSPB)
- The LDP should adopt the plan, monitor and manage approach with annual monitoring ensuring a 5 year supply rather than rolling over surplus zonings (RSPB)
- Social housing figure is only 5 year period, this should be aligned to the 15 year plan period. Social Housing figure should be 5,718 units based on a pro rata calculation over 15 years (Strategic Planning)
- There should be a phased approach but land should be banked for no more than 2 years (Confederation of Community Groups)
- Improved infrastructure means the district is now within the greater Dublin commuter belt.

Statutory Consultee Responses

5.17 The majority of statutory consultees (11 submissions, 79% of all consultees) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did (3) had mixed comments, indicating support in part for the preferred option.

- 5.18 DfI Strategic Planning welcomed the review of housing land, however raised a number of queries:
- They queried whether additional land would be zoned in tandem with a phased approach which would see surplus land held as a long term reserve.
 - They advised that it was unclear what proportion of the potential housing provision was on zoned land not subject of planning permission.
 - They requested clarification on the housing supply target for the plan.
- 5.19 NIHE supported the preferred option, and requested that existing uncommitted sites should be robustly tested for suitability, availability and deliverability. They also suggested that there was a need for joint agreement/strategies on housing between all Councils within the Belfast Metropolitan Housing Market Area.
- 5.20 DfI Transport Planning and Modelling Unit requested that the full review of housing land should include an assessment of the accessibility of sites (by walking, cycling and public transport).
- 5.21 DAERA Historic Environment Division welcomed the phased approach to the release of housing land. They suggested that policy consideration should be given to utilizing historic properties, including industrial heritage, for housing in advance of new build to promote and maintain attractive and distinct places.

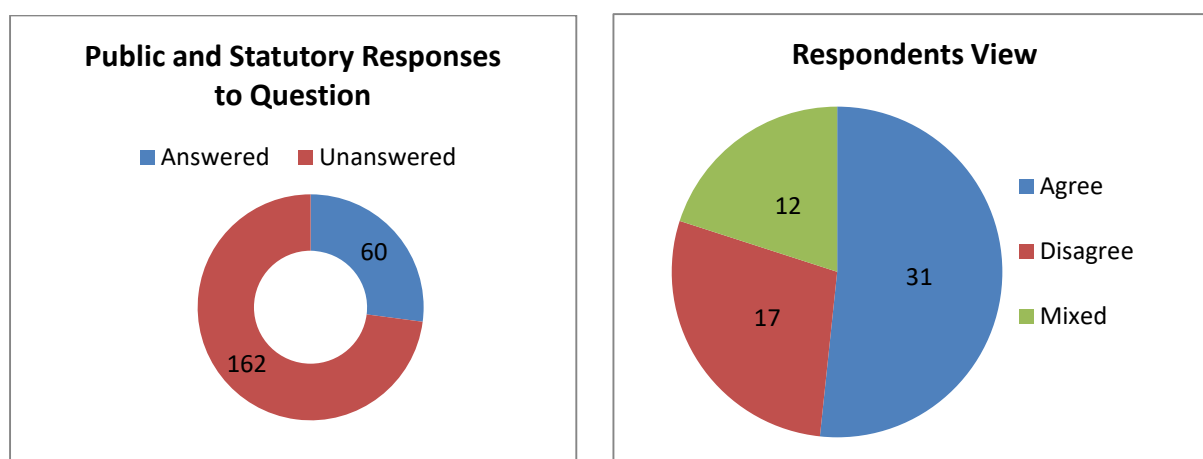
Our Consideration

- 5.22 The Council envisage that a dual approach of zoning additional land and phasing surplus lands will be adopted. The Council acknowledge that the proposed review of housing land, including deliverability, will ultimately have implications for how much land is retained.
- 5.23 An initial review of committed/uncommitted land has commenced as part of this review. The Council agree that urban capacity studies are likely to influence the overall supply and distribution of housing land. The Council will seek to ensure that housing land is fully assessed in terms of its accessibility.
- 5.24 The Council will continue explore collaborative working opportunities with other Councils to address issues of mutual interest.
- 5.25 It is acknowledged that the robustness of data underpinning the spatial growth strategy is a key soundness test.

- 5.26 The Council's POP options are required to be realistic and deliverable thus in some cases there was considered to be only one reasonable option available.
- 5.27 Site/settlement specific issues that were submitted will be considered at the Local Policies Plan (LPP) stage .

Key Issue 3: Distribution of Housing Land

Council's Preferred Option – Option 3 - *Balanced approach focusing development within settlements over 5,000 population but at a lesser figure than the RDS target of 60%. Sustain villages with a degree of housing development being permitted, while providing for small scale development and infilling in small settlements. Development in countryside could be sustained in line with current approvals.*



Public Responses

- 5.28 The majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on the distribution of housing land, 55 responses (26% of all public responses) did address this issue. Within this group 30 respondents (54%) agreed with the Council's preferred option, 17 respondents (30%) disagreed and 8 respondents (14%) held mixed views.
- 5.29 Amongst agents there was broad support for a balanced approach, with the focus of development being city and main towns however they did not support the Council's balanced approach as outlined under Option 3.
- Some proposed that Option 2 should be the preferred approach, this would seek to meet the RDS brownfield target of 60% and protect the countryside.
 - In some cases agents proposed a greater allocation to the larger towns within the town tier. It was suggested that 65% of the town tier allocation

go to the top 4 settlements and 35% to the bottom 4 settlements.
(Strategic Planning).

- Whilst some supported Option 3, they regarded the 21% allocation to the countryside as excessive and unsustainable. They considered that the small settlements allocation should be correspondingly increased.
- A contrary position was also presented, disagreeing with the 21% on the grounds that it was not adequate and none of the options represented a balanced and sustainable approach.

5.30 Other issues raised by the general public included:

- There should be a general presumption against dispersed rural housing.
- The environmental impact of significant housing in the countryside.
(Woodland Trust).
- The Mourne Heritage Trust considered the 21% allocation to the countryside to be a more pragmatic approach than the 15% proposed under option 2 given traditional aspirations and settlement patterns.
- Persisting with current development rates in the countryside was seen as unsustainable, allocation should be 15% to the countryside, small settlements 6% and villages 17%.
- Housing in rural areas should be directed towards small settlements as this was considered to be more sustainable.
- The LDP should consider brown field sites in the district and also focus on city and town centre living as this is currently at low levels.
- Business sector would like to see a strategy to regenerate vacant city centre properties and above the shops space to address housing need and de-populated city centre (Newry Business Improvement District (BID))
- The decision to reduce the RDS target of 60% has implications for the future growth of Newry and Option 2 should be strongly considered.
(Newry Chamber of Commerce and Trade)

Statutory Consultee Responses

5.31 Whilst comments from statutory consultees were broadly split between non-committal (9) or mixed (4) there was a general concern that too much housing would be allocated to the countryside under the Council's preferred option.

5.32 DfI Strategic Planning highlighted a number of issues under this key issue:

- They highlight that the options provided relate to the distribution of the HGI (projected to 2030) rather than the distribution of housing land.
- They acknowledge that the Council's approach to this issue may be further refined by the future review of housing land and/or phased approach to

the release of land. Subsequently the Council will wish to consider how this issue is addressed to deliver the preferred spatial growth.

- They further highlight that the RDS objective of reinforcing the leading roles of Hubs and achieving a complementary urban/rural balance.

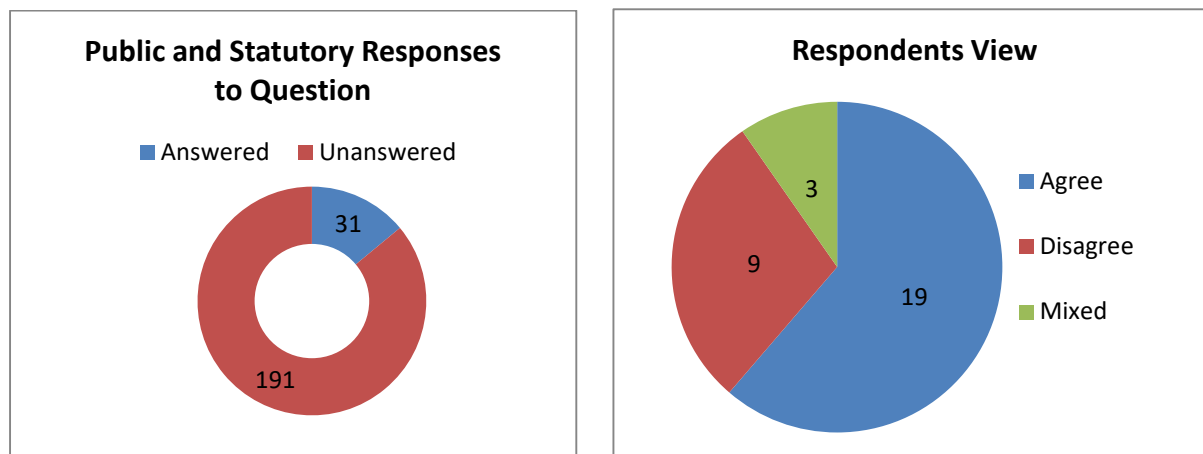
- 5.33 DfI Transport Planning and Modelling Unit disagreed with the Council's preferred option stating that 21% of housing in the countryside did not equate to sustainable development. They considered that an opportunity has been missed to positively shape the district and it appeared to them that accessibility by other modes other than private car has not been considered.
- 5.34 DfC Historic Environment Division welcomed the Council's comment that the preferred option affords the opportunity to retain the majority of rural planning policy but expressed concerns over the quantity of housing which would be assigned to the countryside.
- 5.36 NI Housing Executive indicated they would support a combination of Options 2 & 3, with growth directed to the hubs and towns and the open countryside receiving a smaller proportion of growth than under the preferred option.

Our Consideration

- 5.37 The Council acknowledge that figures provided for rural housing are a proportion of the HGI allocation, however the percentages outlined under each option do represent options for the distribution of housing land and thus are correctly described.
- 5.38 The Council consider the preferred option represents a balanced and sustainable approach which seeks to grow the hubs and towns whilst continuing to support rural communities. The Council acknowledges the objective of regional planning policy to reinforce the roles of the Hubs, and considers that the preferred option seeks to do this without a detrimental impact on the district's rural communities.
- 5.39 Nonetheless the Council will continue to refine the proposed distribution of housing land as the evidence base is enhanced and will seek to ensure a sustainable approach to the district's growth is adopted.
- 5.40 Site/settlement specific issues that were submitted will be retained and reviewed by the LDP team later in the process. These site/settlement specific issues will however need to be submitted/re-submitted, during the appropriate consultation period later in the LDP process, in order to be considered as a formal submission to the LDP.

Key Issue 4: Quantity of Employment Land

Council's Preferred Option – Option 2 - Uplift the overall amount of land zoned for employment use by 20%.



Public Responses

- 5.41 The vast majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on the quantity of employment land, 28 responses (13% of all public responses) did address this issue. Within this group 17 respondents (61%) agreed with the Council's preferred option, 9 respondents (32%) disagreed and 2 respondents (7%) held mixed views.
- 5.42 Public responses were generally supportive of the Council's preferred option to uplift the amount of zoned land by 20%. Invest NI consider the proposed uplift will ensure a balanced reserve of employment land and provide a greater choice of sites with businesses with a greater domestic focus and/or smaller turnover. Those that were neutral or indicated that they did not support the preferred option stated a full review of zoned lands should be undertaken.
- 5.43 Other issues raised:
- The 20% should be uplifted to meet the needs of micro business.
 - The SA does not properly reflect the impact of 20% increase in zoned land. A number mitigation measures are identified which could be used to reduce the impact (Woodland Trust).
 - The RSPB question the relevancy and accuracy in calculating the number of jobs per hectare and suggest that the figures provided may not be sufficiently robust to reflect current times.
 - The need for a full review of uncommitted employment land.

Statutory Consultee Responses

- 5.44 There was a limited degree of support from statutory consultees (2 agreed and 1 held mixed views), the majority of responses were non-committal (11), no consultees disagreed with the Council approach.
- 5.45 DfI Strategic Planning comments were generally neutral, however they did highlight a number of issues for further consideration/clarification.
- DfI requested clarification on the uses to be permitted on such zonings.
 - DfI highlighted that some of the information relied upon to calculate the economic land requirement was out of date, dating back as far as 2000. They reminded the council that the methodology used should have a robust evidential context.
 - DfI stated that the proposal to uplift the overall amount of zoned land for employment use by 20% would result in approximately 210 ha of land being zoned, substantially more than the methodologies or other options presented.
- 5.46 The NIHE supported the preferred option to increase the quantum of land zoned for employment use.
- 5.47 DfC HED whilst acknowledging the Council's need and desire to support business growth , warned that an increase of 20% in employment land zoning had potential to impact on the historic landscape character which would require appropriate consideration. They also suggested engaging with Invest NI to discuss the potential release of Invest NI land to the Council.

Our Consideration

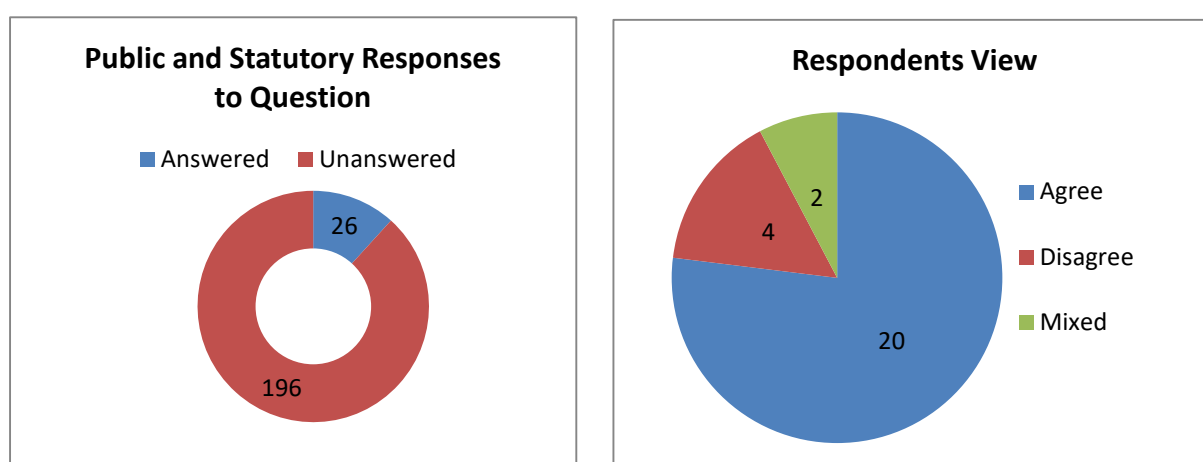
- 5.48 The issue of appropriate uses on employment land is a separate Key Issue and is addressed under Key Issue 12 and considered later this report.
- 5.49 The Council notes DfI's and others comments regarding soundness of its data, the Council reaffirms its commitment to review methodologies and update its evidence base on an on-going basis.
- 5.50 The Council note DfI comment on the 20% uplift to the quantity of housing land. The Council will engage further with both Invest NI and DfI in respect of this issue.
- 5.51 Site/settlement specific issues that were submitted will be retained and reviewed by the LDP team later in the process. These site/settlement specific issues will however need to be submitted/re-submitted, during the

appropriate consultation period later in the LDP process, in order to be considered as a formal submission to the LDP.

Key Issue 5: Distribution of Employment Land

Council's Preferred Option – Option 2 - *Retain the broad balance of remaining employment land provision across the district (currently 132 hectares, former Newry & Mourne District and 42 hectares, former Down District)*

5.52 The Woodland Trust stated there was no recognition of the importance of the tourist industry as an employment sector. The RSPB highlighted the need to distinguish between economic growth and sustainable economic growth.



Public Responses

5.53 The vast majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on the quantity of employment land, 24 responses (12% of all public responses) did address this issue. Within this group 18 respondents (75%) agreed with the Council's preferred option, 4 respondents (17%) disagreed and 2 respondents (8%) held mixed views.

5.54 Whilst the majority of public responses had no comment to make on this key issue, those that did largely supported the Council's Preferred Option, and indicated that it was important to carry out a full review of existing employment land. As indicated some responses did not agree with the Council's Preferred Option:

- A number of submissions stated that the hubs should be the focus of employment land development.
- The RSPB expressed disappointment that there was no reference to or recognition of the environment within this section. They highlighted that

there was a need for sustainable economic growth that is compatible with and enhances social and environmental objectives.

5.55 Other issues raised:

- Some submissions stated that the LDP should focus employment land on brownfield sites including empty buildings at towns and village level.
- The Proximity of employment lands to the main transport network, both the main road network and public transport routes was emphasised in a number of submissions.
- Ensuring employment growth is targeted towards areas of deprivation was an issue raised by some respondents.

5.56 Reference to specific settlements included:

- The current inequitable situation where Kilkeel has more land zoned for development than Warrenpoint was highlighted.
- The need for additional employment land in Carnbane was raised.
- Mixed use sites should be identified in Mayobridge and Newtowncloghoge.

Statutory Consultee Responses

5.58 There was a limited degree of support from consultees (2), the majority of responses were non-committal (12), no consultees disagreed with the Council approach.

5.59 DfI Strategic Planning comments were generally neutral, however they did highlight a number of issues for further consideration.

- DfI advise that in carrying out an analysis of zoned economic development land the Council should ensure that paragraph 6.82 of the SPPS is taken account off.
- DfI direct the Council to the Employment Land Evaluation Framework set out in the RDS and the requirement to assess the suitability of existing employment land before quantifying future land requirements and identifying new sites.
- DfI remind the Council of the RDS Regional Strategic Objectives, in particular the requirement for employment land to be so distributed as to support rural economic development of an appropriate scale and nature.

5.60 NIHE supports the Council's preferred option and makes a number of recommendations:

- Industrial Policy Areas should be located on routes with a public transport service as well as main road network.

- The LDP should introduce planning agreements or conditions attached to planning permissions for major developments, requiring the inclusion of social clause.

Our Consideration

- 5.61 The range of views is welcomed by the Council and is a clear indication that a balanced approach that meets the RDS objective of supporting growth in the district's hubs whilst delivering opportunities for employment at a lower level in the settlement hierarchy is required.
- 5.62 The Council notes the concerns of the RSPB, whilst environmental considerations were not explicitly referenced under this key issue they are an integral part of the assessment of employment land. This will be clearly set out at the LPP stage when employment lands will be identified.
- 5.63 A full review of all employment lands will be undertaken and the associated employment land distribution will seek to grow settlements in line with their role and status.
- 5.64 DfI comments on employment land assessment are noted, the Council will liaise further with DfI as part of its review of employment land across the district.
- 5.65 The Council will follow up with the NIHE to explore the development of social clauses through the LDP process.

6.0 Social: Accommodating People, Improving Health and Wellbeing

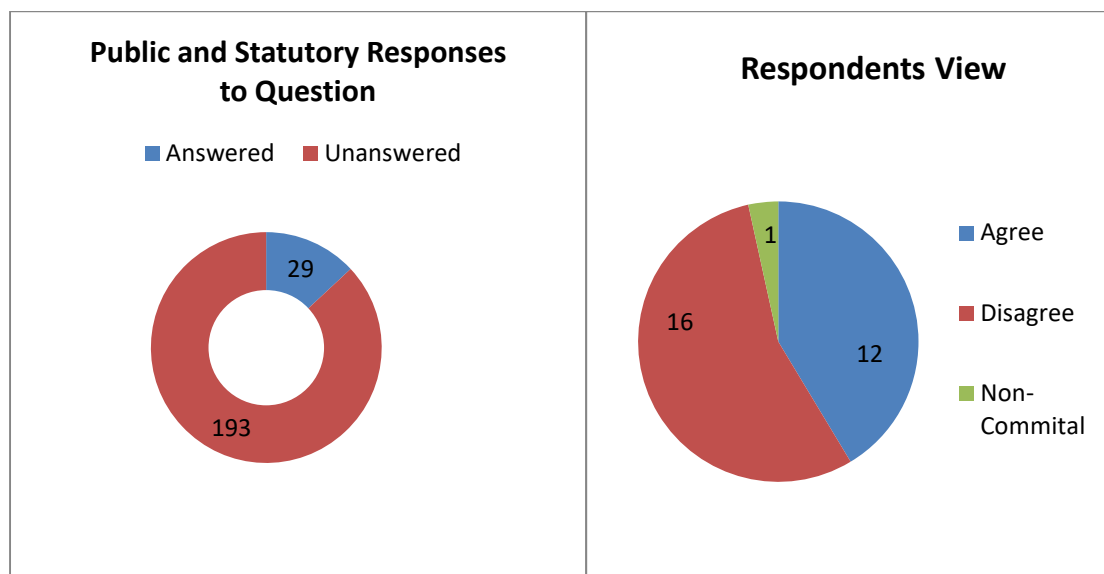
General Comments regarding Social Chapter

- 6.1 Achieving balanced communities and strengthening community cohesion is one of the major themes underpinning the RDS and SPPS. A number of responses were received in respect of these issues with a number of representations suggesting that the LDP should include a policy that would ensure an appropriate mix of housing in terms of housing size, type and tenure. Comments also reflected the district's aging population, smaller households and the important role the private rental market plays in meeting the district's housing need.
- 6.2 Within the RSPB response they highlighted their disappointment that the social chapter contained no reference to either the environment or issues

surrounding biodiversity. They also emphasised that Key Issues 8 and 9 did not go far enough in addressing long-term sustainability.

Key Issue 6: Social Housing Needs

Council's Preferred Option – Option 4 - *Set out a strategic policy requiring all housing sites, over a certain threshold to provide a proportion of social housing along with the zoning of social housing (not large scale) together with facilitating social housing as a proportion of larger housing schemes through key site requirements*



Public Responses

6.3 The majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on social housing, 27 responses (13% of all public responses) did address this issue. Within this group 10 respondents (37%) agreed with the Council's preferred option, 16 respondents (59%) disagreed and 1 respondent (4%) held mixed views.

6.4 Comments received focused on a number of issues:

- Social housing need is currently concentrated within Newry City, Newcastle, Warrenpoint and Downpatrick while many rural communities have been identified as requiring social/affordable housing needs.
- Mixed tenure can add vibrancy and character to settlements while also enhancing the overall social value.
- Including social housing within larger housing schemes would enable an even distribution throughout the district (Matrix).
- Mixed tenure ensures that the larger schemes will remain financially viable.
- Any new policy needs flexibility to allow Key Site Requirements to be set aside if it is demonstrated that there is no need for social housing (TSA).

- Policy must also consider the impact of such a requirement on the viability of the housing market while also taking into account whether this requirement makes development too onerous and therefore creates a negative impact on the deliverability of schemes (Turley).
- Social housing should be delivered on a case by case basis (O'Callaghan Planning).
- Provision of more sheltered housing for the elderly would free up existing family stock (Saintfield Development Association).
- Council should not succumb to increased pressures from developers seeking the removal of social housing requirements.
- Council should produce further evidence on this topic including the compilation of an audit which would assess the number of empty and derelict housing units within the district.

Statutory Consultee Responses

- 6.5 The majority of statutory consultees (12 submissions, 86% of all statutory consultees) made no comment on the options provided while 2 agreed with the preferred option.
- 6.6 While the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) agreed with the preferred option they advised that the term affordable housing should be used rather than social housing. This terminology supports a policy which can provide housing options not only to prospective social housing tenants but to households who cannot readily access owner-occupation. They referred to the definition of affordable housing included within the SPPS as social and intermediate housing provided by a registered housing association as being more appropriate and user friendly.
- 6.7 NIHE believe that affordable housing should be defined as a substantial community benefit and would therefore welcome the retention of policies OS1 of PPS8 and CTY5 of PPS21 which facilitate social housing in areas of high housing need (reference to this in key issue 10).
- 6.8 NIHE would also welcome the promotion of affordable housing within mixed tenure developments as this assists in the elimination of social exclusion, area based deprivation, cycles of deprivation and poverty and help towards the regeneration of many areas. They also made the following suggestions:
- Further to consideration of the high number of committed housing sites they suggested that the threshold for sites which provide a level of social/affordable housing should be lowered from the proposed figure of 50 units.

- The LDP should have a built in mechanism which would allow the affordable housing proportion to be increased if an acute need is demonstrated.
 - Sites artificially divided to avoid provision of affordable housing should be refused.
 - They also sought clarification on the term 'special housing needs' which is used in paragraph 6.11 of the POP document.
- 6.9 SSE agreed with the preferred option but did not offer any additional comments.
- 6.10 While DfI welcomed the acknowledgement by Council of the importance of meeting affordable/social housing need they suggested that the LDP should consider exploring, alongside NIHE, whether a projection of social housing need can be provided over a longer period to align with the lifetime of the plan. DfI also made reference to the strategic policy for developer contributions and the requirement for associated planning agreements. They therefore suggested that any policy approach developed should be subject to a viability assessment.
- 6.11 While HED made no comment on the individual options proposed they took the opportunity to highlight the potential for the re-use of vacant or under used historic assets to provide social housing, provided that policy is in place to ensure the appropriate redevelopment and protection of the asset.

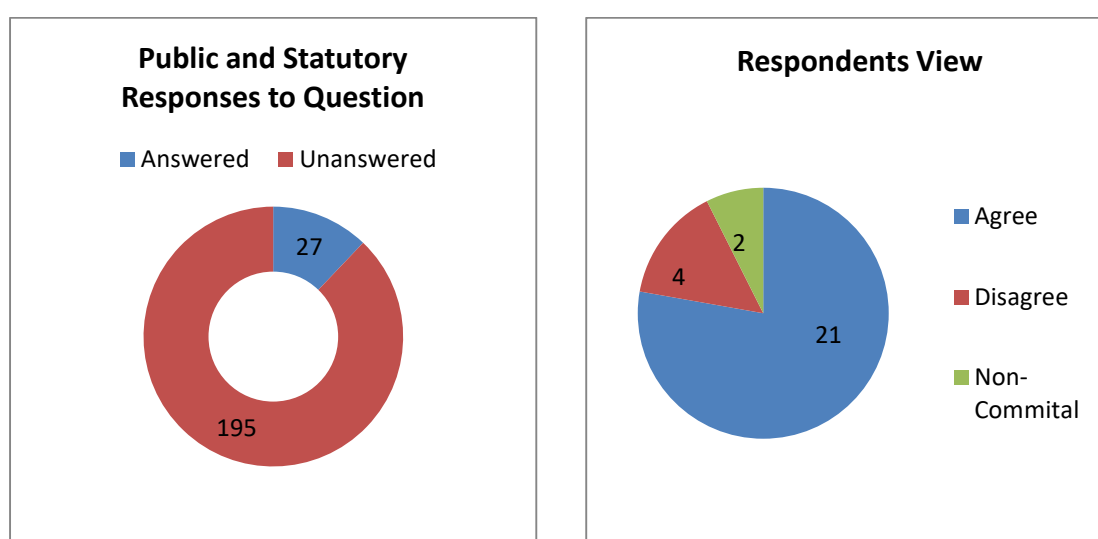
Our Consideration

- 6.12 This key issue has highlighted conflicting and opposing opinions, nonetheless affordable housing provision will form an important element of the overall growth strategy for the district.
- 6.13 Affordable housing forms an important element of the overall growth strategy and we will therefore continue to work closely with the relevant partners to ensure the most accurate and up-to-date figures for social/affordable housing need, including the districts Housing Needs Assessment inform our evidence base. The deliverability of providing such housing will also require detailed investigations as we progress towards Plan Strategy. Consideration will also be given to the formulation of policy which does not allow sites to be artificially divided to avoid providing affordable housing.
- 6.14 The observations in relation to development thresholds, proportions, viability and types of affordable and housing (units and developer contributions) are noted.
- 6.15 The comments made in relation to the definition of 'social housing' are also noted. We will carry out further detailed research and discuss this issue with

the relevant partners as the plan progresses. It is acknowledged that the definition around social/affordable housing requires clarification to ensure that all relevant bodies are working within the same parameters. It is also envisaged that further evidence will be gathered to identify the appropriate mix of housing to be facilitated through the LDP while aligning with the guidance detailed within the SPPS.

Key Issue 7: Housing in the Countryside

Council's Preferred Option – Option 2 - *Adopt the existing policy approach but in addition provide clarification and minor changes to current policies to address a number of shortfalls*



Public Responses

- 6.16 The majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on housing in the countryside, 23 responses (11% of all public responses) did address this issue. Within this group 18 respondents (78%) agreed with the Council's preferred option, 4 respondents (17%) disagreed and 1 respondent (4%) held mixed views.
- 6.17 A number of groups and agents responded with the comments received focusing on a number of issues:
- The number of rural housing approvals has dropped significantly under PPS21 and therefore they would support a similar strategy which seeks to maintain the quality and character of the rural landscape (Mourne Heritage Trust).
 - Neither of the options presented in Key Issue 7 can be supported as they are too restrictive.

- Greater flexibility is needed in line with the review of PPS21 (O'Callaghan Planning) and to accommodate the district's rural population.
- Higher protection to sensitive rural landscapes which are home to sensitive habitats and species is needed (National Trust & RSPB).
- No deviation from the current countryside policy should be considered.

Statutory Consultee responses

6.18 The majority of statutory consultees (10 submissions, 71% of all statutory consultees) made no comment on the options provided. Of those that did comment 3 agreed and 1 disagreed with the preferred option.

6.19 Housing Executive

- Due to the on-going review of the SPPS there is insufficient information available for them to support Option 2.
- The LDP should aim to limit the growth of dispersed, single dwellings in the countryside. This is of particular relevance when considered against an aging society and the high level of children residing in the district.
- Rural housing should be primarily directed to villages and small settlements.
- Housing Executive would welcome an exceptions policy similar to that contained within CTY5 of PPS21.

6.20 DfI welcome the acknowledgement that any changes should support the Councils strategic housing allocation for the district. They do however consider that the opportunities provided within the SPPS provide the appropriate balance between managing growth to achieve sustainable patterns of growth and supporting a vibrant rural community and economy.

6.21 DfI have sought further clarification on any changes proposed and have therefore emphasised that any proposed variation or local adjustment to regional policy would need to be justified by providing appropriate evidence.

6.22 While supporting the Councils preferred option Historic Environment Division consider that it is important that any minor changes to the existing policy be clearly justified on the basis of substantive evidence.

Our Response

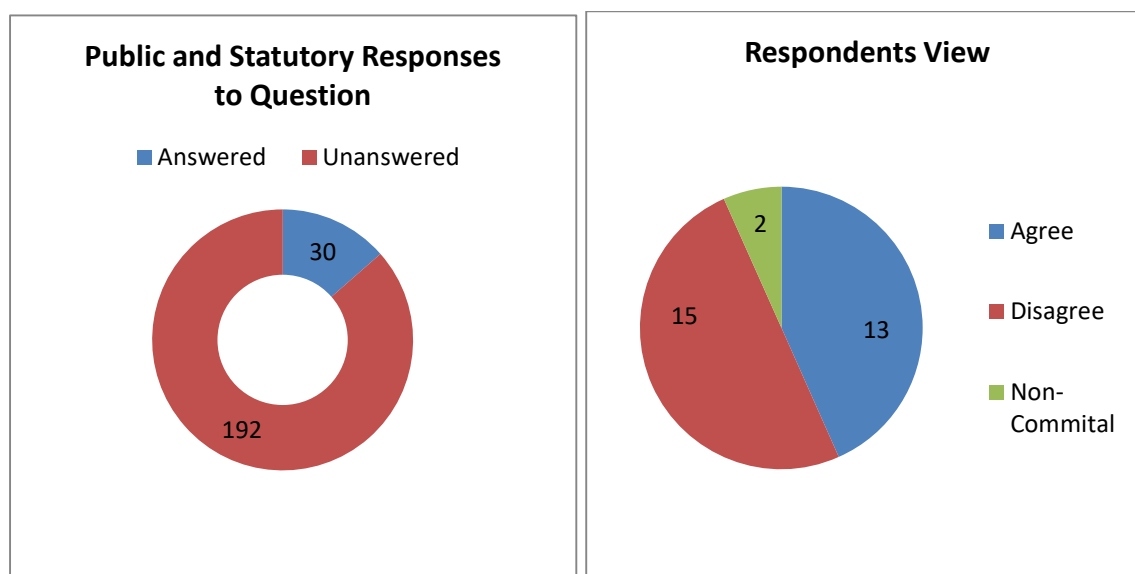
6.23 We recognise the importance of our landscape and the important role it plays as a heritage and tourism asset. We will therefore seek to provide appropriate protection and conservation of the countryside through the LDP process.

6.24 Potential policy amendments will be informed by further research, on-going engagement with the relevant statutory consultees and the comments

received in response to this consultation. Consideration will also be given to DfI's review of PPS21 on its publication.

Key Issue 8: Future Proofing and Housing for All

Council's Preferred Option – Option 3 - *Introduce new strategic policy covering lifetime homes and wheelchair accessible housing to require the provision of an appropriate supply of homes for children, older people and those with physical disability.*



Public Responses

6.25 The majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on future proofing and housing for all while 26 responses (13% of all public responses) did address this issue. Within this group 10 respondents (38%) agreed with the Council's preferred option, 15 respondents (58%) disagreed and 1 respondent (4%) held mixed views.

6.26 Issues raised by the general public included:

- As the district has an aging population there is a need to meet these demands with age appropriate and lifetime homes (WYG Planning & Environment).
- The implementation of Option 3 would encourage lifetime homes and wheelchair accessible homes (Matrix).
- Additional lands will need to be zoned to accommodate these types of development (O'Callaghan Planning).
- Sinn Féin, The National Trust and Confederation of Community Groups are in support of this preferred option, with the Confederation recommending that the proposed percentage allocations for wheelchair accessible homes

should be raised from 5% to 15% and lifetime homes increased from 20% to 33%.

- Turley Planning would not be supportive of such a policy approach as it does not appear to be founded on a robust evidence base.
- Additional regulations will have a negative impact on the house building industry. It could discourage development, inflate house prices and lead to land banking. (O'Callaghan Planning)
- Does this policy not go beyond the realms of planning? (O'Callaghan Planning).
- Implementation of these standards will also delay processing times for applications. (O'Callaghan Planning)
- If such a policy is implemented why would it only impact on large scale developments? (O'Callaghan Planning)

Statutory Consultee Responses

6.27 The majority of statutory consultees (10 submissions, 71% of all statutory consultees) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did comment 3 agreed and 1 disagreed with the preferred option.

6.28 While the Housing Executive agreed with the principle detailed within the preferred option they would like to see this option strengthened to requiring all new housing to be developed to Lifetime Homes standards.

- The proposed percentages detailed in the Preferred Option would only achieve minimal numbers of Lifetime Homes being constructed due to the small number of housing schemes over 50 units being developed within the district.
- Option 3 does not go far enough to meet the demand for this type of housing.
- The Housing Executive would be in favour of encouraging 5% of new private sector housing being developed to meet wheelchair standards.
- Delivering Lifetime Homes standards is often a requirement for all housing development plans in GB with additional costs of delivering lifetime homes minimal.
- Would welcome an increase in the number of apartments and smaller unit developments within the district to reflect household sizes and a policy which deals specifically with supported housing.
- Would like to see housing policy implemented which would meet the full range of housing need within the district taking into consideration the specific needs of disadvantaged and marginalised groups, including Section 75 groups and Traveller accommodation.

- The LDP should include a policy for supported housing. This issue is not projected on a long-term basis and therefore the Housing Executive recommends that the formation of a development management policy which facilitates the prioritisation of these schemes as the most appropriate mechanism to address this issue. They also suggest that a certain amount of flexibility should be shown with regards to design standards when assessing these applications given the specific nature of supported accommodation.
- 6.29 DfI welcomes the suggested policy approach which promotes the SPPS objective of quality housing and in doing so supports the creation of balanced communities. They recommend that Council should liaise with the Department of Finance, Building Regulations Unit for seeking additional advice on required standards and should also demonstrate that consideration has been given to the financial viability of the preferred option. They also advise that Council should demonstrate that they have considered the implications of this approach in combination with Key Issue 6 – Social Housing.
- 6.30 SSE agreed with the preferred option but did not offer any additional comments.
- 6.31 DfC Historic Environment Division welcome the direction taken in the Councils preferred option but reiterate that such an approach does not compromise heritage assets or their setting.

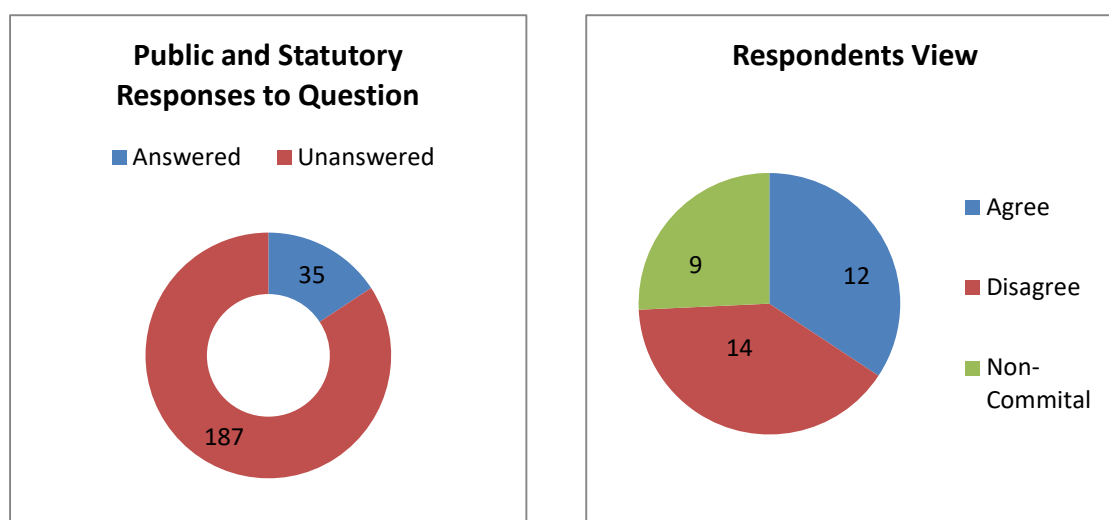
Our Consideration

- 6.32 The LDP must take into consideration the differing opinions received in response to this Key Issue and in-particular the significant proportion of responses which were in favour of a more robust policy approach to lifetime homes. It is recognised that the district has an aging population and there is an associated need to ensure appropriate accommodation is provided to allow older people to remain integrated into their existing communities. It is therefore anticipated that further research will be undertaken to assess/analysis the deliverability and viability of developing such a policy approach.
- 6.33 The preferred option was seen by many as being too lenient with many advocating that lifetime home standards should be applied to all new housing across all tenures. We will therefore continue to liaise with NIHE, the Housing Associations and other key stakeholders to build a robust evidence base which will demonstrate the local need for such units. Detailed research and engagement will also be undertaken to explore the implications that may be

associated with a more stringent policy approach before drafting the Plan Strategy.

Key Issue 9: Integrated Renewable Energy and Passive Solar Design

Council's Preferred Option – Option 3 - *The integration of renewable energy and/or passive solar design should be a requirement in certain new development, eg public sector and on private developments over a certain threshold.*



Public Responses

6.34 The majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on the integration of renewable energy and passive solar design, 32 responses (15% of all public responses) did address this issue. Within this group 10 respondents (31%) agreed with the Council's preferred option, 14 respondents (44%) disagreed and 8 respondents (25%) held mixed views. Comments received under this issue included the following:

- Further consideration should be given to the proposed development thresholds over which renewable energy and passive solar technologies will be a requirement (WYG).
- The wording of policy should potentially be softened to include 'where possible' in order that it does not preclude development (WYG).
- While Turley Associates support the principle of integrating renewable energy's they do not believe the proposed thresholds are supported by a robust evidence base.
- National Trust supports integration of renewables and/or passive solar in certain new developments over agreed thresholds

- Larger developers and developments should not be penalised and therefore it is proposed that an assessment should be carried out on a case by case basis rather than a specific threshold (MJM).
- Requirements of this nature are straying beyond the realms of planning control, will discourage building and will result in additional costs which will all impact negatively on the affordability of new homes. Current policy provision is adequate (O'Callaghan & TSA).
- RSPB does not agree with the Council's conclusions that this policy could also include development in the countryside and in particular dwellings in the countryside. They believe that such technologies and principles could also be employed to dwellings within settlements and small residential schemes.
- Mourne Heritage Trust agree that incorporating renewables should be a requirement within all major public and private sector developments.
- NIRIG believe that the preferred option sends a strong signal that decarbonisation is a priority for the Council.
- Some groups and organisations would support a more stringent policy which would integrate this type of policy into all planning applications. (Saintfield Development Association & Confederation of Community Groups).
- This policy should be abandoned in favour of Geothermal heating and insulation enhancement of new and existing building stock.
- Over a prolonged period of time a system which sees the integration of renewable and solar energy into all dwellings may help to address the above average levels of fuel poverty within the district (C. Gibson).
- Sinn Féin support the preferred option and suggest that the public sector should be leading the way in becoming more sustainable and reducing their carbon footprint.
- All new building should be built to the highest energy efficiency standards.

Statutory Consultee Responses

- 6.35 The majority of statutory consultees (11 submissions, 79% of all statutory consultees) made no comment on the options provided. Among those that did comment 2 agreed with the preferred option and 1 held mixed views.
- 6.36 DfI Strategic Planning agree with the principle of the preferred option but also take this opportunity to advise the Council that they should be satisfied that their evidence base supports this approach. Therefore a justification for the proposed thresholds would be welcomed.
- 6.37 Housing Executive would welcome a policy which would allow householders to benefit from permitted development who wish to use renewable energy.

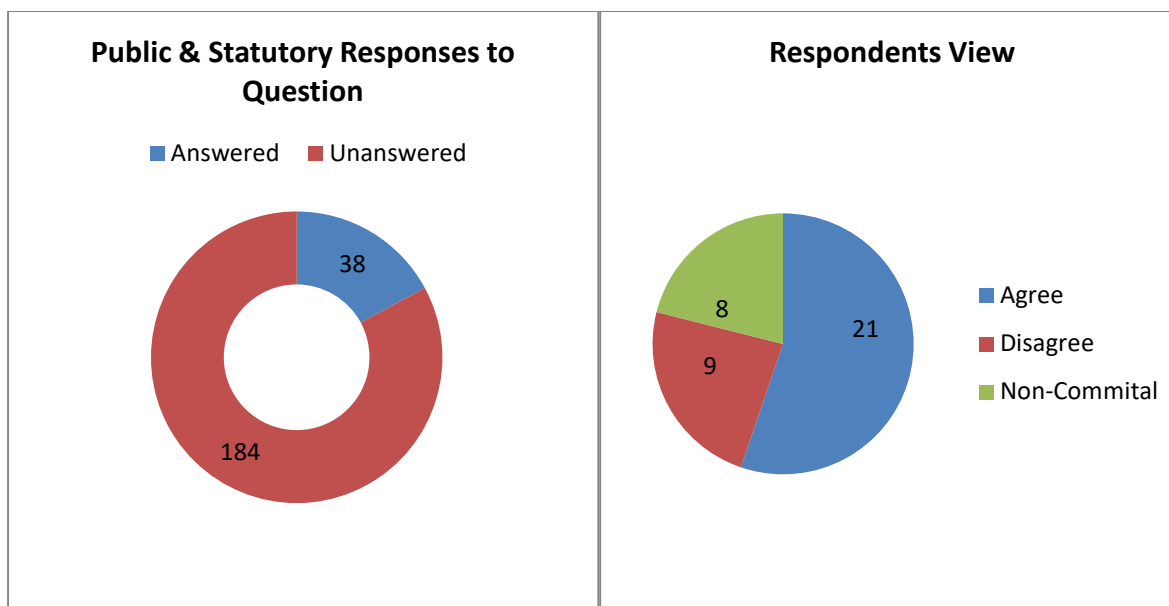
- 6.38 NIEA has concerns that the provision for green and blue infrastructure has not been brought forward as an option within this key issue given the clear relationship which exist. Recognition should be given to forming linkages of wildlife corridors, pedestrian routes and cycle-ways and encouraging biodiversity.
- 6.39 NIEA – Natural Division remains concerned as to how the Council proposes to control such developments in the absence of areas of constraint on renewable energy.
- 6.40 SSE agreed with the preferred option but did not offer any additional comments

Our Response

- 6.41 We welcome the support given to the preferred option for renewable energy and passive solar design but remain mindful that a considerable proportion of responses received were opposed to the preferred option. It is therefore important that we take into consideration all opinions and make a balanced decision on this matter.
- 6.42 Within this theme we have undertook/strived to reflect some of the wider 'climate change' issues and demonstrate how incorporating the use of renewables at the outset of development can make a positive contribution. This is an area of work where it is accepted that additional research is required to ensure that there is a strong evidence base to support the preferred policy direction. The proposed thresholds will therefore be given further consideration as we continue to work with key consultees and strengthen our evidence base as we move towards developing a balanced strategic renewable energy policy.

Key Issue 10: Open Space Provision

Council's Preferred Option – Option 2 *Identify and evaluate current open space provision in the district. Protect existing and any subsequent additional land required for open space, sport and recreation.*



Albert Basin

- 6.43 Off the 208 public respondents 98 or 47% of responses referred specifically to the Albert Basin in Newry. Off these 98 responses only 3 made specific reference to Key Issue 10 or the Preferred Options Paper with the vast majority exclusively requesting the Albert Basin/Peoples Park to be rezoned as open parkland space which should include a forested area, park and museum to provide for the wider Newry area and potential visitors

Public Responses

- 6.44 The majority of respondents agreed in principle with the Preferred Option.
- 6.45 The majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on the provision of open space, 32 responses (15 % of all public responses) did address this issue. Within this group 17 respondents (53%) agreed with the Council's preferred option, 8 respondents (25%) disagreed and 7 respondents (22%) held mixed views.
- 6.46 Other issues raised by the general public included the following:
- Whilst many supported the principle of protecting and enhancing open space some respondents suggested that not all areas are worthy of protection and in some instances add to anti-social behaviour and increased pollution. The RSPB however disagree with these comments and are of the opinion that the quality and accessibility of all areas are equally important highlighting the important role they play in protecting and conserving biodiversity.

- The RSPB also suggest that it would be helpful to include a list of all areas of open space within the district and propose that landscape strategies should be submitted alongside planning applications.
- Concerns have been raised by RPS that the POP does not indicate any proposals to reassess the policy criteria in respect of future development of open space.
- They also have concerns that all existing open space will be protected against future development without evaluating the open space provision across the district. Other representations expressed disappointment that a full open space assessment was not undertaken prior to the publication of the POP document in order to inform the Key Issues and options (Lagan Homes).
- Consideration must be given to the suitability of current open space and the benefits it provides to the community, this may allow for improvements to be made to existing/underperforming open space and areas of play provision (Mourne Heritage Trust & Turley)
- The POP does not indicate any proposal to reassess the policy criteria in respect of the future development of existing open space areas.
- More flexibility should be built into the policy considerations which would allow for future redevelopment of existing open space where there would be significant strategic benefits to the district (RPS & TSA). The Confederation of Community Groups also share this opinion as they have suggested that compliance with policies outlined within the Plan Strategy should not be followed rigidly and should be more advisory.
- Open space provision should relate to the proposed population projections and housing requirements (Lagan Homes).
- Concerns have been raised that the POP appears to suggest that all existing open space will be protected against future development without evaluating the open space provision (RPS).
- Consideration should also be given to alternative provision (e.g. off-site contributions).
- The LDP must consider the potential for zoning new land for biodiversity gains – which would link into the statutory duty of the Council to further biodiversity. Consideration must also be given to the additional benefits of open space through eco-system services such as improved air quality and water management, flood alleviation, urban heat island mitigation and mental and physical health benefits (Woodland Trust).
- The National Trust recommend that in identifying and evaluating current open space provision that the Natural Capital Accounting Method is applied. They also reference the SPPS in relation to designating landscape wedges, public access to and along the coastline, sympathetically designed linear

open spaces for walkers and cyclists and the importance of sustaining and enhancing biodiversity.

Statutory Consultee Responses

- 6.47 A number of Statutory consultees 4 submissions (29%) supported the Councils preferred option, 1 (7%) disagreed with the preferred option, 1 held mixed views and the remainder 8 (57%) had no comment to make on the options provided.
- 6.48 While welcoming the preferred option DfI Strategic Planning advise that the re-evaluation of the current open space provision should align with strategic policy.
- 6.49 Other issues highlighted within the Statutory Consultee responses included the following;
- While the Housing Executive support the Councils preferred option they highlight the benefits of redeveloping areas of open space which are affected by anti-social behaviour.
 - The Housing Executive would advocate the inclusion of a similar policy to OS1 of PPS8 within the LDP. This policy currently allows for redevelopment of lands where it can be demonstrated that this would bring substantial community benefits.
 - While HED's response to this key issue remained quite neutral they highlight the importance of working collaboratively with bordering Councils to protect and promote shared historic environment attractions such as canal towpaths and disused railway infrastructure.
 - The Historic Monuments Council strongly recommend that the value of historic assets as open, accessible spaces for recreation, education and enjoyment should be articulated more clearly in the POP.
 - SSE agreed with the preferred option but did not offer any additional comments.
 - NIEA Natural Environmental Division have concerns that the provision for green and blue infrastructure has not been brought forward as an option within this Key Issue
 - DfI Roads make reference to the important linkages required between open space and Key Issue 17 in order to enhance the key objective of improving health and wellbeing.
 - Historic Monuments Council made no formal comment on the options provided but strongly recommended that the value of the historic assets as open, accessible spaces for recreation, education and enjoyment should be articulated more clearly in the POP.
 -

Our Response

- 6.50 We welcome the overall support for the preferred option to protect existing and any subsequent additional lands identified for open space, sport and recreation. The Council intends to carry out a detailed open space audit in preparation for the Plan Strategy. The LDP will seek to protect open space throughout the district and ensure that new developments make appropriate provision or contributions to open space facilities.
- 6.51 We recognise the benefits of open space in protecting and conserving the district's biodiversity along with the gains they offer in relation to landscape and air quality and preventing some forms of flood risk.
- 6.52 We will continue to work with adjoining Councils and other relevant partners to further protect valuable open space resources while seeking to enhance accessibility and the improvement of associated facilities.
- 6.53 The comments on developments contributions are duly noted and the LDP will continue to research the most appropriate mechanism for their deliverability.
- 6.54 Where specific locations have been suggested for open space we will take account of these as we progress towards the preparation of the Local Policies Plan.

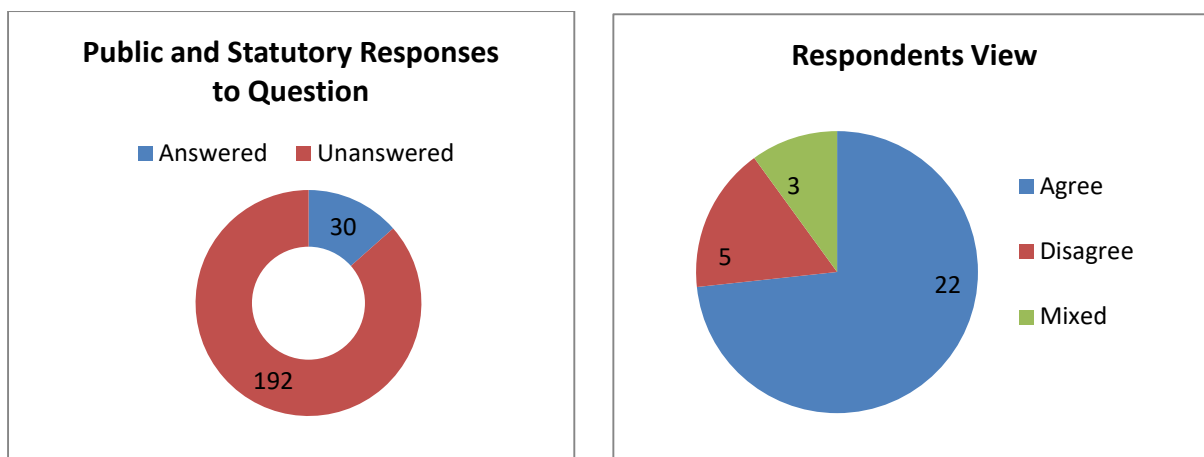
7.0 Economic: Creating Jobs, Promoting Prosperity and Supporting the Transportation Network and other Infrastructure

General Comments

- 7.1 NIEA Natural Environment Division had a concern on the lack of comment on the need for waste management infrastructure (existing or additional) or where it might be located.
- 7.2 DfI Strategic Planning highlighted the absence of options in relation to retailing and town centres, public utilities as well as waste management.

Key Issue 11: Economic Development in the Countryside

Council's Preferred Option – Option 2 - *Consider the scope under the SPPS to allow a more flexible approach – provide small scale workshop style development in the countryside which is ancillary to an existing dwelling.*



Public Responses

- 7.3 The majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on Economic Development in the Countryside, 26 responses (12% of all public responses) did address this issue. Within this group 20 respondents (77%) agreed with the Council's preferred option, 4 respondents (15%) disagreed and 2 respondents (8%) held mixed views.
- 7.4 Invest NI were supportive of the Council's preferred option acknowledging that small rural business should be afforded some opportunity to develop and grow in their locale. They highlighted that the cost implications of moving a small rural business to a larger settlement can be prohibitive, and limited local growth would enable such a move to be affordable in due course. Other comments received included:
- Support for the preferred option provided that new buildings do not adversely impact on the landscape or natural environment (National Trust)
 - Development should locate in towns/villages first and only in countryside as last resort.
 - Existing policy unduly restrictive in a district which is primarily a micro enterprise economy. There is a need to stimulate entrepreneurship and reduce the need for commuting for work (Woodland Trust)
 - Given prevalence of self-employed, small business and primary industries in the district need greater support for new development sites (Sinn Féin)
 - Need to define 'small workshop', proposed floorspace restriction should be increased to 200-250m².
 - Economic benefits outweighing environmental under this issue, greater recognition should be given to the natural environment and the need to avoid areas that are sensitive to change (RSPB)
 - Disagree, current policy approach should be maintained.
 - Disagree, preferred approach does not protect sustainability of mining and manufacturing business in the countryside (QPANI).

Statutory Consultee Responses

- 7.5 The majority of statutory consultees (10 submissions, 71% of all statutory consultees) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did comment agreed (2), disagreed (1) or had mixed views (1).
- 7.6 DfI Strategic Planning stated that the SPPS seeks to restrict new building for economic proposals in the interests of rural amenity and wider sustainability objectives.
- 7.7 DfI Strategic Planning requested greater detail on the nature of economic proposals likely to be considered acceptable. They highlighted that any exceptions to the guiding principle should be justified in line with circumstances set out in paragraph 6.88 of the SPPS.
- 7.8 DfC Historic Environment Division whilst neither supporting or disagreeing with the options listed stated that there was a further opportunity to consider the re-use and repair of vacant buildings, and a more robust justification provided as to why existing buildings could not be used and a new build required.
- 7.9 NIHE supported appropriate small-scale workshops or farm diversification projects within the countryside as long as they are appropriate in scale and sensitive to the environment, amenity and rural landscapes.

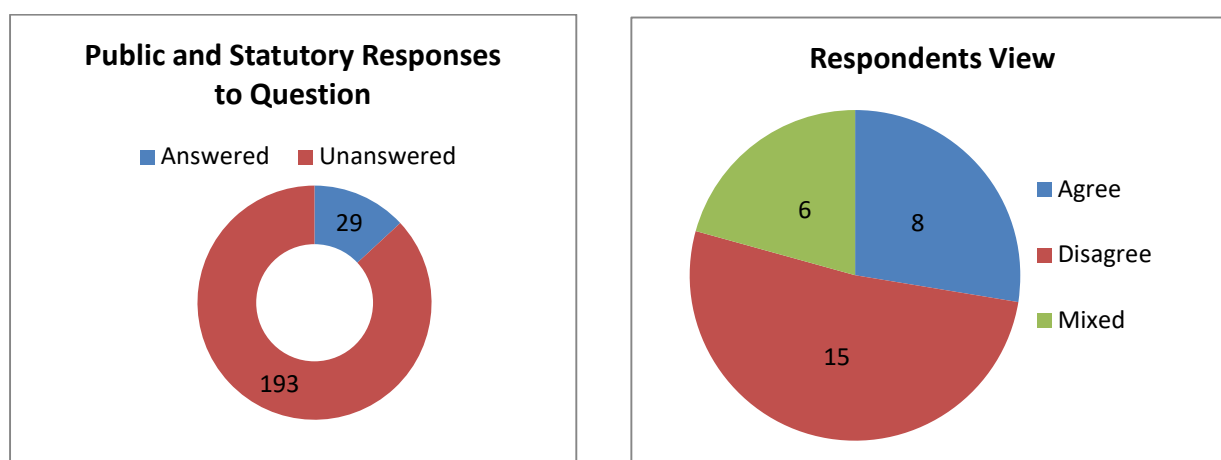
Our Consideration

- 7.10 The Council acknowledges the scope of the SPPS policy as set out by DfI, and will engage further with DfI around the nature of economic proposals that could be supported through local planning policy.
- 7.11 The Council welcomes the recognition of the importance of self-employed and small businesses to the district's economy. The Council recognises the need to balance economic development and environmental protection.
- 7.12 The issue of sustainable development is raised by those holding opposing views on economic development proposals in both urban and rural areas. The POP options have been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), and an SA Interim Report and Scoping report accompanied the main POP document. As part of the preparation of the LDP Plan Strategy all policies and proposals will be subject to testing through the SA process.

Key Issue 12: Alternative Uses on Land Zoned for Economic Development

Council's Preferred Option – Option 2 - *Degree of flexibility – Allow a limited number of alternative compatible use(s)/business(es) falling outside Part B 'Industrial and*

Business Use' of the Planning (Use Classes) Order (NI) 2015 within zoned economic land.



Public Responses

- 7.13 The majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on alternative uses on land zoned for economic development, 25 responses (12% of all public responses) did address this issue. Within this group 7 respondents (28%) agreed with the Council's preferred option, 14 respondents (56%) disagreed and 4 respondents (16%) held mixed views.
- 7.14 Invest NI would caution the Council against adopting a blanket approach, as this has the potential to lessen the attractiveness of employment/industrial land to those businesses requiring a contaminant free environment. Instead consideration could be given to specifying certain areas where alternative compatible economic uses/business uses could be acceptable.
- 7.15 Comments received under this issue include the following:
- Option 1, safeguarding land zoned for economic development in line with current policy reduces the potential for the loss of amenity/impact on existing business operations.
 - Option 3, greater flexibility should be allowed.
 - This does not have to include Class 1 retail use. There should be greater flexibility around re-use of existing buildings and residential use should be considered.
 - A sequential approach would not be appropriate where it is not located in close proximity to the town centre. A certain amount of ancillary facilities, appropriate to the zoning could be permitted without impacting the town centre.
 - The Council should allow alternative use on employment land if the land is not a vital local industrial land resource and there is

sufficient remaining employment land in the locality (as per 1997 version of PPS4).

- Including 'sui generis' uses could be open to manipulation which would not accord with the intention of the policy. Whilst still supportive of Option 2 this comment highlighted a need for further consideration and careful wording of this policy.
- There is a need to support not only city centre first but also consider how district and local centres such as Fiveways/Damolly and Warrenpoint Road can service local needs.

Statutory Consultee Responses

- 7.16 The majority of statutory consultees (10 submissions, 71% of all statutory consultees) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did comment agreed (1), disagreed (1) or had mixed views (2).
- 7.17 DfI emphasised the importance of protecting land and buildings which are identified and retained for economic development to ensure a sufficient appropriate supply. They stated that planning permission should therefore not normally be granted for proposals that would result in the loss of land zoned for this purpose.
- 7.18 The NIHE stated that they would like to see mixed use development including residential use included under alternative uses on land zoned for economic development.

Our Consideration

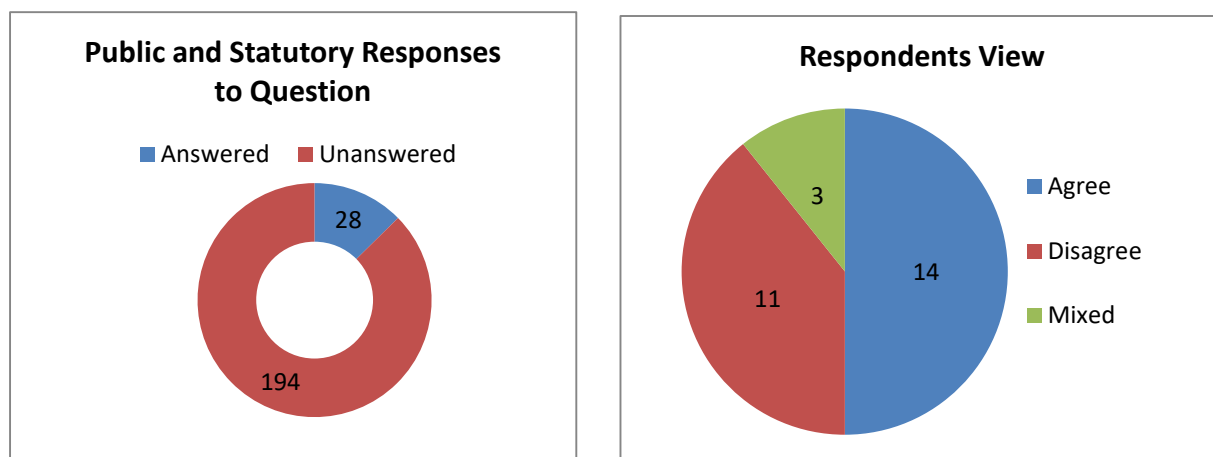
- 7.19 The Council acknowledges the general approach of regional planning policy to protect land zoned for economic development purposes. The Council will engage further with DfI regarding any alternative uses it considers to be compatible.
- 7.20 The Council as highlighted under Option 3 are aware of the danger of permitting a more flexible approach on land zoned for economic development. The Council agree that any local policy which does permit a degree of flexibility does need careful wording to ensure it is correctly interpreted and applied.
- 7.21 The needs of city/town centres, district and local centres will be considered in conjunction with this issue, and as part of full review of retailing and hierarchy of centres.
- 7.22 Comments received seeking a wider approach to include residential use and re-use of existing industrial buildings are noted.

Key Issue 13: Tourism Development

General Comment

The district's assets should be part of Ireland's Ancient East initiative.

Council's Preferred Option – Option 2 - *Retain existing policy led approach as set out in PPS16 with minor amendments and bring forward Tourist Opportunity Zones.*



Public Responses

- 7.23 The majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on the tourism development key issue, 24 responses (12% of all public responses) did address this issue. Within this group 13 respondents (54%) agreed with the Council's preferred option, 10 respondents (42%) disagreed and 1 respondent (4%) held mixed views.
- 7.24 The Mourne Heritage Trust agreed with the Council's preferred option. They suggested that Tourist Opportunity Zones (TOZs) could be appropriate at key entry points to the Mourne uplands: Trassey Valley, Bloody Bridge, Carrick Little/Annalong Valley. Silent Valley Mountain Park and Forest Parks were also put forward as TOZs.
- 7.25 The National Trust held that TOZs, if brought forward, should only be identified in appropriate locations where there was pre-existing development and planned infrastructure proposals. They emphasised the need to protect tourism assets, and to work with adjoining local authorities to ensure a consistency of approach.
- 7.26 QPANI suggested industrial heritage be given recognition, particularly the mining heritage around historic granite industry within the Mournes.
- 7.27 Other points raised included:

- Identification of Cranfield, Warrenpoint, Rostrevor and new Newry park as TOZs.
- Support but need to consider tourism proposals that fall outside any proposed TOZs.
- Disagree with preferred option – it is unclear how tourism will be sustainable and set within environmental limits through the creation of TOZs.
- Need to support the delivery of hotel accommodation, including Downpatrick, and increase focus on outdoor activities, culture, arts, live music and sport.
- Tourism has important role in urban regeneration.
- TOZs are unnecessary, should address through policy, just need presumption in favour of certain development.

Statutory Consultee Responses

- 7.28 The majority of statutory consultees (10 submissions, 71% of all statutory consultees) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did comment agreed (1), disagreed (1) or had mixed views (2).
- 7.29 DfI were non-committal in their response stating that without the precise detail of how the policy would be amended it was difficult to provide further comment. They did however make reference to the tourism signature destinations and absence of any reference to these under the proposed options. DfI also suggested the Council consider the link between retailing and tourism development.
- 7.30 The NIHE disagreed with the Council's preferred option. They suggested that tourism development should be primarily located in cities and towns to enhance regeneration and vibrancy of their centres.
- 7.31 DfC Historic Environment Division (HED) expressed mixed views, whilst welcoming the promotion of the historic environment and heritage assets as key tourism destinations HED considered that an opportunity to put forward options focusing on specific tourist heritage assets (medieval or early Christian heritage) had been overlooked. In considering potential Tourist Opportunity Zones they stated there was a need to properly assess the historic environment evidence base. Also they noted the absence of any reference to aqua cultural activities including sailing and canoeing.
- 7.32 The Historic Monuments Councils also expressed mixed views and emphasised importance of the district's heritage assets and landscape character in sustaining heritage led tourism.

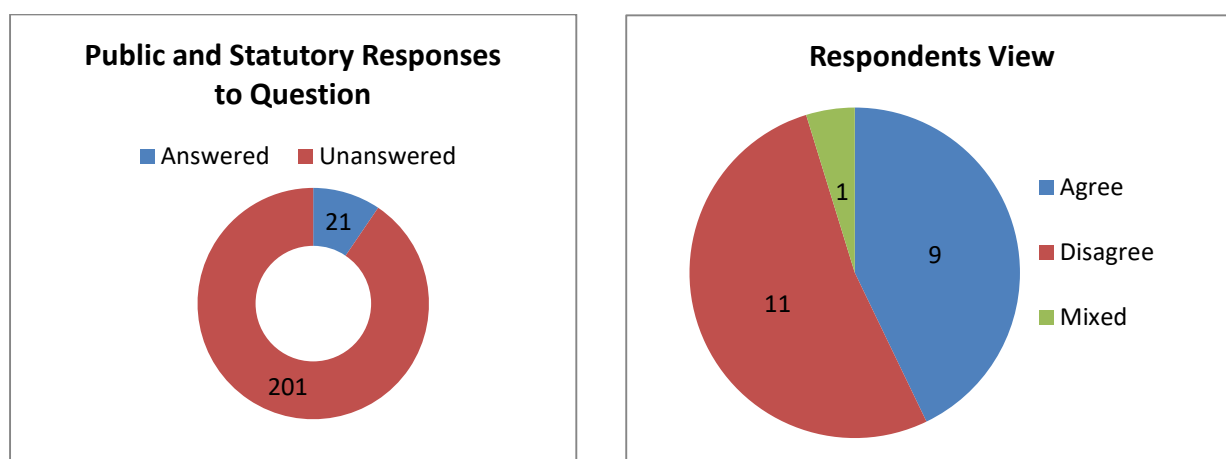
7.33 Louth County Council requested that the Plan Strategy provided for specific policies to protect and advance interlinked tourism policies.

Our Consideration

7.34 The Council welcomes the broad recognition that tourism is an important driver for the local economy. Whilst opinions were divided on how to best to support local tourism activity and deliver sustainable tourism projects through the LDP, the importance of protecting the district's assets be they the natural or historic environment was clearly articulated. The Council will further explore and carefully consider how LDP policies and designations can both protect and enhance the district's tourism assets.

Key Issue 14: Minerals Development

Council's Preferred Option – Option 3 - *Adopt a policy led approach and identify Mineral Safeguarding Zones.*



Public Responses

7.35 The vast majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on the issue of minerals development, only 15 respondents (7% of all public responses) did address this issue. Within this group 9 respondents (60%) agreed with the Council's preferred option, while 6 respondents (40%) disagreed.

7.36 The Quarry Products Association for NI⁵ were adamantly opposed to the current designated Areas of Constraint on Mineral Development (ACMDs). They considered that they were not based on an accurate balanced assessment taking into consideration economic and environmental aspects. They stated that all extractive operations, regardless of their location, should

⁵ QPANI has now rebranded to the Mineral Products Association NI (MPANI) as of the 1 January 2019.

be determined against a criteria based policy, with every application determined on its merits.

- 7.37 The National Trust did not support the identification of Mineral Safeguarding Zones (MSZs) and recommended the designation of ACMDs in line with the SPPS.
- 7.38 The RSPB favoured Option 4, designating both MSZs and ACMDs, stating that this approach had the potential to support minerals extraction whilst protecting the environment. In identifying ACMDs consideration should also be given to including species and habitats most at risk in terms of environmental impact.
- 7.39 The Woodland Trust also considered that Option 4 was the preferred approach, as this would provide the necessary balance between development in and protection of the natural environment.
- 7.40 The need for MSZs were acknowledged by the Mourne Heritage Trust. They also stated that if ACMDs were to be applied at a AONB boundary level it would be overly restrictive, however considered that ACMDs could be applied to defined areas below AONB wide level.
- 7.41 Agents acting on behalf of The Crown Estate whilst broadly supportive of the Council position expressed concern that MSZs by their nature would be limited in scope and could have unintended consequences of preventing exploration and mining activity outside the zones. They further stated it may be difficult, in certain instances, to identify with any great precision the protection zone that should be applied.
- 7.42 Other comments included:
- The Council should only adopt ACMDs (Sinn Féin).
 - Support preferred option but site restoration vital in Areas of High Scenic Value and vulnerable landscapes.
 - All environmental designated sites including AONBs should be afforded protection by ACMDs.

Statutory Consultee Responses

- 7.43 The majority of statutory consultees (8 submissions, 60% of all statutory consultees) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did either disagreed (5) or had mixed views (1). Amongst this group there was general support for the identification of ACMDs.
- 7.44 Making reference to the Council's statement that 'the absence of ACMDs has not had a significant environmental impact on the landscape' DfI Strategic

Planning advised that the Council should be satisfied that the evidence base supported this approach.

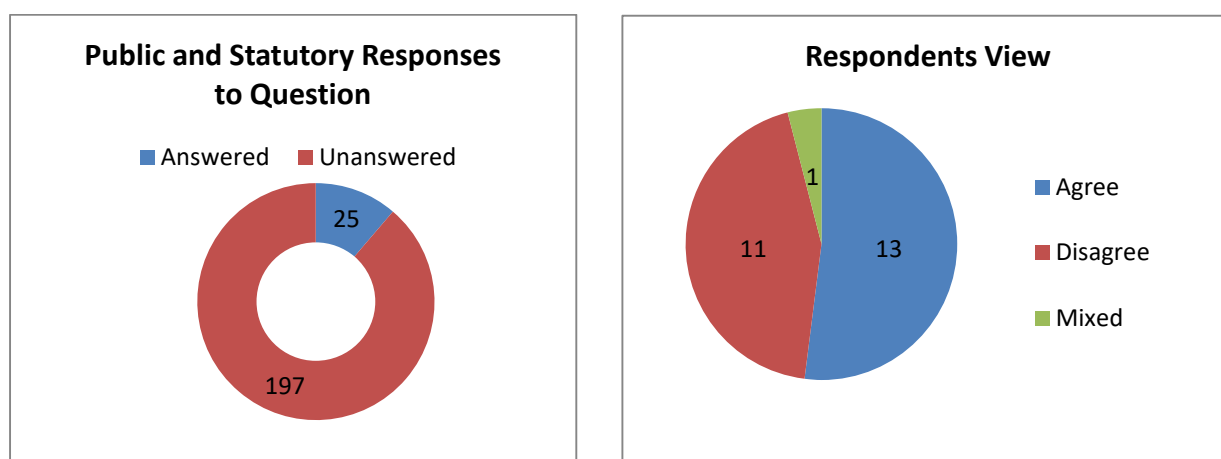
- 7.45 NIEA expressed concern that there appeared to be no ACMDs.
- 7.46 DfC Historic Environment Division considered that ACMDs should be provided to protect heritage assets from inappropriate mineral development. In addition they advised that the location and setting of heritage assets should be considered when identifying mineral safeguarding zones (MSZs). They expressed concern at the wording of Option 1, rather than "...may take account of factors such as landscape character....built heritage" it should read "...must take account.....".
- 7.47 The NIHE suggested that designating ACMDs in sensitive landscapes would be beneficial in affording them a high level of protection.

Our Consideration

- 7.48 The Council will continue to engage with the DfE and minerals industry in order to establish a robust evidence base upon which the need for MSZs and ACMDs can be justified. The Council acknowledge the need to balance the needs of mineral development and protection of the environment.

Key Issue 15: Proposed Transportation Schemes

Council's Preferred Option – Option 2 - *Protect land for non-strategic transportation schemes in the LDP which have been justified by DfI through a Local Transport Strategy for which there is a reasonable prospect of delivery.*



Public Responses

- 7.49 The majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on the identification of proposed transportation schemes, 21 responses (10% of all public responses) did address this issue. Within this group 10 respondents

(48%) agreed with the Council's preferred option, while 11 respondents (52%) disagreed. Further analysis shows that 8 out of the 11 respondents who disagreed wished to see all identified transportation schemes protected irrespective of their status.

- 7.50 Translink stated that there was a risk in not protecting all lands that have been identified as road schemes as it could result in lands previously zoned becoming inaccessible.
- 7.51 The woodland Trust suggested that transport schemes should be diverted away from ancient and long established woodlands and buffer zones (50 metres) implemented where schemes were adjacent to these woodlands.
- 7.52 The National Trust were supportive of the Council's preferred option and emphasised the need for schemes to be sensitively located to encourage sustainable tourism and avoid adverse impact on natural and built heritage assets. They stated that disused transport routes should also be protected.
- 7.53 The RSPB suggested there was a need for linked-up and co-ordinated approach to addressing strategic infrastructure issues which could aid sustainable development. There was a need for early dialogue with/between government departments. They also questioned the merits of releasing previously reserved land for other uses.
- 7.54 Other issues raised included:
- The need for a strategic review of the B8/A25 Newry to Downpatrick and B30 Newry to Crossmaglen Road.
 - Neither the Southern Relief Road nor the Narrow Water Bridge are justified in present form. No need for the SRR, a single bridge project could meet the district's need.
 - Traffic congestion in Saintfield was raised by the Saintfield Development Association. They considered that there was a need for a by-pass in the long term and a route should be identified and protected.
 - Given time period of the plan things can change, it would be best not to rule out projects with no current prospect of delivery,

Statutory Consultee Responses

- 7.55 The majority of statutory consultees (10 submissions, 60% of all statutory consultees) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did either agreed (3) or had mixed views (1).
- 7.56 DfI sought clarification on the reference to the private car being the dominant means of transport over the plan period and how this reflected the draft

strategic objectives. DfI emphasised the importance of ongoing liaison with the Department's Transport Team.

- 7.57 DfI Roads queried whether developer contributions for infrastructure were to be considered by the Council.
- 7.58 DfI Transport and Modelling Unit advised that the accessibility analysis maps for towns over 5,000 population should be afforded weight and highlighted that they would be bring forward a suite of transport plans.⁶
- 7.59 DfC Historic Environment Division advised caution in respect of older non-strategic schemes which were proposed over 20 years ago that had not taken account of current policy context. They also requested that any new routes take account of heritage assets
- 7.60 Louth County Council requested that the Plan Strategy provides for specific policies to protect and advance interlinked transport policies. They also reaffirmed their commitment to the delivery of the Narrow Water Bridge project.

Our Consideration

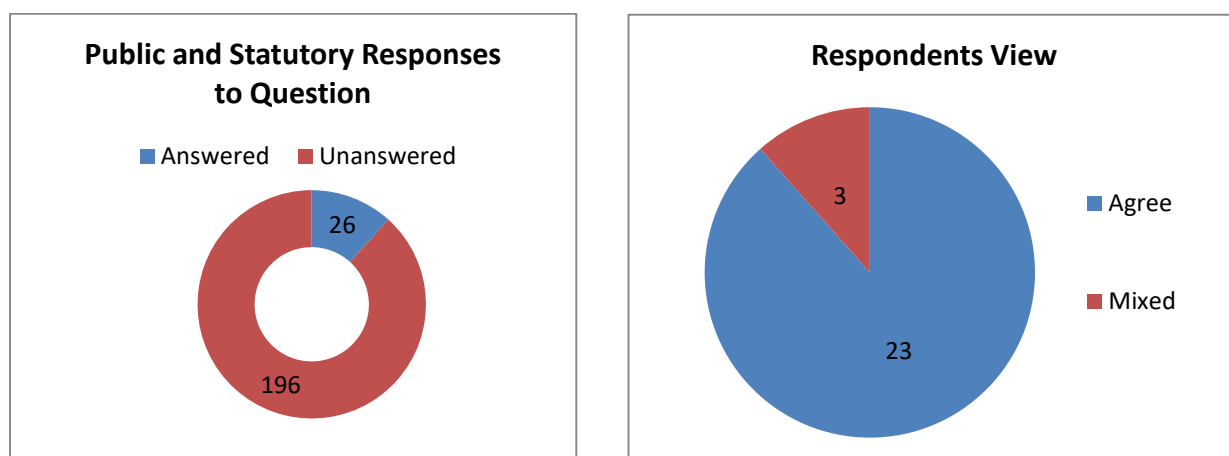
- 7.61 The Council are committed to promoting sustainable development throughout the district however are mindful of the current limited transportation options for the majority of its population living in small settlements and the open countryside. The Council welcome the acknowledgement from DfI of the challenges in providing sustainable transport for the rural population. There is thus a need to consider the draft strategic objectives in the context of current population distribution and how all of the District's population can continue to access day to day services.
- 7.62 The Council welcome the ongoing work of DfI on local transport studies, and looks forward to delivery of these studies in the near future. The Council will continue to engage with DfI to consider how these studies will aid and support the delivery of the LDP's Plan Strategy. The Council will also continue to work closely with DfI to aid the consideration of which non-strategic transportation schemes if any should be identified in the LDP.
- 7.63 The Council notes the desire for a strategic review of the B8/a25 Newry to Downpatrick Transport Corridor and the B30 Newry to Crossmaglen Road.

⁶ In a letter dated 7 August 2019 to Council Chief Executives DfI Transport Strategy Division advised that, in the absence of Ministers, Transport Studies rather than Transport Strategies and Transport Plans would now be issued to Councils to enhance the evidence base for their Local Development Plans.

Statutory responsibility for such a review rests with the Department for Infrastructure Roads Service.

Key Issue 16: Park and Ride/Share Schemes

Council's Preferred Option – Option 2 - *Identify and protect existing and proposed park and ride sites across the district and consider the potential for additional park and ride/share sites to be identified across the district.*



Public Responses

- 7.64 The majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on the park and ride/share schemes, 21 responses (10% of all public responses) did address this issue. Within this group 19 respondents (90%) agreed with the Council's preferred option, while 2 respondents (10%) held mixed views. No respondents disagreed with the Council's preferred option.
- 7.65 Translink stated that the Council should liaise closely with Translink and DfI to establish and zone future opportunities to develop park and ride facilities.
- 7.66 Other issues raised included:
- The district suffers from unacceptable levels of traffic congestion.
 - Towns and larger villages suffering as a result of people using main street and car park to 'park & share'.
 - Need to encourage and incentivize people to use park and ride/share facilities. Bus routes and schedules should be designed with this in mind.
 - Need to add more bus links to key areas of economic activity e.g. Carnbane Industrial Estate onto link route between Newry train and bus station.
 - Smaller settlements of Hilltown and Dundrum have issues with all day parking restricting access to business, could benefit from park and ride/share facilities.

- Potential Translink owned site in Saintfield for park and ride/share site.
- Newry City Belfast Road area could benefit from a park and ride/share facility. The courthouse car park presently acts as a de-facto park and ride facility.
- Areas of parking restraint within town and city centres should be introduced, would help to promote sustainable modes of transport.
- City centre parking should be restricted to low carbon emission vehicles and diesels banned.
- Need to demonstrate need for new facilities, both in terms of public transport use and existing parking provision being insufficient.
- The development of a strategic transport interchange should be examined.
- Park and ride sites should provide sustainable transport options for visitors to tourist attractions without impacting on the environment.

Statutory Consultee Responses

- 7.67 The majority of statutory consultees (11 submissions, 79% of all statutory consultees) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did either supported (4) the preferred option or had mixed views (1).
- 7.68 DfI Strategic Planning did not comment on the key issue but rather expressed concern that car parking had not been identified as a key issue, and stated they would welcome clarification on the findings of the Council's Car Parking Strategy and how it integrated with key issue identified in the POP. They further stated that LDPs are required to consider a range of initiatives such as designating areas of parking restraint to reduce reliance on the private car and tackle congestion.
- 7.69 DfI Transport and Modelling Unit stated that they would consider the need for, and provision of park and ride/share sites. They further stated that it was unclear how the Council intended to encourage and promote sustainable travel methods.
- 7.70 DfI Roads agreed with the Council's approach for protecting and developing park and ride sites. They also suggested that these should connect with other proposals to promote sustainable modes of transport.
- 7.71 DfC HED stated the Council should demonstrate how the historic environment evidence and heritage assets have been considered in key site requirements and location of facilities.
- 7.72 The NIHE highlighted that park and ride/share facilities enable more sustainable travel patterns. Reduction in reliance on the private car contributes to reduction in greenhouse gases and promotes active lifestyles.

7.73 Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) advised they would welcome further discussions in relation to strategic park and ride sites that may positively affect both Council areas.⁷

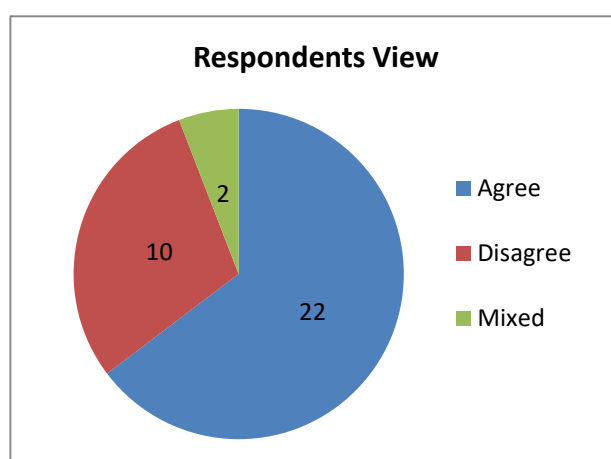
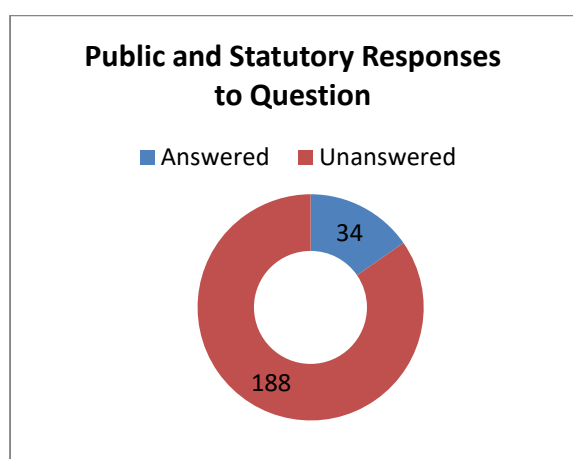
Our Consideration

7.74 The Council recognise that other public bodies (such as Translink and DfI) have a statutory responsibility for bringing forward public transport services and infrastructure. In terms the provision of park and ride/share sites the Council will liaise further with DfI Roads and Translink to consider the existing and future needs for park and ride/share sites across the district. The Council see this as partnership working between central and local government in encouraging, promoting and delivering more sustainable travel options.

7.75 The Council acknowledge that provision of park and ride/share facilities is one element in achieving more sustainable travel solutions. Others elements are considered under Key Issue 17. The Council will also further consider the wider Council Car Parking Strategy and how the LDP could help to address traffic congestion across the district.

Key Issue 17: Sustainable/Active Travel and Identification of Greenways

Council's Preferred Option – Option 2 - *Retain existing policy approach toward sustainable transport and active travel and identify and protect community greenways. In addition introduce a new policy promoting active travel (walking, cycling and integrating with public transport) in new development.*



⁷ NMDDC Plan Team attended an LDP Consultation Strategy Workshop with LCCC on the 21st June 2019. The issue of strategic park and ride sites was raised, it was suggested that a park and ride/share facility at Saintfield should be explored further.

Public responses

- 7.76 The majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on the settlement hierarchy, 26 responses (13% of all public responses) did address this issue. Within this group 16 respondents (62%) agreed with the Council's preferred option while 10 respondents (38%) disagreed. As previously highlighted the Council would recommend a degree of caution in the consideration of the statistical breakdown of submissions. In this instance it should be noted that one agent was responsible for submission of 8 out of the 10 representations that disagreed with the Council's preferred option.
- 7.77 The National Trust recommended the following:
- New development proposals should have to demonstrate how they support and enhance linkages to greenways.
 - Policy should be brought forward to facilitate blue infrastructure as per the SPPS.
 - The Plan should encourage developers to submit design concepts showing land integrated with broader green and blue infrastructure systems.
- 7.78 Translink suggested that the onus should be on each new development proposal to demonstrate how their proposal links into existing open space, greenways and public transport facilities.
- 7.79 The Mourne Heritage Trust welcomed the recognition of community greenways as well as the major routes. A challenge was to address the missing links in provision in particular Slieve Croob landscape area, and link between Newcastle/Donard Park and Bloody Bridge.
- 7.80 The Woodland Trust were broadly supportive of the Council preferred option and emphasised the importance of sensitive development of greenways with protection given to key environmental assets.
- 7.81 The RSPB supported the Council's preferred option and similarly to the National Trust stated that there should be a reference to blueways. The protection of disused transport corridors should be considered in the LDP. Walking and cycling should be promoted generally, not just in new development and new walking and cycling routes targeted.
- 7.82 Other issues raised included:
- Need to address infrastructure requirements, to widen footpaths and add safe cycle lanes. This could be delivered through one way traffic systems and widening of current roads;

- Former rail and tramways should not be used as greenways. Public money should be spent on rail and tram infrastructure;
- Protection of existing disused transport routes is critical in promoting active travel and providing a shared space.
- Sustainable/active travel should apply in both urban and rural areas;
- Line of former Bessbrook tramway and association Tramway station should be protected.
- Potential of disused rail route in Saintfield, adjacent to Community Centre.
- Support for Option 1, additional protection of Option 2 is not needed due to existing protection afforded by other policies.

Statutory Consultee Responses

- 7.83 A number of Statutory consultees (6) supported the Councils preferred option, 2 held mixed views and the remainder (6) had no comment to make on the options provided.
- 7.84 DfI Strategic Planning advised they would welcome a co-ordinated approach between the identification/safeguarding of disused transport routes, promotion of active travel networks, sustainable transport in new development and identification and protection of greenways.
- 7.85 DfI Transport and Modelling Unit expressed disappointment that the only consideration of sustainable/active travel appeared to be in relation to Greenways. They further stated that reference must be made to the forthcoming Transport Plan and the measures to be included to develop walking, cycling and public transport.
- 7.86 DfI Roads agreed with the Council's approach and suggested this issue should link with open space provision (Key Issue 10) to improve health and wellbeing.
- 7.87 DfI Rivers highlighted that greenways have the potential to incorporate flood alleviation measures as in the case of the Connswater Community Greenway.
- 7.88 DfC HED welcomed the approach, particularly in respect of canal towpaths and railway/tram lines and requested the Council consider a heritage led development approach to safeguard the historic character (heritage asset and setting).
- 7.89 The NIHE suggested the Plan could support this issue through improved and linked infrastructure, such as cycle ways and walk ways which integrate with public transport halts. They also highlighted the need for better public transport facilities (bus shelters, bus lanes, increased bus provision as well as park and ride facilities).

7.90 Louth County Council reaffirmed its commitment to the delivery of the Dundalk – Newry Greenway.

Our Consideration

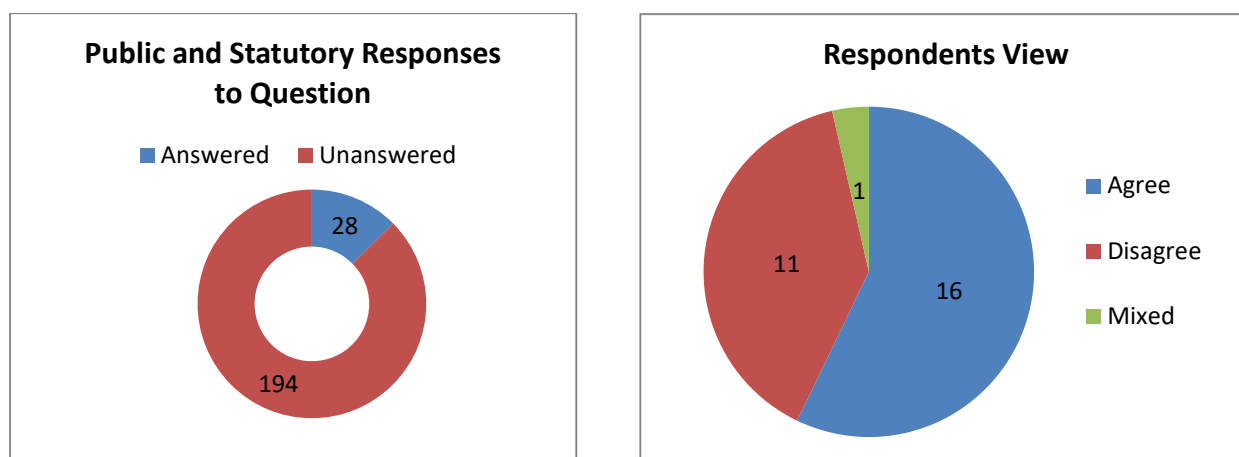
7.91 The Council welcomes the broad level of support from the general public and statutory bodies for the preferred option.

7.92 The Council would highlight that the Council's preferred option (Option 2) states that a new policy promoting active travel (walking, cycling and integrating with public transport) in new development would be introduced. This key issue does therefore consider more than just the protection and provision of Greenways. The Council as previously indicated look forward to receipt of the DfI Transport Study for the district, and will fully consider the measures contained within this study once it has been issued to the Council.

7.93 The Council will continue to work with its statutory consultees, including neighbouring local authorities, to bring forward a policy which supports sustainable and active travel and the development of a greenway network.

Key Issue 18: Renewable Energy

Council's Preferred Option – Option 1 - *Adopt current policy based approach as set out in PPS18 and the SPPS subject policy for renewable energy projects and identify Areas of Constraint for certain types of renewable energy (wind turbines).*



Public Responses

7.94 The majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on the settlement hierarchy, 24 responses (13% of all public responses) did address this issue. Within this group 15 respondents (63%) agreed with the Council's preferred option, 8 respondents (33%) disagreed and 1 respondent (4%) held mixed views.

- 7.95 The Woodland Trust requested that serious consideration be given to the identification of Areas of Constraint (AoC).
- 7.96 The Mourne Heritage Trust stated that AoCs would provide clarity to prospective developers and reassurance to local communities and would represent a proactive approach. AoCs should be introduced in areas where the character is 'intimate', features are small scale and horizon broken by natural landforms (ridge lines, hills).
- 7.97 The National Trust disagreed with the Council's preferred approach suggesting that the introduction of AoCs would be more appropriate and would be in line with the SPPS 'cautious approach' to renewable energy proposals within designated landscapes.
- 7.98 The NI Renewables Industry Group supported the Council's preferred option to adopt the existing policy approach and carry forward PPS18. Whilst welcoming a supportive regime they did not consider the identification of areas where renewable energy proposals would be acceptable in principle as the way forward rather projects should be decided on a case-by-case basis.
- 7.99 The RSPB disagreed with the Council's preferred option and indicated that a strategic spatial approach to renewable energy, as proposed by Mid Ulster DC, should also be adopted in NMDDC. The cumulative impact of single wind turbines was also highlighted and the need for further consideration proposed.
- 7.100 Other issues raised included:
- Council should undertake spatial mapping exercise to identify the optimal locations and potential output for different technologies;
 - LDP should promote the delivery of a strategically planned and integrated renewable energy supply;
 - Council should consider greater opportunities for off-shore renewable energy;
 - Areas of Constraint should be introduced in Slieve Gullion and the Mourne;
 - Need to develop evidence base to show breakdown of energy supply to NI from different sources.
 - NIE Consultation Paper (JAN 18) states that a market remains for the renewable energy generation beyond meeting the 40% target.
 - Applying broad brush approach where renewable energy proposals acceptable/unacceptable cannot be tailored to specific renewable energy proposals;

- Consideration should be given to solar panels on north facing buildings and hydropower development;
- Need to further engage with SONI to increase transmission network in the district.
- In bringing forward policy Council should provide clarification to the SPPS wording in respect of social benefits of renewable energy projections and the weight that can be attached to them.
- Potential of geothermal energy from granite.

Statutory Consultee Responses

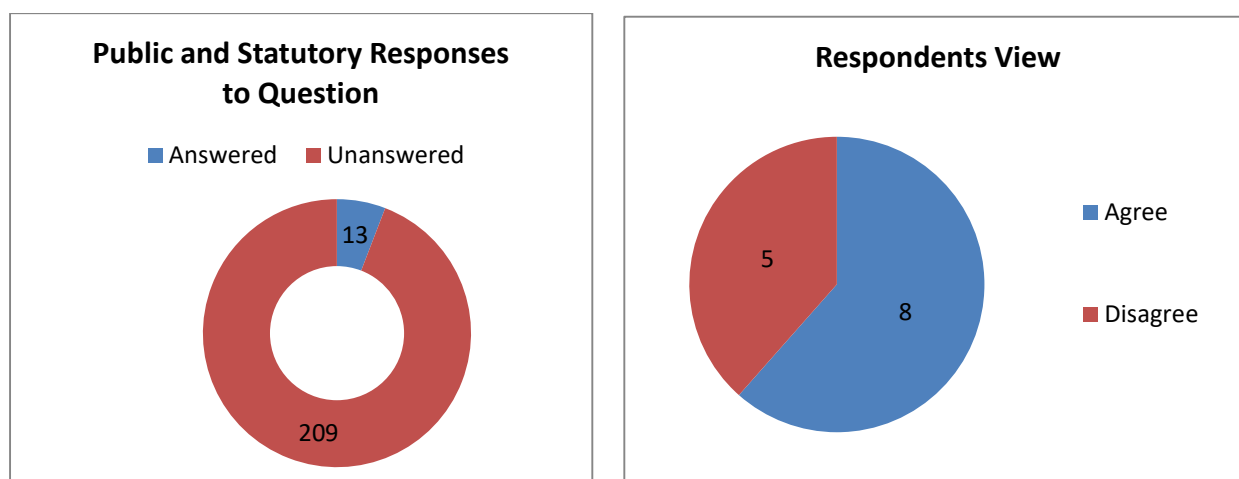
- 7.101 The majority of statutory consultees (10 submissions, 71% of all statutory consultees) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did either agreed (1) or disagreed (3).
- 7.102 DfI Strategic Planning stated in considering the need for Areas of Constraint the Council should ensure that all types of renewable energy should be considered.
- 7.103 In the absence of areas of constraint NIEA Natural Environment Division expressed concern as to how the Council proposed to control renewable energy development within the Mourne AONB (incl Slieve Croob) and Ring of Gullion AONB.
- 7.104 DfI Rivers highlighted that hydroelectric power generation schemes can significantly increase flood risk. They can also completely alter the flow of a river and should not be sited within catchments with a flow gauging station.
- 7.105 DfC Historic Environment Division preference was to identify Areas of Constraint (Option 2) to aid the identification of sensitive landscapes unsuitable for renewable energy development. They also expressed concern regarding the cumulative impact of renewable energy structures incl. tall structures, solar fields and general ground works in the vicinity of heritage assets and the wider historic environment.
- 7.107 The NIHE disagreed with the Council's preferred option and stated that they would support the mapping of areas where renewable energy projects would be acceptable/unacceptable. They further stated they would like to see the LDP include energy strategies/masterplans which identify locations for renewable energy supply , policies aimed at reducing consumption and comprehensive supplementary guidance.
- 7.108 SSE Airtricity supported the Council's preferred option stating that the current policy based approach set out in PPS18 and the SPPS was fair, and allowed proposals for renewable energy to be considered on their individual merits.

Our Consideration

- 7.109 The Council appreciate the strongly held views around renewable energy and will further explore how best to facilitate renewable energy proposals whilst protecting the district's environmental assets.
- 7.110 We will continue to engage with DfI to ensure that any review of regional planning policy for renewable energy is taken account of in the development of our local policies.
- 7.11 The Council will engage with the NIEA Marine Team in consideration of marine planning policy along the district's coast.
- 7.112 The Council has now secured the appointment of Landscape Consultants. One of the key aims of this study is to carry out a comprehensive review of the existing Local Landscape Character Areas within the district, as defined in the Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment (NILCA) (2000), together with a review of the existing SCA's and Areas of High Scenic Value. Part of this review will also consider the need for a separate spatial policy to address the impact of renewable energy proposals.

Key Issue 19: Telecommunications

Council's Preferred Option – Option 1 - *Adopt current policy as set out in PPS10 and the SPPS subject policy for telecommunications.*



Public Responses

- 7.114 The majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on telecommunications, 10 responses (5% of all public responses) did address this issue. Within this group 7 respondents (70%) agreed with the Council's preferred option, 3 respondents (30%) disagreed.

7.115 Disagreeing with the Council's preferred option, the Woodland Trust requested that serious consideration be given to the identification of Areas of Constraint.

7.116 Other issues raised included:

- Need to carry out a study of rural areas which have the poorest connectivity in the district.
- Council should tackle the fact that 7,900 premises do not have access to a service delivering 10 Mbit/s.
- Should consider mast design and should be coloured to blend with landscape e.g. resembling large trees.
- Both AoCs and telecommunications zones should be identified.

Statutory Consultee Responses

7.117 The majority of statutory consultees (11 submissions, 79% of all statutory consultees) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did either agreed (1) or disagreed (2).

7.118 DfI Strategic Planning noted that only one option was presented under this issue and advised that the Council should be satisfied that it had considered any reasonable alternatives with justification based on a robust evidential context.

7.119 DfC Historic Environment Division did not agree with the Council's preferred option, and queried the identification of only one option. They also expressed concern regarding the cumulative impact of telecommunications structures and associated ground works.

7.120 In the absence of areas of constraint NIEA Natural Environment Division expressed concern as to how the Council proposed to control telecommunications development within the Mourne AONB (incl Slieve Croob) and Ring of Gullion AONB.

Our Consideration

7.121 The Council welcome the support for the preferred option to retain the existing policy led approach and the acknowledgement from both supporters and opponents of the preferred option that there is poor coverage in many rural parts of the district.

8.0 Environmental: Protecting and Enhancing the Environment

8.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to protecting, enhancing and sustainably managing our natural and historic environment. As part of this

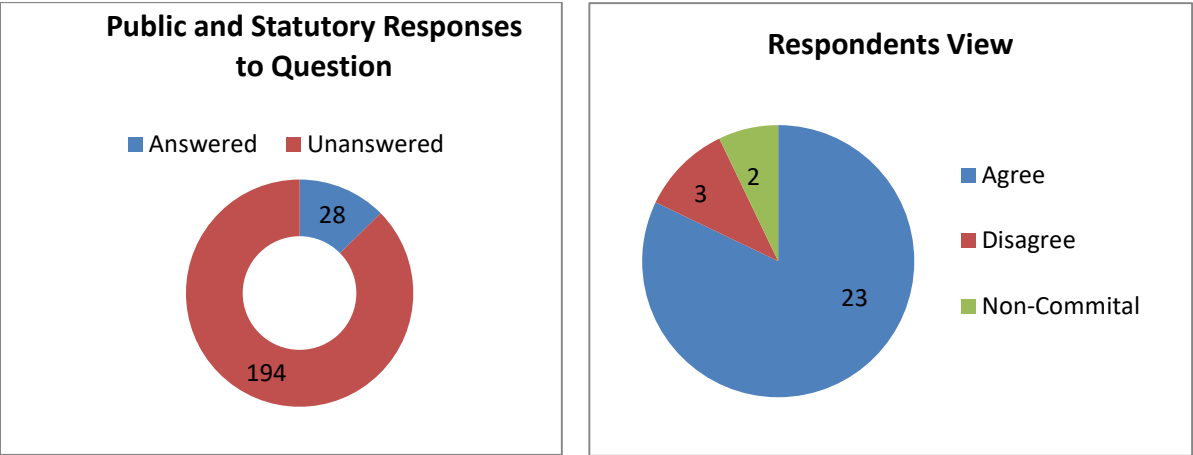
process consideration will therefore be given to all environmental statutory obligations to ensure protection is afforded to our environment.

General Comments regarding Environmental Chapter

- 8.2 Historic Environmental Division (HED) were disappointed that no direct reference had been made to archaeology within this chapter.
- 8.3 HED along with the Historic Monuments Council also raised concerns that within the key issues of the Environmental Chapter there was no discussion or consideration as to how existing policies within PPS6 and the SPPS will be brought forward in the LDP process (unaltered or otherwise). They did however acknowledge the preliminary review of the planning policy document.
- 8.4 HED also recommended that the built environment be referred to as the 'historic environment' in future documentation. They advised that the term historic environment is more meaningful in relation to existing and future policies as it reflects the full suite of heritage assets, including archaeology, listed buildings and designed landscapes.

Key Issue 20 – Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Character

Council's Preferred Option – Option 2 - *Review existing Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Character designations to consider whether they should be extended, reduced, removed or re-graded*



Public Responses

- 8.5 The majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on conservation areas and areas of townscape; however 24 submissions (12% of all public submissions) did address this issue. Within the 24 public responses received the majority of responses supported the Councils preferred option with 19 submissions (79%) agreeing with the Councils preferred option while 3

submissions (13%) disagreed and 2 submissions (8%) offered non-committal responses.

8.6 Issues which were highlighted within the public responses included the following:

- Warrenpoint Area of Townscape Character should be re-graded to a Conservation Area (Mourne Heritage).
- Any re-grading of designations should be accompanied by up-dated design guidance (Matrix)
- RSPB recommend that in the Councils bid to further sustainable development this issue should be linked to urban decision and place-making.
- The preferred option does not allow new areas to be considered for Conservation Area or Area of Townscape/Village Character.
- The definition of conservation areas does not include any environmental designations and only relates to heritage and historic value (C Gibson)
- The amount of prior and on-going engagement with Statutory Consultations was also queried in relation to this issue.

8.7 A number of groups and agents also responded to the associated supplementary questions and were in agreement that consideration should be given to the removal of certain permitted development rights within Conservation Areas (Including National Trust).

Statutory Consultee Responses

8.8 The majority of statutory consultees (10 submissions, 71% of all statutory consultees) made no comment on the options provided. Those that did comment agreed with the preferred option.

8.9 DfI Strategic Planning Division welcomed the principles detailed within the preferred option. They highlighted the importance of requiring sufficient evidence being acquired to allow the Council to add a spatial dimension detailing which CA's or ATC's could be extended, reduced, removed or re-graded.

8.10 While DfC Historic Environment Division also supported the Preferred Option they raised a number of points for further considerations:

- They recognised the high proportion of existing Conservation Areas within the district and the important role their associated design guides play in the assessment of development proposals.

- HED would also support the removal of some permitted development rights as this may help to prevent the potential negative impact of multiple small schemes over a period of time.
- They highlighted concerns about merging policies included within PPS 6. Presently these policies currently reflect a distinct hierarchical approach to archaeology and historic buildings which may be lost or misinterpreted if combined. HED also make reference to the explanatory text within PPS6 as being particularly valuable.
- Greater reference should be made to the connection between the historic environment and its pivotal role within the district's tourism industry – (these comments were made in reference to the sustainability appraisal) Should this be included within an introduction or in reference to SA?

8.11 Within the Housing Executives response it was suggested that the Council examine the potential to include a new policy to limit the weight given to 'precedent' as a material consideration within Conservation Areas.

Our Consideration

8.12 The Council welcomes the general support for this preferred option while also acknowledging that not all elements of the natural and built environment have been considered in depth within the Preferred Options Paper. A comprehensive and thorough analysis of all other elements relating to the environment will be undertaken within the next stage of the LDP process in preparation for the Plan Strategy and through a detailed policy review.

8.13 The Preliminary Review of Planning Policy which was published alongside the POP document gives an indication as to how the Council proposes to take forward the policy review which will include detailed policy associated with Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Character.

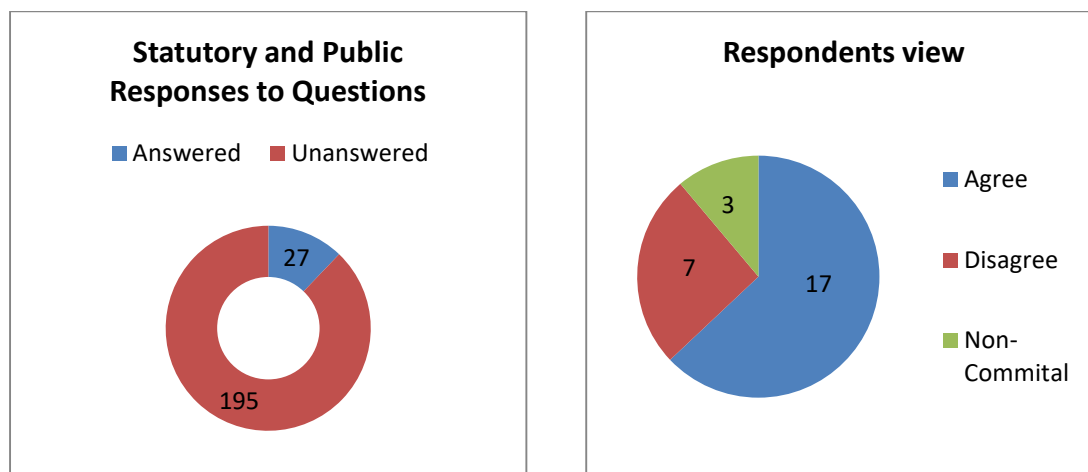
8.14 The remit of the LDP does not extend to proposing new Conservation Areas or altering their designations but as outlined in PPS6 should be taken forward and progressed as a separate exercise in parallel with the LDP process. Any associated policy included within the Plan Strategy in relation to these designations will however seek to ensure the new development respects their context. As part of this process the Historic Buildings Council will be consulted as per statutory requirements.

8.15 The Council also recognises the important role Conservation Areas and ATC's play in stimulating tourism and regeneration within the district. The LDP will therefore continue to ensure the safeguarding of the local character and distinctiveness of these areas while also continuing to work closely with all major stakeholders involved in the tourism industry.

- 8.16 The preferred option would also offer the Council the opportunity to consider the identification of new Conservation Areas or Areas of Townscape Character subject to a detail analysis being carried out.

Key Issue 21 – Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Council's Preferred Option – Option 1 - *Carry forward existing policy and consider scope to strengthen existing policy to afford further protection to non-designated heritage assets.*



Public Responses

- 8.17 The majority of public submissions received supported the preferred option with 16 responses (70%) in agreement, while 4 disagreed (17%) and 3 (13%) were deemed to be non-committal

- 8.18 Amongst the comments received from agents the following points were raised:

- The local development plan should safeguard the district's existing heritage but not unduly restrict or potentially hinder development.
- The importance of bringing historic buildings back into circulation and acting as a catalyst for heritage-led regeneration was highlighted.
- Protection of these assets is seen as a contributing factor to attracting tourism to the area and maintaining a sense of place for residents (all above Matrix)

- 8.19 Other issues raised by the general public included:

- Disagreement with the suggestion that the creation of a heritage list may have a negative impact on these assets (Confederation of community groups).
- Consideration should be given to consolidating Options 1 and 2. (C Gibson

- Reference is made to some local buildings and artefacts which should be considered for any subsequent list, including Warrenpoint Windmill and Viking long boats (details other buildings – already listed or a monument). C Gibson).
- Contact should be made with local historians, cultural groups and community associations to tap into their local knowledge.

Statutory Consultee Responses

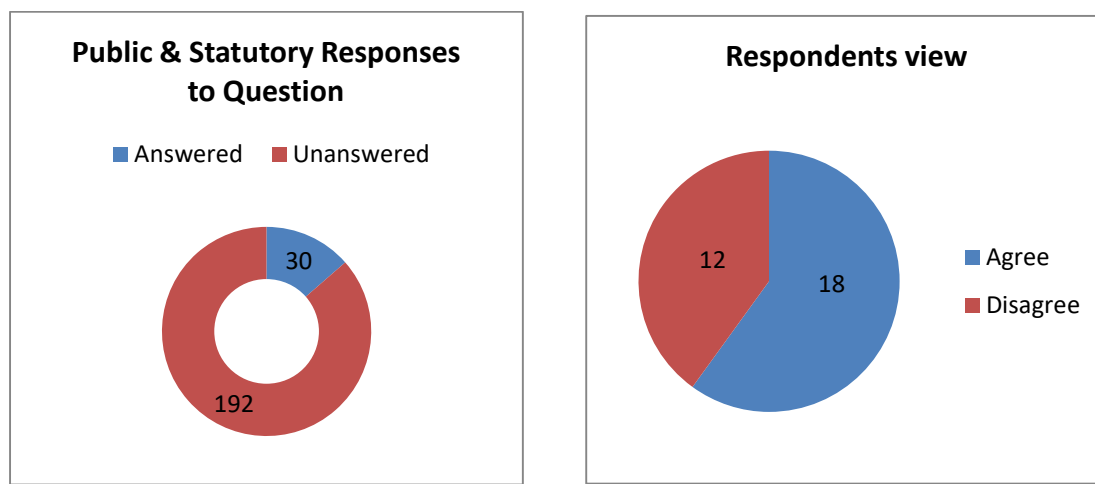
- 8.20 The majority of statutory consultees (10 submissions, 71% of all statutory consultees) made no comment on the options provided. Of those that did comment, 3 disagreed and 1 agreed with the preferred option and highlighted that they believed that the Council had the opportunity and responsibility to do more towards protecting the district's non-designated heritage assets and therefore preferred option 2.
- 8.21 The majority of statutory consultees offered no comment to the options provided in relation to this key issue, while SSE Airtricity were the only statutory consultee to agree with the Council's preferred option but made no specific comment. While welcoming the Council's desire to protect the non-designated heritage assets of the district DfI Strategic Planning, DfC Historic Environment Division and the Historic Monuments Council believe that Option 2 may be a more robust option and would deliver better results. Other comments made by the consultees are summarised below:
- DfI have suggested that the Council should consider combining both options as the creation of a comprehensive list may provide a unique opportunity in aiding the protection of the non-designated heritage assets.
 - Historic Monuments Council believe Option 2 would encourage and provide a more consistent approach to the identification and management of local heritage assets across the district.

Our Consideration

- 8.22 The Council is aware that non-designation heritage assets make an important and positive contribution to the local character of the district and therefore acknowledge the need to protect them from inappropriate development or demolition where possible. It is therefore proposed that the Council will produce a guidance document which will deal specifically with protecting and enhancing the local character and distinctiveness of these assets. The Council would therefore welcome future engagement with HED and other relevant bodies to consider the viability and appropriateness for such a document

KI 22 – Sensitive Upland Landscape

Council's Preferred Option – Option 3 - *Review and extend Special Countryside Areas*



Public Responses

8.23 The majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on sensitive upland landscapes. Within the 25 public responses received comments were almost evenly split with 13 respondents (52%) agreeing with the Council's preferred option and 12 respondents (48%) disagreeing.

8.24 Comments in relation to this issue were almost evenly divided with some representations supporting this additional layer of protection while others believed it to be more restrictive and unnecessary. Some of the comments received are detailed below:

- A degree of flexibility was advocated by some to provide limited opportunities for development where the impact to the landscape would be minimal (Matrix).
- Agreement with Option 3 but in relation to 'reducing or removing' the designation with specific reference made to the High Mourne designation. One response suggested that the existing Special Countryside Area boundary includes lands (lower western foothills) that do not merit such a restrictive policy approach to future development (Shanks)
- Current designation is overly restrictive.
- Consideration should be given to designating Special Countryside Areas to non-upland areas including parts of the district's coastline such as Strangford Lough (National & Woodland Trust)
- Retention of Policy COU 1. (as per BNMAP)
- Remove the status of SCA and use Conservation Areas instead (C Gibson)

Statutory Consultee Responses

- 8.25 The majority of statutory consultees (9 submissions, 64% of all statutory consultees) made no comment on the options provided. The 5 that did comment all agreed with the preferred option.
- 8.26 While DfI Strategic Planning Division provided a neutral response they raised a number of points for further consideration:
- While noting the preferred option which seeks to standardise the approach and address any inconsistencies associated with extant Special Countryside Area (SCA) designations across the district they reference that the High Mourne, Slieve Croob and Ring of Gullion as being exceptional landscapes. They however recognise the benefits in the preferred option which will establish if further designations are required within the district.
 - They also welcomed more detail on the local policy direction intended for these sensitive landscapes.
- 8.27 While Historic Environment Division and the Historic Monuments Council welcome the protection of these landscapes they would recommend that the historic environment be fully taken into any further assessment to ensure its future management will be effective and sustainable. No further comments were made regarding this issue as they remained unsure as to how the sensitive upland landscape zones would be identified and defined.

Our Consideration

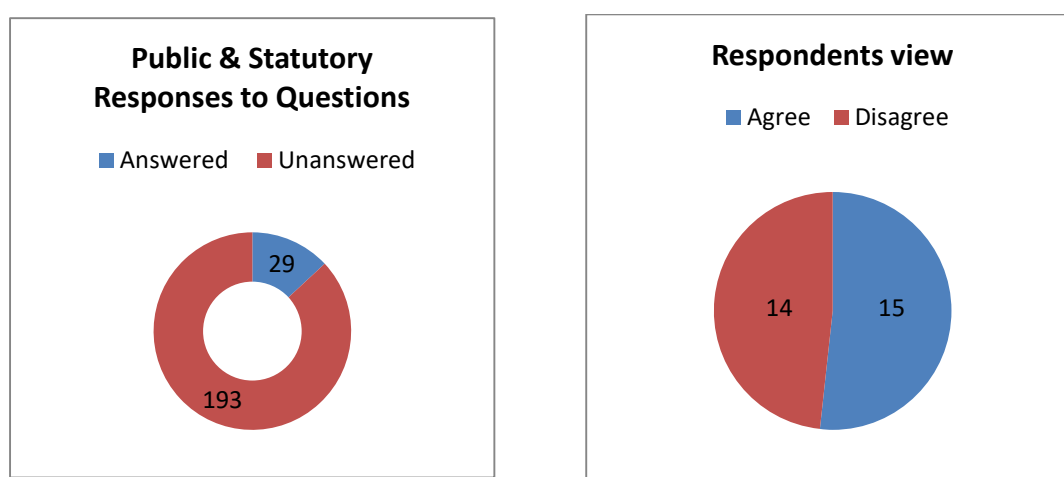
- 8.28 The Council welcomes the support shown for the preferred option to ensure the continued protection of the district's sensitive uplands but remain aware that this key issue has raised opposing views. It is therefore important that we take into consideration all opinions and make a balanced decision on this matter.
- 8.29 We will review the boundaries of the existing SCA's and ensure that any amended designations and associated policy are informed by a robust evidence base which is required to underpin decisions in relation to the new LDP.
- 8.30 The Council has now secured the appointment of Landscape Consultants. One of the key aims of this study is to carry out a comprehensive review of the existing Local Landscape Character Areas within the district, as defined in the Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment (NILCA) (2000), together with a review of the existing SCA's and Areas of High Scenic Value.
- 8.31 This review will be used to assess the three existing SCA's within the district namely, Mourne, Ring of Gullion and Slieve Croob. Consideration will therefore

be given to whether it is appropriate to make any changes to these current designations including extending, reducing or removal of these boundaries to ensure all areas worthy of this designation are afforded the same level of protection.

- 8.32 It is envisaged that the report will form a key supporting document that will underpin the Council's future Local Development Plan and associated planning policies while also forming a vital component of the Countryside Assessment Technical Supplement.

KI 23 – Coastal Erosion and Land Instability

Council's Preferred Option – Option 3 - *Targeted and measured approach*



Public Responses

- 8.33 The majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on coastal erosion and land stability, however 24 submissions (12% of all public submissions) did address this issue.
- 8.34 Public responses received in relation to this key issue were almost evenly split with 11 responses (46%) agreeing with the preferred option and 13 (54%) disagreeing. Of those that disagreed with the preferred option there was again variance in what the representations believed to be the most appropriate course of action. These contrary opinions were therefore reflected in the associated comments, some of which are detailed below.
- Areas designated at being at risk from existing and potential coastal erosion should be protected from all development (Confederation of Community).
 - Council should apply a more restrictive approach by having a presumption against development within the parts of the coastline identified most at risk from existing and potential coastal erosion.

- The preferred option will ensure that specific details and impacts of any proposed development are assessed (Turley)
- Policies should be developed with neighbouring Councils to ensure consistency in the protection of shared assets such as Carlingford and Strangford Loughs.
- Consideration should be given to the impact of HGVs and other heavy vehicles (caravans) on coastal routes. Additional planting to help protect against further erosion. Not in agreement with any of the options provided – coastal development should be prohibited (C Gibson).
- Coastal defence infrastructure should be sourced locally to ensure cost effectiveness (QPANI)

Statutory Consultee Responses

8.35 The majority of statutory consultees (9 submissions, 64% of all statutory consultees) made no comment on the options provided. Of those that did respond 4 agreed (80%) with the preferred option while DfI Strategic Planning Division disagreed with the preferred option. Within their response they were critical of some of the elements included within the Preferred Option while also highlighting a number of points for further consideration.

- DfI have indicated that some of the wording included within the preferred option in relation to exceptions to coastal development is not in-line with the SPPS. Reference is made to paragraph 6.42 of the SPPS which states 'development will not be permitted in areas of the coast known to be at risk from flooding, coastal erosion, or land instability' while the preferred option suggests that the only exceptions permitted would be where there is a demonstrated need for a coastal location.
- DfI advise that clarification is required in relation to bullet point 3 of the Preferred Option and the supporting text detailed in Paragraph 8.56 which appear to contradict each other with regards to the benefits of coastal defences. DfI also however suggest that the references made to new or replacement coastal defences goes beyond the Councils remit and refer to the SPPS which states that flood protection/management measures involving new flood defences or flood compensation storage works will not be acceptable unless carried out by DfI Rivers or other statutory bodies.
- No distinction has been made between those areas currently experiencing coastal erosion and those that have the potential to experience erosion.
- Given the extent and varied nature of the Councils coastline DfI believe that the issues of coastal erosion and land stability are fundamentally important to the district and therefore should be dealt with separately. Reference is made to the PSRNI which considers these issues separately to ensure sufficient policy coverage.

- The Council must ensure that emerging policy is backed up by a robust evidence base

8.36 DEARA's Natural Environment Division supported the Councils preferred option for coastal erosion and land stability as they indicated that this would allow the specific details and impacts of any proposed development to be assessed.

Our Consideration

8.37 The Council notes DfI Strategic Planning's comments in relation to the preferred option and their views on coastal erosion and land stability being distinct issues. An evaluation and further consideration will be given to both these issues as we move forward in the development plan process.

8.38 Historic Monuments Council make reference to the draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland (2018) which provides policy on maritime heritage. This will be considered along with Irish Maritime Policy as we progress towards Plan Strategy. The Council will continue to explore collaborative working relationships with other Councils to address issues which are of a mutual interest.

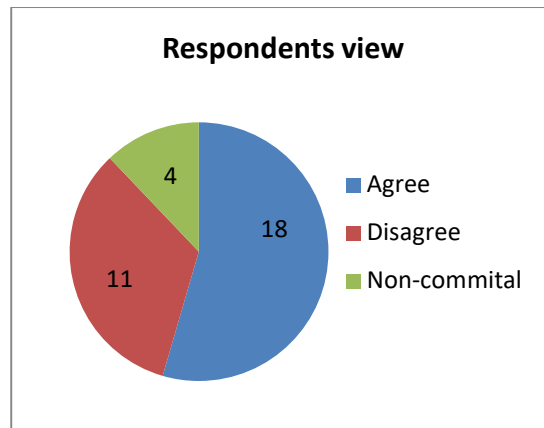
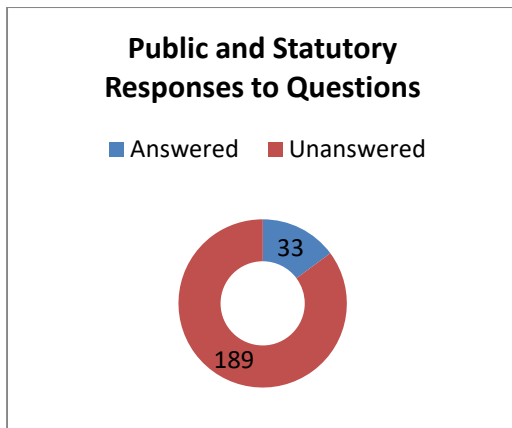
8.39 The Council reiterates its commitment to review and update its evidence base on a regular basis and acknowledges the importance of maintaining this throughout the plan process as it forms a pivotal role in demonstrating how the Council has met the required soundness tests.

8.40 Since the publication of the Preferred Options Paper a number of Councils have been working collaboratively on taking forward the findings of the Baseline Study and Gap Analysis of Coastal Erosion Risk Management⁸. This has involved the formation of forums and working groups to ensure a common approach is taken in developing a coastal change strategy and the identification of areas at high risk. Work has also been ongoing with DfI and DAERA to advance guidance on coastal management.

KI 24 – Flood Risk Management

Council's Preferred Option – Option 2 - *Precautionary approach towards development in flood prone areas along with addressing the issue of surface water flooding with SuDS being required on zoned sites through the use of key site requirements or alternatively incorporated into a new policy covering SuDS for all new development.*

⁸ Published by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (www.daera-ni.gov.uk) in December 2018.



Public Responses

8.41 The majority of the 208 public respondents had no comment to make on flood risk management, however 25 submissions did address this issue. Within this grouping 12 submissions (48%) agreed with the Councils preferred option, 9 submissions (36%) disagreed and 4 submissions (16%) offered non-committal mixed views. As with many of the Environmental issues comments received from the public varied greatly, some of which are detailed below.

- Existing ground conditions may inhibit the use of SuDS and therefore should be encouraged rather than viewed as a requirement (TSA).
- SuDS should be compulsory in all new applications.
- Mitigation measures should be incorporated to allow development to be permitted (P Murdock).
- Different suggestions were made as to how SuDS should be managed and maintained. Recommendations included that responsibility should rest with the developer or site owner while the planning authority and/or building control should be responsible for inspections, reports and fines associated with failure to comply with these requirements.
- Areas in close proximity to the Derrybeg River in Newry are referenced to be prone to major flooding.
- The Council should consider adopting a strategy along with DfI to invest heavily in a new drainage system.

Statutory Consultee Responses

8.42 The majority of statutory consultees responded to this Issue (8 submissions, 57% of all statutory consultees) with 6 agreeing (75%) and 2 (25%) disagreeing with the preferred option.

8.43 Statutory consultees were broadly split between supporting the Councils preferred option and offering a non-committal response while both DfI Strategic Planning and DfI Rivers responses were more varied.

- 8.44 NIHE supports the approaches detailed in respect of mitigation and climate change and suggest that SuDS should be required in all developments.
- 8.45 HED welcomes the precautionary approach towards development in the flood prone areas while advising that the impact of SuDS on archaeological sites should be carefully considered.
- 8.46 NIEA Natural Environment Division highlight the possibility of incorporating temporary SuDS during the construction phase of development which could then be retained or adapted.
- 8.47 DfI Water & Drainage Policy Division welcome the references made to the use of SuDS to help deliver effective drainage at source and reduce flood risk.
- 8.48 While the comments made by DfI Strategic Planning and DfI Rivers were positive in relation to the options surrounding SuDS they queried why other aspects of flood risk were omitted.
- DfI note that the POP has not addressed other aspects of flood risk including
 - Development in proximity to reservoirs
 - Protection of flood defence and drainage infrastructure
 - Artificial modification of watercourse
 - References were not made to local circumstances.
 - No review of existing policies nor indication as to whether these policies will be retained or modified was included within the POP.
 - Council need to satisfy themselves that processes are in place to make this a viable option.

Our Consideration

- 8.49 Taking into considerations the comments made by some of the sections within DfI the Council will aim to review all elements of the preferred options and liaise with the relevant authorities to ensure all areas of flood risk have been covered accordingly.
- 8.50 Given the level of support for promoting SuDS, we will endeavour to work closely with the relevant statutory agencies to investigate further how the LDP can promote SuDS.
- 8.51 As outlined previously the preliminary review of planning policy which was published alongside the POP document gives an indication as to how the Council proposes to take forward the associated policy review. A programme of work has been drawn up to review all policy. This review will consider the four main sources of flooding including fluvial, coastal, surface water and flooding from impounded water bodied such as reservoirs or dams.

- 8.52 The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Rivers Agency is the lead Government body in respect of reservoirs and potential flood risks associated with their failure. They have advised that Newry, Mourne, and Down District has 20 controlled reservoirs within its boundaries. Given the size, scale and geographic spread across the Council there is a need to consider if the LDP should identify these reservoirs, their associated inundation zones and introduce a protection/safety zone for those areas considered by Rivers Agency to be at very high risk in the event of a structure failure or overtopping. Therefore, as the LDP progresses further discussions will be held with the relevant stakeholders to ensure appropriate action is taken with regards this topic area.

9.0 Preliminary Review of Operational Planning Policy

Current Operational Policy	Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)	LDP Approach	Responses and Post Consultation Consideration
<p>PPS2: Natural Environment</p> <p>Policies NH1-NH6</p>	<p>Natural Heritage (paragraphs 6.168–6.198)</p> <p>The SPPS is consistent with policies of PPS2 and provides greater clarification in particular on the legal duties of the local planning authority in relation to the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive.</p>	<p>It is recommended to carry forward the existing policy with minor changes to reflect the wording of the SPPS.</p> <p>For example, in respect of Policy NH6 the SPPS introduces an assessment of the 'cumulative impacts' when assessing proposals.</p>	<p>RSPB – policies such as NH 2 and NH 5 remain crucially important in achieving sustainable development. Policy NH 6 should be carried across into the new LDP.</p> <p>Post POP Consideration: Carry forward the existing policy with minor changes to reflect the wording of the SPPS.</p>
<p>PPS3: Access, Movement and Parking</p> <p>Policies AMP1–AMP11 (including clarification to AMP3)</p> <p>Annex A-B</p> <p>PPS3: Access, Movement and Parking</p>	<p>Transportation (paragraphs 6.297–6.305)</p> <p>The SPPS is consistent with the policies of PPS3 and includes the consequential revision to PPS21 in AMP3. However, it omits Policy AMP9 and AMP11.</p>	<p>It is recommended to carry forward the existing policy with minor changes to reflect the wording of the SPPS.</p> <p>An example is to include reference to the Councils overall Parking Strategy within Policy AMP10.</p> <p>Key Issue 17 considers the issue of sustainable/active travel and greenways. The Preferred Option is to introduce a policy promoting active travel and seek to</p>	

<p>Clarification of Policy AMP3: Access to Protected Routes.</p> <p>Annex A</p>		<p>identify and protect community greenways. Policy AMP8 would be amended to require the needs of cyclists to be taken into account in all new development. Under this option it is proposed to add wording to Policy AMP5 to allow for the protection of designated community greenways.</p>	
<p>PPS4: Planning and Economic Development</p> <p>Policies PED1–PED9</p> <p>Annex A</p>	<p>Economic Development, Industry and Commerce</p> <p>(paragraphs 6.79–6.98)</p> <p>The SPPS is generally less prescriptive than the PPS policies however it allows for an exception to build a small scale new build economic development outside a village or small settlement where there is not a suitable site within the settlement.</p> <p>The SPPS confirms the presumption set out in PPS4 against the loss of economic</p>	<p>It is recommended to carry forward the existing policy with some changes to reflect the SPPS.</p> <p>Key Issue 11 considers whether there is scope under the SPPS to allow small scale economic development in the countryside where there is not a suitable site within the settlement.</p> <p>Key Issue 12 considers making provision for compatible 'sui generis' uses on economic development land. The Preferred Option is to allow for compatible 'sui generis' uses.</p>	

	development land for alternative uses (paragraph 6.89)		
<p>PPS6: Planning, Archaeology, and the Built Heritage</p> <p>Policies BH1–BH15</p> <p>Annex A-F</p>	<p>Archaeology and Built Heritage (paragraphs 6.1–6.30)</p> <p>The SPPS is generally consistent with the policies of PPS6. In relation to Conservation Areas the SPPS requires special regard be given to the desirability of enhancing its character or appearance where an opportunity to do so exists, or to preserve its character or appearance where an opportunity to enhance does not arise.</p>	<p>It is recommended to carry forward the existing policy with changes to reflect the wording of the SPPS.</p> <p>It is proposed that Policy BH5 is not carried forward as the district does not contain any World Heritage Sites.</p> <p>The recommended policy approach may include a review of the existing built heritage and archaeological designations.</p> <p>Key Issue 21 considers non-designated heritage assets. The Preferred Option is to recommend that Policy BH15 is reviewed to consider if there is scope to strengthen existing policy.</p>	<p>In respect of the Identification/ retention/enhancement of LLPAs the RSPB advise that they should be recognised for their biodiversity and ecological networks.</p> <p>DfC Historic Environment Division notes that the SPPS merges a number of PPS6 policies. HED has serious concerns in regard to merging existing policies which can change emphasis and create confusion. HED advise the Council to review the existing justification and amplification text from PPS6 as part of the evidence base. Policies on ASAI should be specific on each. BH15 – If replacement is considered acceptable, consideration should be given to retention of historic structure.</p> <p>Historic Monuments Council advise that section 6.11 of the SPPS provides for preservation of arch record through investigation and archiving under planning conditions and is a critical component.</p>

PPS6 Addendum: Areas of Townscape Character Policies ATC1–ATC3 Annex A	Archaeology and Built Heritage (paragraphs 6.21–6.23) The SPPS is generally less prescriptive than the PPS6 addendum. However, it is consistent with the thrust of its policies.	It is recommended to carry forward the existing policy with minor changes to reflect the wording of the SPPS. Consideration will be given to removing Annex A 'excerpt from PPS6' to avoid duplication.	
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Current Operational Policy	Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)	LDP Approach	Responses and Post Consultation Consideration
PPS7: Quality Residential Developments Policies QD1–QD2 Annex A-C	Housing in Settlements (paragraphs 6.136-6.137) The SPPS is less prescriptive than PPS7 however it seeks to create sustainable forms of development. The SPPS suggests incorporating sustainable elements into residential developments such as the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and energy efficient design in housing units (paragraph 6.137)	It is recommended to carry forward the existing policy with minor changes to reflect the wording of the SPPS. The thresholds within Policy QD2 for submission of a design masterplan will be reviewed. Key Issue 8 considers future proofing and housing for all. The Preferred Option is to introduce a new strategic policy covering lifetime homes and wheelchair accessible housing to require the provision of an appropriate supply of homes for children, older people and those with a physical disability.	

		<p>Key Issue 9 considers integrated renewable energy and passive solar design. The Preferred Option is that existing policy is revised to require new development over a certain threshold to incorporate renewable energy features.</p> <p>Key Issue 24 addresses flood risk management. The Preferred Option is to require the use of SuDS through key site requirements or introduce a new policy requiring all new development to incorporate SuDS to address surface water flooding.</p>	
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Current Operational Policy	Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)	LDP Approach	Responses and Post Consultation Consideration
<p>PPS7 Addendum: Residential Extensions & Alterations</p> <p>Policy EXT1</p> <p>Annex A-C</p>	<p>Housing in Settlements (paragraph 6.137)</p> <p>The SPPS is less prescriptive on design than the PPS7 addendum.</p>	<p>It is recommended to carry forward the existing policy.</p> <p>Consideration will be given as to whether further clarification is required in regard to ancillary accommodation.</p>	

		<p>Consideration will be given to the inclusion of criteria on bin storage within PPS7 Policy QD1 replacing paragraph A43 of Annex A.</p> <p>It is proposed to remove Annex B and C.</p>	
<p>PPS7 Addendum: Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas Policies LC1-LC3 Annex A-E</p>	<p>Flood Risk & Housing in Settlements (paragraphs 6.118 & 6.137)</p> <p>The SPPS is more strategic and less prescriptive than PPS7 addendum. However it does encourage sustainable forms of development to include SuDS where appropriate.</p>	<p>It is recommended to carry forward the existing policy with some small changes to reflect the SPPS.</p> <p>For example, consideration may be given to encouraging permeable material for hard landscaped areas in new developments.</p> <p>Key Issue 24 addresses flood risk management. The Preferred Option is to require the use of SuDS through key site requirements or introduce a new policy requiring all new development to incorporate SuDS to address surface water flooding.</p> <p>It is proposed to remove Annex B and D, and update Annex C.</p>	

Current Operational Policy	Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)	LDP Approach	Responses and Post Consultation Consideration
<p>PPS8: Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation</p> <p>Policies OS1–OS7</p> <p>Annex A–D</p>	<p>Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation (paragraphs 6.205–6.213)</p> <p>The SPPS is generally less prescriptive than PPS8 however in relation to all sport and outdoor recreational activities, states that material considerations will include: location, design, hours of operation, noise, impact on visual and residential amenity, access and links to public transport, floodlighting, landscaping, public safety, nature conservation, biodiversity, archaeology or built heritage.</p>	<p>It is recommended to carry forward the existing policy with some clarification and changes to reflect the wording of the SPPS.</p> <p>For example, the criteria listed as material considerations for sport and outdoor recreation development may be introduced.</p> <p>Within Policy OS2 the thresholds for the provision of public open space and children’s play areas will be reviewed.</p> <p>Within Policy OS3 it is proposed to provide greater clarification on what constitutes equestrian use.</p> <p>It is proposed to update Annex C and remove Annex D.</p>	<p>NIHE would welcome retention of Policy OS1</p>

<p>PPS10: Telecommunications</p> <p>Policies TEL1–TEL2</p> <p>(Policy TEL2 is cancelled)</p> <p>Annex A-D</p>	<p>Telecommunications and Other Utilities (paragraphs 6.240–6.250)</p> <p>The SPPS is consistent with the thrust of PPS 10.</p>	<p>It is recommended to carry forward the existing policy with some small changes to reflect the wording of the SPPS.</p> <p>Key Issue 19 addresses telecommunications. The Preferred Option is to retain the existing policy approach and not introduce a more restrictive planning policy for telecommunications equipment.</p>	
Current Operational Policy	Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)	LDP Approach	Responses and Post Consultation Consideration
<p>PPS11: Planning and Waste Management</p> <p>Policies WM1–WM5</p> <p>Annex A-D</p>	<p>Waste Management (paragraphs 6.311–6.318)</p> <p>The SPPS is generally less prescriptive than PPS11.</p>	<p>It is recommended to carry forward the existing policy with some minor changes to reflect the wording of the SPPS.</p> <p>Wording will be updated to remove reference to BPEO.</p>	
<p>PPS12: Housing in Settlements</p> <p>Planning Control Principle 1– Planning Control Principle 4 & Policy HS1–HS4 (Policy HS3 as amended)</p>	<p>Housing in Settlements (paragraphs 6.137–6.147)</p> <p>The SPPS is consistent with the policies of PPS12 and is generally less prescriptive.</p>	<p>It is recommended to carry forward the existing policy approach set out in PPS12 and amend the wording to align with the SPPS.</p>	

<p>Appendix 1-5</p>	<p>The provision of a variety of house types, sizes and tenures is encouraged to achieve balanced communities (paragraph 6.137).</p>	<p>Where policies are covered elsewhere in the Plan Strategy it is not proposed to carry them forward.</p> <p>Key Issue 6 addresses social housing need. The Preferred Option has three key elements. Firstly it sets out a strategic policy requiring all housing sites over a certain threshold to provide a proportion of social housing, secondly it zones sites solely for social housing and thirdly it facilitates social housing as a proportion of larger housing schemes through key site requirements.</p> <p>Key Issue 8 addresses future proofing and housing for all. The Preferred Option is to introduce a new strategic policy covering lifetime homes and wheelchair accessible housing to require the provision of an appropriate supply of homes for children, older people and those with physical disability.</p>	
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Current Operational Policy	Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)	LDP Approach	Responses and Post Consultation Consideration
<p>PPS13: Transportation and Land Use</p> <p>General Principles GP1–GP12</p> <p>Appendix 1-3</p>	<p>Transportation (paragraphs 6.299–6.303)</p> <p>The SPPS is consistent with the policies of PPS13.</p>	<p>It is recommended to carry forward the existing policy approach set out in PPS13 and the SPPS.</p> <p>Where policies are covered elsewhere in the Plan Strategy it is not proposed to carry them forward.</p>	
<p>PPS15: Planning and Flood Risk (Revised)</p> <p>Policies FLD1–FLD5</p> <p>Annex A-D</p>	<p>Flood Risk (paragraphs 6.106–6.125)</p> <p>The SPPS is generally consistent with the policies of PPS15</p>	<p>It is recommended to carry forward the existing policy approach set out in PPS15 and amend some wording to align with the SPPS.</p> <p>Key Issue 24 addresses flood risk management. The Preferred Option is to require the use of SuDS through key site requirements or introduce a new policy requiring all new development to incorporate</p>	<p>Policy FLD2 – Protection of Flood Defence RSPB NI is content for this policy to remain within the new LDP.</p> <p>Policy FLD5 – Development in Proximity to Reservoirs RSPB NI recommends retention of regional planning policy as contained within the SPPS.</p>

		SuDS to address surface water flooding.	
PPS16: Tourism Policies TSM1–TSM8 Appendix 1-4	Tourism (paragraphs 6.255–6.266) The SPPs is generally consistent with the policies of PPS16 although it is less prescriptive.	It is recommended to carry forward the existing policy approach set out in PPS16 with minor changes to reflect the wording of the SPPS. Key Issue 13 deals with tourism development. The Preferred Option is to carry forward existing policy but in addition identify Tourist Opportunity Zones where a range of appropriate tourism facilities could be accommodated.	

Current Operational Policy	Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)	LDP Approach	Responses and Post Consultation Consideration
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<p>PPS17: Control of Outdoor Advertisements</p> <p>Policy AD1</p> <p>Annex A-B</p>	<p>Control of Outdoor Advertisements (paragraphs 6.57–6.60)</p> <p>The SPPS is consistent with the policy of PPS17.</p>	<p>It is recommended to carry forward the existing policy in PPS17 with minor changes to reflect the wording of the SPPS.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to reviewing the impact of more advanced technological advertisements (eg light boxes) as well as the impacts of advertising in Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Character.</p> <p>Annex B refers to the enforcement of advertisement control. As Planning Policy Statement 9: The Enforcement of Planning Control has been cancelled following introduction of the SPPS it is proposed to remove Annex B.</p>	
<p>PPS18: Renewable Energy</p> <p>Policies RE1–RE2</p>	<p>Renewable Energy (paragraphs 6.219–6.233)</p>	<p>It is recommended to carry forward the existing policy approach set out in PPS18 with</p>	

	<p>The SPPS is consistent with the policies of PPS18, although it is less prescriptive.</p>	<p>changes to reflect the wording of the SPPS.</p> <p>Key Issue 9 considers integrated renewable energy and passive solar design. The Preferred Option is that the wording of Policy RE 2 is amended to require new development over a certain threshold to incorporate renewable energy features.</p> <p>Key Issue 18 deals with renewable energy. The Preferred Option is to carry forward existing policy and to not introduce Areas of Constraint for certain types of renewables, for example, wind turbines.</p>	
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Current Operational Policy	Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)	LDP Approach	Responses and Post Consultation Consideration
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<p>PPS 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside</p> <p>Policy CTY1–CTY16</p>	<p>Development in the Countryside (paragraphs 6.66–6.78)</p> <p>The SPPS is consistent with the policies of PPS21. It is less prescriptive for some policies and provides clarification for other policies.</p>	<p>It is recommended to carry forward the existing policy approach set out in PPS21 with changes to reflect the SPPS.</p> <p>It is not proposed to carry forward policy CTY2 as there are no Dispersed Rural Communities identified in the district.</p> <p>Policy CTY2a – Consideration will be given to providing clarification on what would be considered to be a focal point.</p> <p>Policy CTY3 – Consideration will be given to providing clarification on what constitutes a replacement dwelling.</p> <p>Policy CTY5 – Consideration will be given to providing a definition of what constitutes a small group of dwellings that will be permitted and whether more than one housing group should be permitted.</p> <p>Policy CTY8 – Consideration will be given to defining the size of</p>	<p>RSPB NI – Welcomes the review and extension of Special Countryside Areas.</p> <p>DfC HED advise there is an opportunity to create a linkage between CTY 4 and PPS6 BH15.</p> <p>NIHE would welcome retention of Policy CTY5</p>
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		<p>a gap site as well as what constitutes a built up frontage.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to providing additional clarification to policies where appropriate.</p>	
Current Operational Policy	Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)	LDP Approach	Responses and Post Consultation Consideration
<p>PPS23: Enabling Development</p> <p>Policy ED1</p>	<p>Archaeology and Built Heritage (paragraphs 6.25–6.27)</p> <p>The SPPS does not provide the same level of criteria as Policy ED1 however it is consistent with the aims of PPS23 and provides clarification on some points including that the justification is the over-riding public benefit to the conservation of the significant place and its sustainable future use.</p>	<p>It is recommended to carry forward the existing policy approach set out in PPS23 with clarification, where appropriate, to reflect the wording of the SPPS.</p>	
A Planning Strategy for a Rural Northern Ireland (PSRNI)	Town Centres & Retailing (paragraphs 6.273-6.283)	It is recommended to carry forward the existing retained policy approach set out in PSRNI	

<p>Policies IC15–IC17; Policies MIN1–MIN8; Policy TOUT5; Policy PSU1–PSU3, PSU8 & PSU11; Policies DES1, DES2, DES4, DES10; Policies COU1–COU4.</p>	<p>Minerals (paragraphs 6.154–6.161)</p> <p>Tourism (SPPS is silent on directional signs)</p> <p>Housing in Settlements (paragraph 6.137)</p> <p>Telecommunications and other utilities (6.246)</p> <p>Economic, Development, Industry & Commerce (paragraphs 6.88)</p> <p>Development in the Countryside (paragraph 6.76)</p> <p>Natural Heritage (paragraphs 6.186–6.187)</p> <p>Design (paragraphs 4.23–4.30)</p>	<p>where necessary, in line with the provision of the SPPS.</p> <p>Where policies are covered elsewhere in the Plan Strategy it is not proposed to carry them forward.</p> <p>Key Issue 14 considers minerals development within the district. The Preferred Option is carry forward existing minerals policy (Min1–Min8) but in addition identify mineral safeguarding zones through the LDP.</p> <p>Key Issue 23 considers coastal erosion and land instability. The Preferred Option is to identify areas of existing and potential coastal erosion and land instability through the LDP. A new high level criteria based</p>	
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		policy would be introduced and would apply within these areas.	
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10.0 Other Comments Received

Statutory Consultee Responses

- 10.1 DfI Strategic Planning stated that it would be advisable to include policies on the use of planning agreements in line with the legislation and the SPPS.
- 10.2 The NIHE suggested that the Council should consider the following:
- Introduction of a developer contribution policy to fund additional community infrastructure. Housing associations should be exempt from this policy;
 - Inclusive urban design should be promoted by using design such as Lifetime Neighbourhoods (DCLG), Building for Life, and Inclusion by Design (Design Council).
 - Review the spatial extent and function of existing town centres boundaries and primary retail cores. The plan should consider the long-term future of town centres in the context of changed shopping patterns, the increase in vacant units and consequent need to diversify uses.
 - A retail strategy between Councils should be required to address cross boundary effects.
- 10.3 DAERA NIEA highlighted the importance of the Council setting out how the legal requirements of Section 8 of the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 (MANI) and Section 58 in the Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009) (MCAA) had been applied in the preparation of the POP and subsequent LDP.
- 10.4 DAERA NIEA noted the absence of preferred options in the POP covering policies in the PPS2 suite and expressed concern regarding this omission. They also expressed concern about the lack of recognition of the landscape and its future protection and enhancement in the POP. They highlight that the POP did not address the following landscape designations: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), Areas of High Scenic Value (AofHSV), Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs) and Urban and Rural Landscape Wedges.
- 10.5 Following on from this they expressed concern about the lack of consistency and the differences with regard to the recognition and protection of the landscape between the Council's POP and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon District Council's POP.
- 10.6 They also questioned the absence of comments on the need for waste management infrastructure.

- 10.7 The Historic Monuments Council recommended that the importance of the heritage of the District (natural, historic and built) should be integrated into the text more fully across the POP.

Public Responses

- 10.8 Planning agents provided a number of additional comments, including:

- The absence of any reference to planning agreements and developer contributions;
- The absence of any options around retailing, town centres and opportunity sites. The Council needs to develop a retail strategy and bring forward a retail hierarchy. Changing retail trends should be referenced. There should be re-consultation on the POP following the gathering of retail evidence. Not undertaking this could raise concerns around soundness.
- The Council's evidence base was largely prepared prior to the decision to leave the EU, and the potential demographic consequences of Brexit have therefore not been considered.

- 10.9 Newry Business Improvement District (BID) highlighted the need to regenerate Newry city centre vacant properties and space above shops to address need and a depopulated city centre. They considered the POP to be light on place making.

- 10.10 The Woodland Trust suggested that ancient and long-established woodlands needed to be protected from damage and/or destruction. The additional consideration of a 50 metres buffer zone around ancient and long-established woodlands would ensure sufficient protection for these important habitats.

- 10.11 The absence of design and place making proposals was highlighted by some planning agents and a number of individuals.

- 10.12 A number of other submissions stated that there had been an inadequate consultation period, the POP had been poorly advertised and the POP documentation was not accessible. In addition it was stated that the timing of the drop in sessions did not take account of residents with work commitments. Newry Older Peoples Forum considered that the language of the document was beyond most lay people.

Our Consideration

- 10.13 The Council notes comments made in respect of the role of planning agreements and developer contributions and these will be further considered as part of the ongoing LDP draft Plan Strategy Preparation.

- 10.14 The Council will ensure that the strategic policy requirements for Town Centres and Retailing as set out in the SPPS subject policy is addressed in the preparation of the LDP Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan. The Council have engaged a Retail Consultant to undertake a Retail and Commercial Leisure Need and Capacity Study and the findings of this will be used to inform future planning policy direction.
- 10.15 Whilst the POP document does not contain a policy review section a Preliminary Review of Operational Policy document was published alongside the POP and referenced within the POP text. This Preliminary Review gives an indication as to how the Council proposes to take forward the policy review to inform its new planning policies within the draft Plan Strategy document.
- 10.16 Legislative requirements for the LDP POP Public consultation are set out in Regulation 11 of the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and state that the period of consultation *must be a period of not less than 8 weeks or more than 12 weeks*. In this instance the Council undertook a public consultation lasting 12 weeks which is therefore the maximum permitted under the legislation. Comments made in respect of publicity and timing of information sessions are noted and the Council will further consider how to maximise public engagement as the LDP progresses through its key stages.
- 10.17 The Council acknowledges the comments made in respect of the impact of Brexit. Whilst the current Brexit process remains unclear the Council will seek to ensure that consideration is given to Brexit in reviewing and updating its evidence base. The Council will follow up with DfI Planning regarding any future review of the current HGIs.

Site Specific Representations

- 10.18 Chapter 9 'Next Steps' paragraph 9.2 on page 187 of the POP document stated "*Those wishing to submit representations of a site specific nature will have the opportunity to do so at the Local Policies Plan stage and the Council will only consider these types of representation at that stage.*"
- 10.19 We received 172 representations during the POP consultation period which contained proposals for specific sites. A significant number of these (98) focused on the provision of a public park on the Albert Basin site in Newry with the remainder largely concerned with the inclusion of additional lands within a range of different settlement limits.

Our Consideration

10.20 These site specific representations cannot therefore be considered at this stage in the LDP process. While the Council will retain all representations to the POP, those submitting site specific representations have been advised that there will be an opportunity to formally submit site specific representations at the draft Local Policies Plan stage. It is only at this stage that representations of a site specific nature will be considered.

Issues outside the remit of planning

10.21 In addition to planning issues a number of respondents included issues outside the remit of the LDP within their submissions, these included:

- City Centre Masterplan has not been consulted on since 2011;
- Query over content of the Deloitte report on the proposed Council Civic and Conference Centre. The Council appears to be prioritising a new civic centre over other matters for Newry;
- Upgrade the Southern Regional College to provide more degree courses;
- Full re-opening of the Newry Canal from the Albert Basin to Portadown for barges and boats;
- The Newry canal must not be made un-navigable through provision of a fixed bridge delivered as part of the Southern Relief Road scheme;
- More tourism events throughout the year, re-opening of Gallows Hill Tunnell;
- Simpler methods of waste disposal, need to increase blue and brown bin lifts;
- Incentives for business to reduce packaging waste; and
- CCTC cameras should be taken out of Newry city centre.

Our Consideration

10.22 Those issues falling outside planning but within the remit of the Council will be referred to the relevant Council Department. The Newry City Centre Masterplan whilst not forming part of the LDP statutory process will be fully considered as part of the preparation of the both the LDP Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan. Whilst referenced in the POP document the Newry Southern Relief Road project is the responsibility of DfI Roads and is subject to a separate public consultation process.

11.0 Sustainability Appraisal

11.1 The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires us, under statutory duty, to undertake a SA incorporating SEA. SA/SEA is a tool for appraisal policies to ensure they reflect sustainable development objections. This is required in

relation to both development plan documents, the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan. The scope and the interim report of the SA/SEA was developed and consulted upon alongside the POP.

- 11.2 The SA/SEA process to date has involved two key stages
- 11.3 The SA/SEA consultation ran alongside the POP with 2 questions contained within the POP questionnaire offering comment on the overall approach taken to the SA and another question dealing with the findings contained with the SA Interim Report. This section of the report summarises the feedback received on the SA/SEA Interim Report outlining the key points, potential environmental impacts or concerns and suggestions for mitigating and monitoring these effects.
- 11.4 Only a total of ** responses were received to the Sustainability Interim and Scoping Report with additional comments received within responses to the overall POP document
- 11.5 DAERA and Historic Environment Division, DfC were consulted as the Consultation Bodies on the POP and the Sustainability Appraisal. In the context of biodiversity, flora and fauna DAERA identified some additional issues that could be addressed through updates to the SA Scoping Report, including waste water treatment work capacity and the biodiversity value of brownfield sites. DAERA queried SA scores for Key Issues 4, 7, 14, 15, 18 and considered that Key Issue 7 – Housing in the Countryside could have a significant negative effect requiring mitigation. It also noted that reviews of plan designations should take account of habitats and landscape. SES have therefore advised that the SA Scoping Report for the draft Plan Strategy will be updated where necessary to reflect the additional issues raised. While SES consider that the scores which were given are justified they will be reviewed and clarified in light of DAERA's comments for any of the policies brought forward in the draft Plan Strategy.
- 11.6 DAERA Marine Team highlighted that marine policy documents are cross-cutting in nature and therefore relevant to many SA topics and therefore emphasised the need for these documents to be considered when making decisions which may affect the marine area. SES advised that the suggested amendments are noted and will be incorporated when updating the Scoping Report and conducting the SA for the draft Plan Strategy.
- 11.7 The Climate Change and Air Quality Units of DAERA also provided some updates for the SA Scoping Report. Again these amendments have been noted and will be incorporated when updating the Scoping Report for the draft Plan Strategy.

- 11.8 Within HEDs response they made recommendations as to what additional information they believe should be included within the Scoping Report. These suggested amendments along with the additional references which were provided have been noted by SES and will be incorporated when undertaking the SA for the draft Plan Strategy.
- 11.9 HED also raised concerns as to what they deemed to be as inconsistencies in relation to the scores against objective 14 of the SA which is to 'protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural resources'. They have also suggested that in some instances the scores for this objective should reflect those scores associated with the objectives relation to natural resources and landscape. While none of HEDs comments change the outcome of the SA they have suggested that the comments which state 'no overall effect' to 'uncertain'.
- 11.10 In response to specific Key Issues, HED have noted that they were uncertain about scoring in some cases as it would depend on the location of plan designations
- 11.11 While there were only a small amount of representations received the general consensus was that the SA identified and recognised the potential/likely environmental, social and economic impacts of each option put forward by the Preferred Options Paper.
- 11.12 While the majority of statutory response refer to the importance of sustainability only a limited number reference the SA specifically.
- 11.13 Within the RSPB response they welcomed the reference to 'sustainable' within the LDP vision while also endorsing the commitment given to undertake both a SA and Habitats Regulation Assessment. They outline on a number of occasions that they firmly believe that plan-making should seek to integrate the three pillars of sustainable development rather than balancing, as this could potentially result in environmental trade-offs.
- 11.14 They therefore do not support the way each of the three pillars of sustainable development have been dealt with in isolation and believe that the LDP needs to be more cross-cutting and integrate the various sectors/themes of the plan.
- 11.15 They also add that they are disappointed that the POP failed to recognise the importance of ecosystem services and its part in sustainable development. They therefore recommend that the condition of ecosystem services, the provision of services and their relationship to human well-being should be

integrated into plan-making and decision-taking processes through overarching LDP objectives.

- 11.17 RSPB highlights the importance of having an informed updated evidence base.
- 11.18 The RSPB highlighted that designated sites should be considered at an early stage of plan making to reflect their needs and, where possible, avoid impacts. The Scoping Report Appendix 7 sets out baseline information for the Habitats Regulations Assessment which identifies all designated sites to which there is a pathway from the plan area and potential impacts arising from the plan. Therefore designated sites are being considered at an early stage and the
- 11.19 One response indicates that no public reference has been made to the SA within the POP and there is a very limited inclusion of these reports within the associated POP questionnaire. They also indicate that they feel the whole process surrounding the publication of the POP document and the 'drop in' sessions were not conducive to an effective participation process and it therefore contrary to SEA Directive 2001/42/EC and the Aarhus Convention.

Scoping Report

- 11.20 A number of documents have been suggested for inclusion within the scoping report including Guidance on Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environment Assessment for the Historic Environment, Guidance on Setting and the Historic Environment and Wellbeing and the Historic Environment. These have been noted and will be referred to in further versions of the Scoping Report which will be produced at each stage of the LDP process.
- 11.21 HED note their disappointment that in neither the POP nor scoping report has recognised the vital contribution that the historic environment plays in relation to the tourist industry.
- 11.22 Marine Team within NIEA advise that while maritime/marine issues have been considered and referenced throughout the Scoping Report it is mainly through an 'environment related' lens. The marine policy documents contribute to sustainable development and cross-cutting. They advise that as a public authority the LDP is legislatively obliged to consider the marine policy documents if making decisions which affect or may affect the marine area and therefore this must be done across the majority of topic areas.
- 11.23 They recommend that the term 'marine area' or 'marine' is used rather than marine environment and also that the LDP considers impacts in terms of the users of the marine area along with its uses activities. In doing so this would

encompass the environmental consideration along with the economic and social considerations associated with activities such as commercial fishing and related port activities, marine energy

- 11.24 DEARA advise that there is more up to date information available with regards to air quality than included within the document – reference is made specifically to the 2018 Northern Ireland statistical report.

Interim Report

- 11.25 HED have some concerns that there are some inconsistencies and inaccuracies in relation to scoring in relation to the historic environment objective and advise that the scoring and justification should be more robust. They recommend clearer articulation of potential mitigation measures to illustrate how impacts may be offset.
- 11.26 HMC also note the concerns of HED in relation to inconsistencies and inaccuracies of the scoring in relation to the historic environment objective in the Sustainability Appraisal Interim Report. They make reference to recently published policy guidance: Guidance on Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Historic Environment (HED June 2018)
- 11.27 HMC suggests an integrated management approach to heritage assets should be taken by Council as part of the LDP process, with natural and cultural heritage recognised as inter-twined aspects of the landscape of the areas and the result of the interaction between people and place.
- 11.28 HED have some concerns that the creation of new proposed small settlements could have either a positive or negative effect on the historic environment and therefore the scoring should be marked as uncertain
- 11.29 Highlight some inconsistencies between the test of the Scoping Report and the Interim Report
- 11.30 HED believe the scoring for Key Issues 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 16, 18, 19 and 23 should be either marked as uncertain or in some instances creating a negative impact on the sustainability objective which concentrates on protecting, conserving and enhancing the historic environment and cultural resources.
- 11.31 Natural Environmental Agency make specific reference to the issue of air quality within their response and advise that the POP should be promoting and encouraging behavioural changes to the way in which development is planned to ensure proximity to the public transport network, essential

services and active travel is considered as an essential requirement within new development.

- 11.32 With regards to Air Quality, Natural Environmental Division believe the priority should be to improve air quality and meet air quality objectives in order to revoke air quality management area's rather than protect them. Within their response they also refer to more recently published statistics and in-particular Northern Ireland's Environmental Statistics Report 2018.
- 11.33 RSPB are concerned that the SA summary confirms that the preferred option for Key Issue 5 – Distribution of Employment Land acts negatively for the environmental sustainability objectives. Similar concerns are voiced in relation to Key Issue 11 – Economic Development as the SA summary confirms that in terms of environmental sustainability objectives the Councils preferred option performs less positively than Option 1.
- 11.34 Key Issue 13 raises similar concerns for the RSPB as they state it is concerning that the SA for the Councils preferred option has a mixed impact across the environmental objectives and they therefore have observed the potential environmental trade-offs through the balancing of the three pillars of sustainable development rather than seeking their integration.
- 11.35 In terms of the SA conclusions, RSPB NI does not necessarily support the conclusion that the restrictiveness of Option 2 for Key Issue 18 – Renewable Energy would discourage investment in the district and may mean that opportunities are lost.

Moving forward

- 11.36 HED propose that as the LDP progresses towards the Plan Strategy the inclusion of indicators which demonstrate effective monitoring strategies to monitor and measure the effects of the plan will be an important component of a robust SA/SEA. HED suggest indicators which may help to monitor the effects of the plan on the historic environment may include
- The number of scheduled monument consents related to planning applications
 - The number of planning conditions that have had archaeological conditions attached
 - The number of conservation areas and/or townscape character designated or removed
 - The number of non-designated heritage (in CA, ATC or the countryside) assets re-used/enhanced, demolished or replaced, and

- The number of planning decisions which overturn consultation advice/recommendations throughout the plan period.
- 11.37 DfI request that the Council provides evidence that all policy options are tested through the Appraisal to ensure that the decision-making process is as transparent as possible and that the preferred option represents an appropriate alternative when set against the baseline environmental, economic and social characteristics of the district.
- 11.38 DfI advised that any proposals to carry forward existing policies should be the subject of sustainability appraisal incorporating strategic environmental assessment as failure to do so may raise issues of soundness.
- 11.39 RSPB welcomes the commitment to undertake both a Sustainability Appraisal and a Habitats Regulation Assessment
- 11.40 The Historic Environment Division (HED) was not in agreement that all areas of the Evidence Base had been covered in the SA Interim Report and particular attention was made to the lack of consideration given to the Scheduled Historic Monuments.
- 11.41 Historic Monuments Council also notes the concerns of the Historic Environment Division across a number of key issues including
- Settlement hierarchy
 - Quantity of housing land
 - Distribution of housing land
 - Quantity of employment land
 - Distribution of employment land
 - Social housing need
 - Housing in the countryside
 - Economic development in the countryside
 - Minerals development
 - Renewable energy
 - Telecommunications
 - Flood risk management
- 11.42 Historic landscape, character, heritage assets, their setting and archaeological remains without a current surface signature can all be adversely impacted on by development. Historic Monuments are of the opinion that this point is not clearly brought out in the current draft POP and requires explicit recognition in policy and appropriate consideration in the context of mitigation measures.

Regional and Local Policy Context

- 11.43 HMC welcomes the recognition of the relevance of the Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework given the common land and sea boundaries, There are strong natural and historic environment linkages that span the border and in this sense it is important this shared environment is managed responsibly.

Plan Vision and Strategic Objectives

- 11.44 HED are of the opinion that in developing strategic objectives and in relation to carrying out a Sustainability Appraisal it is important to recognise that the Historic and Natural Environment and Landscape Character are intertwined. HED prefer the use of the term 'Historic Environment as it reflects the full suite of heritage assets aswell as favouring the use of the term 'heritage asset' rather than 'built assets' or 'cultural identity' rather than cultural heritage.
- 11.45 HMC welcomes the commitment to increasing and enhancing access to natural and built heritage and protecting, enhancing and benefiting from environmental assets. They are disappointed that the linkages between the environmental and the social and economic objectives are not drawn upon. HMC believe that the environment is critical to the sustainable economy and particular reference is made to the tourism industry.

Section 6: Social

- 11.46 HMC would strongly recommend that the value of the historic assets as open, accessible spaces for recreation, education and enjoyment should be articulated more clearly in the POP.

Section 7: Economic

- 11.47 POP fails to recognise that the heritage assets and exceptional landscape setting that ARE the tourism product. Therefore the LDP must go beyond 'respecting its heritage assets and exceptional landscape setting' and recognise this it is these features that provides the basis for key activity.
- 11.48 HMC welcomes the approach taken towards tourism development, however they draw attention to the fact that the POP does not address the need to maintain and enhance the district's heritage assets and landscape character as a policy consistent. The POP should have listed more sites specific to the district with HMC referencing the Greencastle area and the potential significant increase that this tourist asset could experience as a result of the new ferry service link with Carlingford.

Our Response

- 11.49 The feedback received from the consultation body will be reviewed and revised as appropriate with particular reference to the following points.
- 11.50 The Scoping Report is an evolving document and the baseline data will be updated to reflect the current situations. On-going research is being undertaken.
- 11.51 Any policy proposal including those from existing Planning Policy Statements will be integrated and assessed as part of the subsequent environmental reports associated with the LDP process.
- 11.52 The LDP team has ensured that the SA has informed the development of the local plan thus far and it will continue to assist the Council in balancing and integrating the variety of complex social, economic and environmental matters that are in the long term public interest. This is fundamental to the achievement of sustainable development while also playing an important role in demonstrating the plans soundness.
- 11.53 The SA was clearly referenced in POP document and the Public Notices which appeared in the local press. Page 14 and 16 of the POP document refers to the SA reports and states that these documents were available in hard copy or in alternative formats on request. Included within each key issue the outcome of the SA findings has been also been summarised to simplify the process for the reader.
- 11.54 The SA is a statutory process incorporating the requirements of the European Union Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive

12.0 Equality Impact Assessment

- 12.1 An EQIA Screening Progress Report was prepared alongside the POP and published at the same time on the 1st June 2018. The purpose of the Screening Report was to consider the equality and good relations impact of the POP at a strategic level. It should be noted that the options represented in the POP are not defined policies but rather policy approaches to take forward to the next stage in the production of the LDP. The EQIA thus screened these various policy approaches to help identify issues and subsequently act as a guide for subsequent assessment.
- 12.2 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires all public authorities in carrying out their 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.
- 12.3 In addition to this, public authorities are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or race.
- 12.4 The Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 introduced new duties requiring all public authorities in carrying out their function relating to Northern Ireland to have due regard to the need to:
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
 - Encourage participation of disabled people in public life.
- 12.5 The Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) will ensure these obligations are met to the fullest possible extent and that promotion of equality of opportunity will be at the core of the LDP. The main purpose of the EQIA for the LDP is to ensure that, in identifying and taking forward future planning policy, we will give due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity by addressing inequalities within and between Section 75 groups. It is therefore important to identify clearly the key inequalities which the future LDP has the potential to address.
- 12.6 The Council received no represents in respect of the POP EQIA screening progress report.
- 12.7 The Council will carry out further equality Screening Assessments at the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan stages.

13.0 Conclusion


- 13.1 This interim POP Representation Report outlines how the public consultation in relation to the Council's Preferred Option Paper (POP) complies with Regulation 11(4) of the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.
- 13.2 In terms of issues raised, whilst respondents were broadly supportive of the sustainable approach to the Council's preferred options, not surprisingly, opposing positions were put forward from those with environmental and pro development interests.
- 13.3 The critical importance of the evidence base was an underlying theme in many submissions and the Council fully acknowledge this. A number of

references were made to outdated evidence and/or absence of certain evidence. The Council welcome this constructive input, and will seek to address these issues as it progresses work to inform the LDP draft Plan Strategy.

- 13.4 A significant proportion of submissions had a site specific aspect. Where the Council identified a site specific aspect in a POP submission it has written to the individual or organisation to inform them that site specific issues are not being considered at this stage in the LDP process. The Council has also highlighted to these parties that any site specific issue will need to be raised at the appropriate time in the LDP process.
- 13.5 Those issues receiving the most interest and subsequently requiring a greater level of additional consideration are as follows:
- Spatial hierarchy, Key Issues 1-4;
 - Key Issue 9: Integrated Renewable Energy and Passive Solar Design (35 responses)
 - Key Issue 10: Open Space (32 responses)
 - Key Issue 17: Sustainable/Active Travel and Identification of Greenways (34 responses)
 - Key Issue 24: Flood Risk Management (31 responses)
- 13.6 Any actions arising out of the issues consideration will be tested through the Sustainability Appraisal process to demonstrate the soundness of the approach. In addition any actions that could be perceived to be contrary to current regional planning policy will need to be underpinned by a sound and robust evidence base to justify their inclusion within the Plan Strategy.

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