

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

Local Development Plan

Timetable

Revised September 2023

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



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

Local Development Plan: Timetable

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

The Timetable has been kept under regular review since 2017 and revised to take account of delays in preparation of the draft Plan Strategy. The Council approved this revision to the Timetable on 7 August 2023. The revised Timetable was agreed by the Department for Infrastructure on 12 September 2023.

Getting in Touch

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

By email: ldp@nmandd.org

By post: Development Plan Team
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Downshire Civic Centre
Downshire Estate, Ardglass Rd
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By telephone: Council 0330 137 4000
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This document can be viewed and downloaded from the Council's website at www.newrymournedown.org/planning or requested using the contact details above.

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

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

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of Local Development Plan Timetable (Timetable) is to set out the key stages of and an indicative timescale for the production of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's new Local Development Plan (LDP).
- 1.2 The Timetable meets the legislative requirements of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

2.0 Purpose of the Local Development Plan

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

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

3.0 The Timetable

3.1 In accordance with Regulation 6 of the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 the Timetable contains indicative dates for the various stages of the plan preparation process; these are set out at Appendix 2. A brief outline of the key stages is set out below:

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

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

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

- **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** - This will help the Council to assess the sustainability of the LDP proposals and how the plan will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, especially with regard to social, economic and environmental factors. This is required in relation to both LDP documents.
- **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** – A procedure to follow that contributes to the integration of environmental considerations in the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes. It will be undertaken in relation to both LDP documents as an integral part of the SA process above. Prior to commencing an SEA an initial screening exercise will be undertaken at the POP stage to determine if the LDP requires a full SEA.

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

4.0 Delivery of the Local Development Plan

- 4.1 There are a number of factors outside the Council’s control that may impact on the delivery of the Council’s LDP within the indicative timescales indicated. This can include unforeseen events (e.g. emergency crisis), input from statutory consultees, the duration of the Independent Examination and reporting period, subsequent consideration by Central Government and the potential for legal challenge.
- 4.2 To help identify the full range of factors that may impact of the delivery of the LDP a Risk Management Log has been developed (see Appendix 1). The Risk Management log not only highlights the risks but outlines how the Council will seek to mitigate the impact of these.
- 4.3 To further assist with the effective management of the timetable a range of steps and safeguards will be put in place to manage the LDP decision making process and provide early warning of potential time slippage. Such steps include:
 - Papers presented to the relevant Council Committee on a regular basis regarding LDP matters, including key planning topics and findings as they emerge.

- A Steering Group will be set up comprising elected Members of the Council and Senior Council Officers. This is the high level co-ordinating body that will ensure overview and strategic input on behalf of the whole community as well as planning professionals.
- A Project Management Team will be set up comprising Senior Council Officers, representatives from the key statutory/government departments will also be invited.
- An Annual Monitoring Report will be produced to inform Members and the Central Government on our progress in meeting the published timetable.

5.0 Review

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

Appendix 1: Risk Management Log

	Risk Description	Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Action
1	<p>Legal Challenge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There may be a risk of legal challenge to the process undertaken for the LDP. This could impact on the work programme through the creation of additional work or delays to adoption. 	Very High	Likely	Long term delay (>12 months) Possible failure to produce LDP	Ensure LDP production is compliant with planning legislation, regulations and guidance.
2	<p>Tests of Soundness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a risk of the LDP documents being found unsound, resulting in major delays to the implementation of policies or an inability to adopt the LDP. 	Very High	Likely	Long term delay (>12 months). Possible failure to produce LDP	Ensure robust evidence base to support decisions. On-going liaison with PAC and Central Government.
3	<p>Delays associated with the Independent Examination Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The timescales associated with the soundness based IE are beyond the control of the Council. 	High	Likely	Significant delay (6 - 12 months)	The Timetable provides forward notice of the Council's LDP programme to help inform resource requirements from Central Government and the External Examiner. Early identification of any slippage in the Timetable.
4	<p>Staff Resource Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff turnover, loss of experienced staff could impact on production. Limited size of Development Plan Team. 	Very High	Likely	Long term delay (>12 months). Possible failure to produce LDP	Ensure sufficient staff resources with necessary knowledge, experience and expertise are available for production of the LDP.
5	<p>Competing work priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given work pressures and demands on resources within the Planning Department, Development Plan Team staff could be redeployed to other planning duties and diverted away from the LDP programme. 	High	Likely	Significant delay (6 - 12 months)	Corporate commitment to adequately resource the LDP work. Recognition that the LDP is a high priority.

	Risk Description	Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Action
6	Consultancy/Specialist Input <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elements of the plan will require specialist technical input in terms skills and expertise, and there is a risk that this cannot be progressed in house. This could impact on quality and soundness of the LDP documents. 	High	Likely	Significant delay (6 - 12 months)	Scoping of work to identify specialist technical input (skills and expertise) required. Develop staff skills and competencies. Use of external consultants to support the Development Plan Team.
7	IT failure or cyber attack/data disclosure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss or corruption of data due to IT failure or cyber attack Disclosure of commercially sensitive data 	High	Likely	Significant delay (6 - 12 months)	Ensure adequate storage capacity and systems in place to regularly backup data. Ensure robust security measures in place for LDP data.
8	Financial Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficient financial resources are required to prepare LDP documents including for consultancy, consultation and the examination process. 	High	Likely	Significant delay (6 - 12 months)	Ensure the Timetable informs the Council's short and medium term financial plan.
9	Changes to Regional Policy/Legislation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any changes to policy or legislative framework could introduce delays 	Medium	Likely	Short term delay (up to 6 months)	Carefully monitor changes to regional policy and legislation. Early and consistent engagement with central government and the PAC.
10	Volume of work – LDP Programme too ambitious <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scale and uncertainty of the content of the new LDP presents potential risks to its deliverability. 	Medium	Likely	Short term delay (up to 6 months)	Robust scoping of work required. Sound project planning with realistic and flexible timescales. Careful monitoring of progress.

	Risk Description	Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Action
11	<p>Public Consultation Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number and the nature of representations received during consultation are not predictable. It is possible that issues may arise in consultation that lead to longer response times by the Council and longer examination and reporting time. 	Medium	Likely	Short term delay (up to 6 months)	The Timetable takes into account the likely time required to process responses to consultation.
12	<p>Consultee Involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultees may be involved in multiple LDPs at the same time. They will need to be available to provide adequate input into the plan process at key stages. 	Medium	Likely	Short term delay (up to 6 months)	The Timetable provides forward notice of the Council's LDP programme to help inform resource requirements within statutory partners. Liaise regularly with key stakeholders to minimise prospect of slippage.
13	<p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major disruption to working practices and workplace arrangements as a consequence of an emergency crisis e.g. Regional/National lockdown due to disease pandemic, civil unrest, or other emergency/disaster/major incident. Disruption to working practices and arrangements and/or loss of data etc. due to damage/loss of workplace (or storage facility) due to fire, flooding, storm, explosion, or other means of destruction. 	High	Likely	Significant delay (6 – 12 months)	Ensure adequate resources and arrangements in place to facilitate alternative staff working arrangements e.g. agile working / 'Work From Home', alternative workplace. Ensure safe and secure workplace and storage facilities with preventative measures and maintenance against any potential damage or security risk. Ensure back up of data with remote access.

Appendix 2: LDP Timetable (Revised September 2023)

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Local Development Plan: Timetable		
Local Development Plan process: Key Stages	Sustainability appraisal & other assessments	Indicative Timeframe
Stage 1 – Plan Preparation	Statement of Community Involvement & LDP Timetable	
	Publication of SCI and LDP Timetable	Complete SCI published July 2017 LDP Timetable first published October 2017
	Preferred Options Paper	
	Publication of Preferred Options Paper (POP)	Complete POP published June 2018
Stage 2 – Plan Strategy	Plan Strategy	
	Publication of draft Plan Strategy (PS) Statutory public consultation (8 weeks for representation & 8 weeks for counter-representations)	2nd Quarter 2024/25 (public consultation 2 nd – 3 rd Quarter 2024/25)
	Independent Examination	
	IE of draft Plan Strategy From submission of draft PS for IE, IE hearing, submission of IE Advisory Report to Central Government, to receipt of Binding Report/Direction from Central Government to the Council.	4th Quarter 2024/25 – 3rd Quarter 2025/26
	Council considers Binding Report/Direction and incorporates any changes into the final PS	4th Quarter 2025/26
Adoption of Plan Strategy	1st Quarter 2026/27	

Stage 3 – Local Policies Plan	Local Policies Plan		
	Statutory Stakeholder engagement.	Invite comments from Consultation Body (NIEA) on draft SA (incorporating SEA) Scoping Report. Publication of SA Interim Report comprising Scoping Report and appraisal of alternative options.	2nd – 3rd Quarter 2026/27
	Publication of draft Local Policies Plan (LPP) Statutory public consultation (8 weeks for representation & 8 weeks for counter-representations)	Publication of SA Appraisal Report (Incorporating SEA) Publication of drafts of HRA, EQIA and RPA where relevant.	4th Quarter 2026/27 (public consultation 4 th Quarter 2026/27 – 1 st Quarter 2027/28)
	Independent Examination		
	IE of draft Local Policies Plan From submission of draft LPP for IE, IE hearing, submission of IE Advisory Report to Central Government, to receipt of Binding Report/Direction from Central Government to the Council.		2nd Quarter 2027/28 – 1st Quarter 2028/29
	Council considers Binding Report/Direction and incorporates any changes into the final LPP.		2nd Quarter 2028/29
Adoption of Local Policies Plan	Publication of SA Adoption Report (Incorporating SEA)	3rd Quarter 2028/29	
Stage 4 – Monitor & Review	Monitoring and Review of LDP		
	Prepare new timetable		3rd Quarter 2028/29
	Monitoring and Review of LDP Annual Monitoring Report Review every 5 years	Monitoring of SA and other assessments.	Ongoing

Notes:

- This is an indicative Timetable and may be subject to change due to factors outside the Council's control (see Appendix 1: Risk Management Log).
- There is no statutory timeframe for the progress of each of the Development Plan Documents (PS and LPP) through the respective IE stage. The timeframe from submission to, and receipt of Binding Report from, Central Government is dependent on both Central Government and the Independent Examiner. The indicative timeframe of 12 months for each IE stage is based on current Central Government advice (5-2-5 i.e. 5 months from submission to IE, 2 months for IE, 5 months from IE to issue of Binding Report).
- The current Central Government department is the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). The current Independent Examiner is the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC).
- The indicative timeframe refers to quarters of the financial year.

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