

# **Plean Forbartha Áitiúla 2035** **Dréacht-Straitéis an Phlean** **Local Development Plan 2035** **Draft Plan Strategy**

**Forlíonadh Teicniúla 5 - Iompar**  
**Meitheamh 2025**

**Technical Supplement 5 - Transport**  
**June 2025**



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

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

## Contents

<b>1.0 Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.0 Policy Context</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.0 Preferred Options Paper</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4.0 District Profile</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>5.0 Consultee and Councillor Engagement</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>6.0 Draft Plan Strategy Policy Approach</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>7.0 Soundness</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>8.0 Evolution of Policies</b>	<b>27</b>

## Figures and Tables

Figure 1 Regional Strategic Transport Network	5
Figure 2 Northern Ireland Greenways Map	7
Figure 3 Northern Ireland Protected Routes Network	10
Table 1 Travel to Place of Work	16
Table 2 Travel to Place of Study	17
Table 3 Car Parking Spaces in Newry, Downpatrick, Newcastle and Warrenpoint	20
Table 4 Park and Ride Facilities and Spaces	21

## Appendices

Appendix 5A – Newry, Mourne and Down Local Transport Study	33
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## **1.0 Introduction**

### **Purpose of this Document**

- 1.1 The purpose of this technical supplement is to bring together the evidence base that has been used to inform the preparation of the Newry, Mourne and Down Local Development Plan 2035, draft Plan Strategy. It forms one of the subjects based technical supplements that should be read alongside the draft Plan Strategy, to provide justification for the policies proposed therein.
- 1.2 This builds upon LDP Preparatory Paper 5: Transportation (February 2017), which provides baseline information for transportation and formed part of the evidence base for the Preferred Options Paper (POP) which was published in May 2018.
- 1.3 This technical supplement provides an overview of the regional and local policy context (and legislative background) to transportation development, the district profile of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council in respect of the transportation services and indicates future proposals in the District.

### **Planning and Transport**

- 1.4 While the Council is not directly responsible for the provision of transport facilities and services within the District, through the LDP process it can identify and zone lands for the provision of such services, safeguarding them for future use, and by encouraging sustainable patterns of development it can help make the provision of such services viable.
- 1.5 Transport links are crucial to the performance of the District's economy, the movement of goods and people between places can be improved through a well-developed and efficient transport system and can make an area more attractive for inward investment as well as enabling people from within and outside the District to access tourist amenities and attractions
- 1.6 A key objective of regional transport policy is the reduction in dependency on private cars and to promote greater use of more sustainable forms of transport such as cycling, walking and public transport as well as encouraging greater opportunities for Zero Emissions Vehicles. The LDP seeks to encourage these initiatives and proposals within the District.

## 2.0 Policy Context

### Regional Policy Context

#### **NI Executive Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Doing What Matters Most'<sup>1</sup>**

- 2.1 The Programme for Government 2024-2027 (PfG) was agreed by the Executive on 27 February 2025, one of the missions set out within it is "Improve Our Transport Infrastructure for Safer Travel, Connected Communities and Sustainable Economic Growth." No specific projects are listed but it is stated that the Strategic Road Network will be improved as well as the rail network and "provide more accessible public transport for our rural and disabled communities."

#### **Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)<sup>2</sup>**

- 2.2 The RDS provides an overarching strategic planning framework to facilitate and guide the public and private sectors and ultimately shall influence Council decisions and investments.
- 2.3 The spatial framework of the RDS identifies Newry as a main hub and the South-Eastern Gateway on the Belfast-Dublin Corridor, it forms a hub cluster with Warrenpoint, whose port means it is also considered part of this Gateway. The potential for Newry to develop as a "twin city" with Dundalk to allow for more efficient public transport links is noted. Downpatrick and Newcastle are also identified as forming a hub cluster.
- 2.4 Several of the Regional Guidance of the RDS relate to transport issues, these are discussed below;
- RG2 – 'Deliver a balanced approach to Transport Infrastructure,' it is important to promote transport that balances the needs of our environment, society and economy. It is intended to improve connectivity, maximise the potential of the Regional Strategic Transport Network and use the road space and railways more efficiently.
  - RG9 – 'Reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate mitigation and adaptation to climate change whilst improving air quality.' The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, noise and air pollution from transport is encouraged, as is the use of more energy efficient modes of transport such as electric vehicles.
  - SFG14 – 'Improve Accessibility for Rural Communities,' the integration of public transport to meet the needs of elderly and disabled persons in rural areas is encouraged.
  - SFG 15 – 'Strengthen the Gateways for Regional Competitiveness,' links between the gateways and business, tourist and freight

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<sup>1</sup> [Programme for Government 2024-2027 - 'Our Plan Doing What Matters Most'](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Regional Development Strategy 2035](#)

markets should be enhanced without adversely impacting nature conservation sites.

### Regional Transport Strategy for Northern Ireland<sup>3</sup> (RTS)

- 2.5 The RTS is a 'daughter document' of the RDS, it contains a vision "*To have a modern, sustainable, safe transportation system which benefits society, the economy and the environment and which actively contributes to social inclusion and everyone's quality of life.*" The RTS was supported by 3 transport plans, two of which applied to the District:-

- **Regional Strategic Transport Network (RSTN) Plan 2015<sup>4</sup>**

The Regional Strategic Transport Network of Northern Ireland comprises the complete rail network, five Key Transport Corridors (KTCs), four Link Corridors, The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Corridors and the remainder of the trunk road network. The plan identified a number of upgrades to the RSTN in the District that at the time were either under construction or in the project planning/appraisal stage; -

- New railway station for Newry (Completed);
- A1 Loughbrickland – Beech Hill dual carriageway (Completed);
- A1 Newry – Dundalk Cross Border Link (Completed);
- A1 Beech Hill – Cloghogue dual carriageway (Completed);
- A24 Ballynahinch By-Pass (Not commenced)

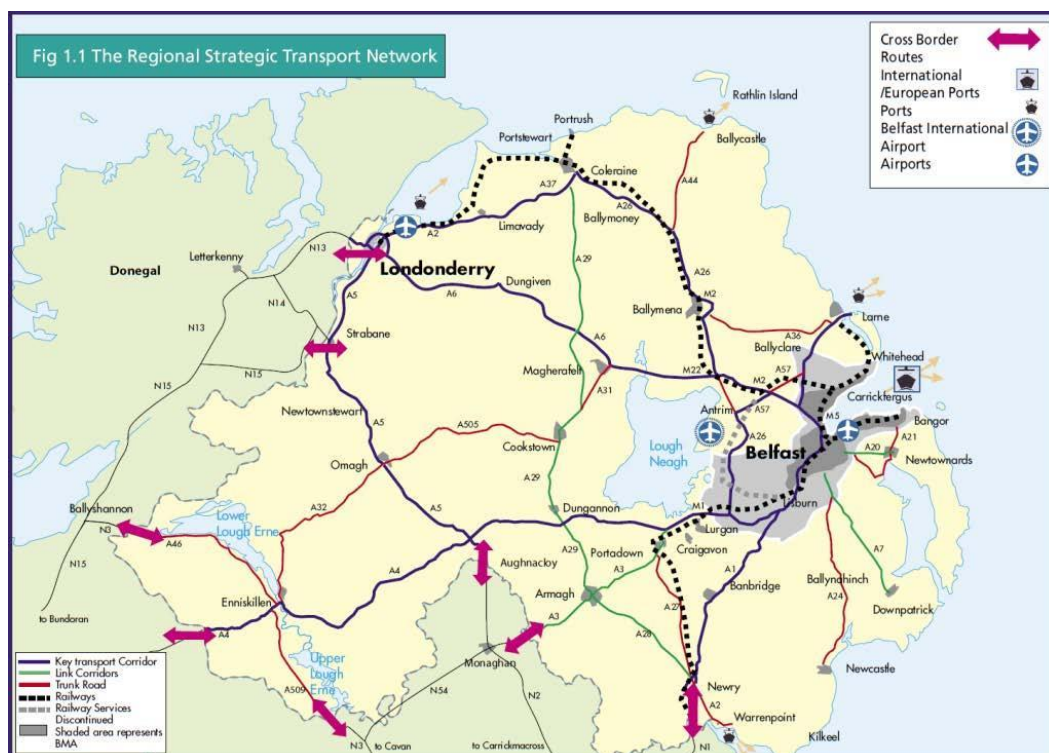


Figure 1 – Regional Strategic Transport Network; Source: DfI

<sup>3</sup> [Regional Development Strategy 2035](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Regional Strategic Transport Network Plan 2015](#)

- **Sub-Regional Transport Plan 2015<sup>5</sup>**

The SRTTP covered all the transport infrastructure that was outside of the Belfast Metropolitan Area and the RSTN. Within the 29 towns contained within this area a number of Local Transport Studies were carried out to identify transport related issues and set out measures to address them. These included the provision of alternatives to private cars such as encouraging walking and cycling as well as proposing improved public transport measures. Several of these measures have either been implemented through LDP's or through initiatives by government, councils or voluntary organisations.

### **Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future: A New Approach to Regional Transportation (ESTF)<sup>6</sup>**

2.6 Published in 2011, in contrast to the RTS the ESTF does not set out details of individual projects but instead sets out three high level aims and twelve strategic objectives that are intended to guide strategic investment decisions on transportation interventions beyond 2015. The aims and strategic objectives are;

- Support the Growth of the Economy-
  - 1: Improve connectivity within the region
  - 2: Use road space and railways more efficiently
  - 3: Better maintain transport infrastructure
  - 4: Improve access in our towns and cities
  - 5: Improve access in rural areas
  - 6: Improve connections to key tourism sites
- Enhance the quality of life for all-
  - 7: Improve Safety
  - 8: Enhance Social Inclusion
  - 9: Develop transport programmes focused on the user
- Reduce the Environmental Impact of Transport –
  - 10: Reduce Greenhouse gas emissions from transport
  - 11: Protect biodiversity
  - 12: Reduce water, noise and air pollution

### **Northern Ireland Changing Gear: A Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland<sup>7</sup>**

2.7 Published in 2015, the Strategy aims to transform Northern Ireland into a cycling community over a period of 25 years. It outlines how a comprehensive network of bicycle facilities should be developed, including infrastructure such as bike lanes in urban areas and greenways in rural areas, often utilising disused transport links. The Strategy also seeks to change people's attitudes towards cycling through

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<sup>5</sup> [Sub-Regional Transport Plan 2015](#)

<sup>6</sup> [ESTF: A New Approach to Regional Transportation](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Northern Ireland Changing Gear: A Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland](#)

information campaigns to promote cycling and make them aware of the infrastructure that will be developed to support it.

- 2.8 The Strategy proposes a “Three Pillar Approach” in order to create the infrastructure and then encourage and promote its use, the three pillars are;-
- Build (infrastructure, design, cycle parking and safety),
  - Support (education and training, safety and security, legibility and mapping), and;
  - Promote (respect and understanding, marketing and flagship events and schemes).

### Exercise, Explore, Enjoy – A Strategic Plan for Greenways<sup>8</sup>

- 2.9 Published in 2016 the Strategic Plan aims to develop a network of Greenways across Northern Ireland, utilising disused public transport links such as former railways and canals. Proper utilisation of this resource will create additional opportunities for cycling and walking and serve as a tourism resource. The District currently has two Greenways, the Newry Canal Towpath and the Carlingford Lough Greenway, which utilises both the towpath of the Newry Canal and part of the Dundalk, Newry and Greenore Railway and runs from the centre of Newry, through Victoria Locks to the Border. Proposals exist for additional Greenways along the former Newry to Armagh railway, and on the former Belfast and County Down Railway around Downpatrick.



Figure 2 - Northern Ireland Greenways Map (Source [Northern Ireland Greenways](#) )

<sup>8</sup> [Exercise Explore Enjoy - A Strategic Plan for Greenways](#)



## Transport Plans

- 2.10 DfI is currently preparing a new suite of Transport Plans, these will be informed by a number of Local Transport Studies that will identify the issues relating to that District. The relevant Transport Plan for the District is the Sub Regional Transport Plan. The associated Newry, Mourne and Down Local Transport Study was published by DfI in 2021.<sup>9</sup>

## Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)<sup>10</sup>

- 2.11 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) was adopted in September 2015, it provides a framework for the replacement of the retained Planning Policy Statements by the Local Development Plans of Councils. It also requires the LDP to take account of the ESTF and any Transport Plans.
- 2.12 The SPPS lists “Improving Health and Well-Being” as one of its core principles, paragraph 4.5 sets out a number of elements that can contribute positively to health and well-being, these include;
- ‘better connected communities with safe pedestrian environments,’ and;
  - ‘better integration between land use planning and transport.’
- 2.13 The importance of transport planning to place making is recognised in paragraphs 4.31 to 4.36 which identifies the need for a collaborative approach between all those involved in designing developments and about how the relationship of different buildings and spaces to each other creates a sense of place.
- 2.14 Transportation is listed as one of the subject policies in the SPPS. In paragraph 6.293 it is stated that ‘The successful integration of transport and land use is fundamental to the objective of furthering sustainable development. Planning has a vital contributing role for improving connectivity and promoting more sustainable patterns of transport and travel.’ Paragraph 6.295 highlights how switching to sustainable modes of travel can play a significant role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- 2.15 Paragraph 6.297 sets out the Regional Strategic Objectives in relation to Transportation;
- promote sustainable patterns of development which reduce the need for motorised transport, encourages active travel, and facilitate travel by public transport in preference to the private car;
  - ensure accessibility for all, with the needs of people with disabilities and others whose mobility is impaired given particular consideration;
  - promote the provision of adequate facilities for cyclists in new development;
  - promote parking policies that will assist in reducing reliance on the private car and help tackle growing congestion;

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<sup>9</sup> [Newry Mourne and Down Local Transport Study](#)

<sup>10</sup> [DfI - The Strategic Planning Policy Statement](#)



- protect routes required for new transport schemes including disused transport routes with potential for future reuse;
  - restrict the number of new accesses and control the level of use of existing accesses onto Protected Routes; and
  - promote road safety, in particular for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users.
- 2.16 The SPPS also sets out Regional Strategic Policy on each subject area and provides guidance on how it should be implemented through the LDP process. In Paragraph 6.299 it is stated; “The preparation of a LDP provides the opportunity to assess the transport needs, problems and opportunities within the plan area and to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to transportation issues in the allocation of land for future development, including appropriate integration between transport modes and land use.”
- 2.17 Paragraph 6.300 requires LDP’s to “identify active travel networks and provide a range of infrastructure improvements to increase use of more sustainable modes. In particular, within urban areas, providing enhanced priority to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and an appropriate level of parking provision which is properly managed, should assist in reducing the number of cars in our urban areas.”

### **Planning Policy Statement 3: Access, Movement and Parking<sup>11</sup>**

- 2.18 Planning Policy Statement 3: Access, Movement and Parking (PPS 3) sets out the Department’s planning policies for vehicular and pedestrian access, transport assessment, the protection of transport routes and parking. It was issued in a revised form in February 2005. A clarification of Policy AMP3 – Access to Protected Routes was issued in October 2006.<sup>12</sup> Supplementary Planning Guidance is set out in Developer Control Advice Note 15 (*DCAN 15*)<sup>13</sup> for intending developers, their professional advisors and agents on the standards for vehicular access and also in ‘Parking Standards’<sup>14</sup> which sets the parking standards that the Department will have regard to in assessing proposals for new development.
- 2.19 The main objectives of PPS 3 are to:
- Promote road safety, in particular, for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users;
- Restrict the number of new accesses and control the level of use of existing accesses onto Protected Routes
  - Make efficient use of road space within the context of promoting modal shift to more sustainable forms of transport

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<sup>11</sup> [PPS3 \(Revised\)](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Clarification of Policy AMP3](#)

<sup>13</sup> [DCAN 15](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Parking Standards](#)

- Ensure that new development offers a realistic choice of access by walking, cycling and public transport, recognising that this may be less achievable in some rural areas
- Ensure the needs of people with disabilities and others whose mobility is impaired, are taken into account in relation to accessibility to buildings and parking provision
- Promote the provision of adequate facilities for cyclists in new development
- Promote parking policies that will assist in reducing reliance on the private car and help tackle growing congestion; and
- Protect routes required for new transport schemes including disused transport routes with potential for future reuse.

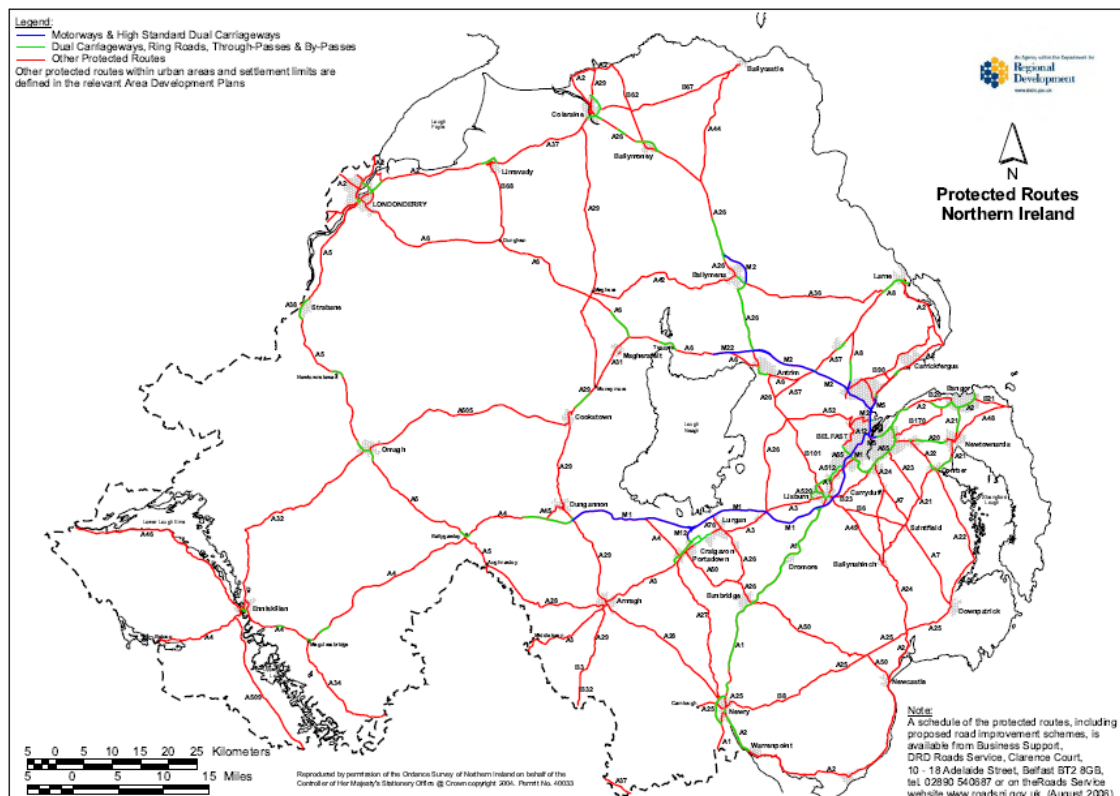


Figure 3 Protected Routes Network Source DfI

### Planning Policy Statement 13: Transportation and Land Use<sup>15</sup>

2.20 Planning Policy Statement 13: Transportation and Land Use (PPS 13) has been prepared to assist in the implementation of the RDS. It aims to guide the integration of transportation and land use, particularly through the preparation of development plans and transport plans. It is also a material consideration in dealing with individual planning applications and appeals.

2.21 The primary objective of PPS 13 is to integrate land use planning and transport by:

- Promoting sustainable transport choices

<sup>15</sup> [PPS 13 - Transportation and Land Use](#)

- Promoting accessibility for all; and
- Reducing the need to travel, especially by private car.

## Local Policy Context

### Existing Area Plans

- 2.22 The existing development plans that apply to Newry, Mourne and Down are:
- Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015
  - Ards and Down Area Plan 2015
  - Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015
- 2.23 The Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 (BNMAP)<sup>16</sup> had a section on transportation that referred to relevant transport schemes which were incorporated in the Sub Regional Transport Plan. Volume 3 of the Plan contained policies specific to Newry and Mourne, a number of local road upgrades and other measures were proposed.

### Ards and Down Area Plan 2015

- 2.24 The Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 (ADAP)<sup>17</sup> sets out two policies in relation to transportation;
- Policy TRAN 1 - Planning protection for road schemes  
Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the availability of land required for road schemes identified in the Plan.
  - Policy TRAN2 – Development reliant on the provision of road schemes  
Development proposals which rely on the construction of road schemes to:
    - Provide satisfactory access and/or;
    - Reduce the impact on the adjacent road network of traffic generated by the proposed development, shall not be permitted in advance of the road scheme being completed to an appropriate stage.

### Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Corporate Plan 2024 - 2027<sup>18</sup>

- 2.25 The Councils mission is to “*To deliver sustainable services and empower our communities through transparent governance and collaboration*”. The Corporate Plan incorporates the outcomes set in the Community Plan into its vision for the District and sets objectives for the Council in achieving these.

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<sup>16</sup> [DfI - Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015](#)

<sup>17</sup> [DfI - Ards/Down Area Plan 2015](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Newry Mourne and Down Corporate Plan 2024-2027](#)

## Newry, Mourne and Down Community Plan "Living Well Together"<sup>19</sup>

- 2.26 The Community Plan is the overarching strategic plan for integrated planning and delivery of services in Newry Mourne and Down. It provides a framework for the strategies and plans the Council will put in place to contribute towards achieving its outcomes.
- 2.27 Section 8 of the Local Government Act 2014, (as amended) requires the Council to take its Community Plan into account in LDP preparation. The LDP team has therefore formulated the Draft Policies in order to contribute towards the achievement of these outcomes.
- 2.28 The Community Plan sets 5 outcomes for the life conditions that it seeks to achieve for Newry Mourne and Down, one of which is relevant to Transportation;
- All People in Newry, Mourne and Down get a good start in life and fulfil their lifelong potential;
- 2.29 The indicators listed under the outcomes include issues such as Level of Infrastructure, Travel Times and Congestion Levels, improvements in which will show progress towards the achievement of these outcomes.

## Cross Boundary Policy Context

- 2.30 In considering the local policy context, it is important to take account of the three neighbouring councils in Northern Ireland and the two in the Republic of Ireland. The table below offers a short summary of each Council's position with regards to transportation development.

Neighbouring Council	Position
Ards and North Down Borough Council	Ards and North Down Borough Council published its Preferred Options Paper <sup>20</sup> in March 2019. It sets out a total of 42 Key Issues for the LDP and lists the preferred options. Five of which relate to Transportation, KY 38 seeks to promote sustainable and active travel by requiring all new development proposals to demonstrate how their promotion has been considered in the proposal and where appropriate require specific measures as Key Site Requirements, KY39 aims to promote sustainable travel through the identification of sites for Park and Ride/Park and Share Facilities, KY40 Reducing Dependence on the Private Car

<sup>19</sup> [Newry Mourne and Down Community Plan 2030 'Living Well Together'](#)

<sup>20</sup> [Ards and North Down Borough Council, Local Development Plan - Preferred Options Paper](#)

	by introducing, where appropriate, Areas of Parking Restraint, KY41 Protect proposed Routes for Transport Schemes and KY42 Identify and Protect Disused Transport Routes for possible future use.
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council published its Preferred Options Paper <sup>21</sup> in March 2018. Key Issues ECN13-18 relate to Transportation, that relate to Protected Routes, Safeguarding Key Strategic Road Improvement Schemes, Protecting Disused Transport Routes, Protecting existing Park and Ride Sites while identifying sites for new schemes, Promote active travel networks and sustainable transport in all new developments within settlements and Promote and Enhance access to Greenways. In all cases the preferred option is to protect existing sites and potential new infrastructure while encouraging a move away from private car dependency.
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council	Lisburn and Castlereagh City Borough Council published its adopted Local Development Plan in September 2023. <sup>22</sup> Strategic Policy 20 – Transportation Infrastructure seeks to support proposals that encourage a modal shift away from the private car, deliver sustainable patterns of development, promote integrated transport, and encourage the development of active travel and Park and Ride. The accompanying LTS sets out 7 objectives as part of the framework for making decisions on new transport schemes. In terms of operational policy, Chapter 11 of Part 2 of the Strategy is titled 'Access and Transport' and it sets out 11 policies that largely update the provisions of PPS3 but introduce new policies in relation to active travel.

<sup>21</sup> [Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council - Local Development Plan Preferred Options Paper](#)

<sup>22</sup> [Lisburn and Castlereagh City Borough Council - Adopted Plan Strategy](#)

Louth County Council	<p>Louth County Council published its Development Plan<sup>23</sup> in September 2021. Chapter 7 is titled "Movement." The overall aim is <i>'To facilitate investment and improvement in transport infrastructure in the County that will support economic growth and investment and the creation of healthy, sustainable communities; by improving connectivity and journey times within and between settlements, promoting and investing in more sustainable modes of travel including walking, cycling and public transport, creating a more attractive public realm, and reducing carbon emissions.'</i> The Plan identifies a number of new schemes, both strategic and local and sets out objectives to encourage more sustainable forms of development such as encouraging a higher density of development along public transport corridors and encouraging a modal shift away from the private car including the provision of EV charging points and more car sharing. Additional Park and ride facilities are to be encouraged at the existing stations in Drogheda and Dundalk as well as measures to improve rural transport and promoting cycling including the development of Greenways.</p>
Monaghan County Council	<p>Monaghan County Council published its draft Development Plan<sup>24</sup> in March 2023. Chapter 7 relates to Transport and Infrastructure, and it lists draft objectives for a range of community facilities. The overall policy approach is <i>"to facilitate the development of County Monaghan through the provision of essential infrastructure and services, while minimising the adverse impacts of development on the environment."</i> The Plan seeks to provide additional transportation infrastructure while encouraging the development of alternatives to the private car, such as</p>

<sup>23</sup> [Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027](#)

<sup>24</sup> [Draft Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031](#)

	walking and cycling, including the provision of Greenways.
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- 2.31 The Council has engaged and responded to neighbouring Council's POPs and draft or final Plan Strategies (where published). The Council is represented on a number of working groups to discuss cross-boundary issues, including the Development Plan Working Group.
- 2.32 The draft Plan Strategy was presented to neighbouring councils in a workshop on 9 April 2025, where representatives from the three neighbouring councils in the north were represented. A similar presentation was held online with the two neighbouring councils in Louth and Monaghan Councils on 8 April 2025. This involved discussion on the proposed Plan objectives, Strategic Policies and new operational policies, along with the consideration of shared cross-boundary issues. Further detail is outlined in the Neighbouring Council Consultation Report (see supporting documents to the draft Plan Strategy on the Council's website).
- 2.33 In consideration of neighbouring Council's development plan documents and discussions held with their officials, it is the opinion of the Council that no conflict is apparent with our draft Plan Strategy insofar as it is related to transportation development.

### 3.0 Preferred Options Paper

- 3.1 Publication of the Preferred Options 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. For each key strategic issue, a range of options were set out and the Council's preferred option identified.
- 3.2 As part of the process of preparing the POP a Preliminary Review of Operational Planning Policy was carried out which drew upon operational experience and changes in regional planning policy to identify issues to be addressed through the preparation of the LDP.
- 3.3 The POP identified three key issues in relation to transportation development:
- Key Issue 15 related to Proposed Transportation Schemes. The Council's preferred option was *"Include non-strategic transport schemes which have been justified by DfI through a Local Transport Strategy for which there is a reasonable prospect of delivery."*
- Key Issue 16 related to Park and Ride Schemes. The Council's preferred option was *"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."*
- Key Issue 17 related to Sustainable/Active Travel and the Identification of Greenways. The Council's preferred option was "Retain the existing policy



approach toward sustainable transport and active travel and identify and protect community greenways.”

- 3.4 A total of 222 responses was received from members of the public, community groups, charitable organisations, private interests and public bodies. None related specifically to the three Transportation related Key Issues.

## 4.0 District Profile

- 4.1 Newry, Mourne & Down District has a comprehensive network of transport infrastructure and services. There is an extensive network of roads ranging from major strategic routes to minor rural roads, as well as a footpath system in most designated settlements, and parts of the National Cycle Network also pass through the District. Public transport provision consists of a network of urban and rural bus services including inter-urban express routes, the area is also connected to the Northern Ireland Rail Network. The following section outlines the main features of existing transportation provision.
- 4.2 The 2021 Northern Ireland Census asked respondents to identify their method of transport to work or study. The results for the District and NI as a whole are given below;

**Table 1: Travel to Place of Work**

	<b>Percentage of all usual residents aged 16 to 74 in employment and currently working</b>	
<b>Method of Transport</b>	N.Ireland	Newry, Mourne and Down
<b>Do not travel: Work mainly from Home</b>	18.87	17.58
<b>Train</b>	0.94	0.34
<b>Bus, minibus or coach</b>	2.77	1.5
<b>Motorcycle, scooter or moped</b>	0.18	0.10
<b>Driving a car or van</b>	62.69	67.47
<b>Passenger in a car or van</b>	4.86	4.89
<b>Car or van pool, shared driving</b>	0.66	0.76
<b>Taxi</b>	0.99	0.49
<b>Bicycle</b>	0.80	0.41
<b>On Foot</b>	6.45	5.52
<b>Other method</b>	0.81	0.95

<b>Total of all usual residents of aged 16 to 74 in employment and currently working (excluding full time students)</b>	813,772	77,026
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Source: [NI Census 2021 Method of Travel to Work](#)

**Table 2: Travel to Place of Study**

	<b>Percentage of all usual residents of primary school age and over in full-time education</b>	
<b>Method of Transport</b>	N.Ireland	Newry, Mourne and Down
<b>Do not travel: Work mainly from Home</b>	3.68	3.36
<b>Train</b>	1.49	0.50
<b>Bus, minibus or coach</b>	23.61	27.12
<b>Motorcycle, scooter or moped</b>	0.03	0.021
<b>Driving a car or van</b>	0.19	5.44
<b>Passenger in a car or van</b>	42.26	46.60
<b>Car or van pool, shared driving</b>	0.19	0.2
<b>Taxi</b>	1.38	1.26
<b>Bicycle</b>	0.50	0.27
<b>On Foot</b>	20.51	14.68
<b>Other method</b>	0.52	0.53
<b>Total of all usual residents of primary school age and over in full-time education</b>	401,812	39,865

Source: [NI Census 2021 Method of travel to study](#)

## Road Network

- 4.3 Transportation within the Council Area is primarily provided by the Road Network with 85.52% of households owning at least 1 car or van according to the 2021 Census. The Department for Infrastructure is the sole roads authority in Northern Ireland and is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of all public roads and their supporting infrastructure, as well as for the development of new public road schemes and improvements to the existing network. There is approximately 3,000

kilometres of roads within Newry, Mourne and Down according to DfI, the entirety of the District falls within DfI's Southern Area Division.

- 4.4 The roads that form part of the Regional Strategic Transport Network (RSTN) within the District (see paragraph 2.5) are the A1 Belfast-Dublin road, the A2 Newry-Warrenpoint road (both of which are dualled for their entire length), the A7 Belfast-Downpatrick road, the A24 Belfast-Newcastle Road the A28 Newry-Armagh Road. The A1 is part of a Key Transport Corridor while the A7 and A28 are classed as link corridors and the A2 and A24 are classed as trunk roads.
- 4.5 As well as the roads forming part of the RSTN, a number of other roads are designated as Protected Routes, on account of their import role. The designation of Protected Routes is a matter for DfI, their designation in any plan documents are on a "for information only" basis and may be subject to change in accordance with DfI's procedures (see Figure 3 under paragraph 2.19).

### Strategic Network Improvements

- 4.6 A number of upgrades to the trunk road network in the District are either in the planning stages or are being implemented. Where schemes have been identified they will be protected from inappropriate development by the Plan.
- 4.7 **Narrow Water Bridge:** Construction of a 0.5km bridge connecting the A2 at Narrow Water Roundabout across the estuary of the Newry River to the R172 north of Omeath in County Louth is currently underway and is scheduled to be opened in 2028.
- 4.8 **A1-A2 Newry Southern Relief Road:** A new road of approximately 2.4kms in length connecting the A1 at the Eliisholding Road junction, to the A2 at Greenbank in Newry. The Environmental Impact Assessment and Draft Legal Orders for the scheme have been published and were subject to a public consultation which closed on March 4<sup>th</sup> 2025. A public inquiry into the scheme is anticipated, construction is expected to commence no earlier than 2028.<sup>25</sup>
- 4.9 **A24 Ballynahinch Bypass:** A proposed new road of approximately 3.1kms allowing traffic running between Belfast and Newcastle to bypass Ballynahinch. A route along the eastern side of Ballynahinch has been identified. On March 12<sup>th</sup> 2025 the Minister announced that the scheme is proceeding to business case and procurement stage, it is possible that work could start in the 2028/29 financial year.<sup>26</sup>
- 4.10 The LDP Team will continue to liaise with DfI as its capital programme changes, any schemes that require the protection of LDP policy can be incorporated into the LDP either at the statutory review of the Plan Strategy, or in the preparation of the Local Policies Plan.

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<sup>25</sup> [DfI - Newry Southern Relief Road](#)

<sup>26</sup> [DfI - 'Kimmins announces next steps on A24 Ballynahinch Bypass scheme'](#)

## **Modes of Travel**

- 4.11 The main mode of travel in Newry, Mourne and Down is private car, together with public transport, walking and cycling these account for the vast majority of journeys. The 2021 Travel Survey for Northern Ireland<sup>27</sup> found that for the whole of Northern Ireland private cars accounted for 69% of all journeys, with walking the next most popular mode with 24%.

### **Private Car**

- 4.12 Given the high level of private car ownership recorded in the Census, it will remain the dominant mode of travel over the plan period. A total of 73.12% of people in the District use a car to travel to work, either their own or as passenger or in a car pool.

### **Public Transport**

- 4.13 Public Transport services in the District are provided primarily by Translink through its Ulsterbus and NI Railways services. Ulsterbus operates services from bus stations in Downpatrick, Kilkeel, Newcastle and Newry which serve the surrounding local settlements. Goldline Express services to Belfast originate and terminate in both Newry and Downpatrick, Newry is also a stop on the Belfast-Dublin bus services operated by Ulsterbus and Bus Eireann. The latter also operates a service between Newry and Dundalk.
- 4.14 Ulsterbus also operates a Goldline Express service between Newry and Downpatrick which also serves Mayobridge, Hilltown, Kilcoo, Castlewellan and Clough.
- 4.15 A number of private firms operate bus services across the District, most notably Aircoach which provides a stop on its services between Belfast and Dublin Airport.
- 4.16 The only rail station in the District is at Newry, the station has a park and ride facility as well as a shuttlebus connection to Newry Bus Centre. The station is primarily used by the Enterprise service between Belfast and Dublin which now operates an hourly service. There are also rush hour services to and from Portadown which connect with other NI Railways services

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<sup>27</sup> [Travel Survey for Northern Ireland 2021](#)

## Car Parking

- 4.17 Responsibility for public car parking was transferred from DfI to the Council upon its creation on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2015. The Local Transport Study (LTS) surveyed the car parking available in the centres of the four largest settlements of the District, it's findings on the number of spaces are given below.

	On Street		Off Street		
Settlement	Free	Pay	Free	Pay	Total
Newry	792	431	879	2388	4,490
Downpatrick	241	-	779	227	1,247
Newcastle	197	-	98	-	295
Warrenpoint	443	-	419	-	862

Table 3: Car parking spaces in Newry, Downpatrick, Newcastle and Warrenpoint

- 4.18 The LTS states that many of the Free car parking spaces are subject to restrictions and include spaces for Badge Holders or Loading Bays. Many spaces in the settlement are operated by private firms and include car parks associated with supermarkets and tourist facilities etc.
- 4.19 The Technical Supplements to the 2015 Sub Regional Transport Plan collected information on the occupancy levels of car parks in the main settlements, the Plan was produced prior to the reorganisation of local government and therefore supplements were produced for each of the then 26 Councils<sup>28</sup>. They showed that Newry in particular had severe issues with on-street car parking with spaces in the City Centre having an occupancy rate of 103%. In contrast Warrenpoint's Occupancy rate was 23%, Downpatrick's was 60% and Newcastle's was 66%.

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<sup>28</sup> [Sub-Regional Transport Plan - Technical Supplements](#)

## Park and Ride

- 4.20 There are a limited number of park & ride/share sites within the Newry, Mourne and Down District. In terms of reducing the overall number of vehicles on the road and reducing the length of time vehicles spend on the road, park and ride or park and share sites offer the potential to reduce congestion in town centres, reduce pollution and save money for the traveller. At present there are 3 main sites within the District.<sup>29</sup> In addition to the locations listed below, Park and Ride/Share happens at a number of locations throughout the District, either in association with the car parks ancillary to transport facilities such as Newry Railway Station, at dedicated facilities provided by the Council such as at Bann Road, Castlewellan or informally.”<sup>30</sup>

	Location	Spaces	Comments
<b>Newcastle/Clough</b>	A24 Newcastle Rd/Clough Rd Roundabout	16	Bus service (to Belfast)
<b>Sheepbridge, Newry</b>	A1	25	N/A
<b>Cloghogue, Newry</b>	A1	25	N/A

Table 4 Park and Ride Facilities and Spaces

## Community Transport

- 4.21 Community Transport is a term covering a wide range of solutions usually developed to cover a specifically identified transport need, typically run by the local community for local neighbourhoods on a not-for-profit basis. Community transport provides the connectivity needed to get otherwise isolated or excluded groups of people to a range of destinations and helps to develop sustainable communities. It is often provided through minibuses and volunteer car schemes.
- 4.22 Community Transport Services are provided through Rural Community Transport Partnerships. There are currently two operational within the District, Down District Accessible Transport<sup>31</sup> and Newry and Mourne Community Transport.<sup>32</sup>

## Walking and Cycling

- 4.23 A key theme of government at all levels is to promote a modal shift from private car usage to walking and cycling, which in turn will have clear benefits in relation to reducing congestion, vehicle emissions and improving health. Walking is

<sup>29</sup> [NIDirect - Park and Ride Sites](#)

<sup>30</sup> [Newry Mourne and Down Council - Opening of Bann Road Park and Share facility](#)

<sup>31</sup> [NI Direct - Down District Accessible Transport](#)

<sup>32</sup> [NI Direct - Newry and Mourne Community Transport](#)

facilitated through the provision of footpaths along main roads as well as by dedicated recreational footpaths along river corridors, in parks etc.

- 4.24 As stated in paragraphs 2.7-2.8 above, government policy is to encourage the increased use of cycling. Many cycle routes are along footpaths such as the Newry Canal Towpath and the Carlingford Lough Greenway. Dedicated routes for mountain biking etc exist in several of the country parks within the District. Approval for the Newcastle Active Travel Hub was announced by the DfI Minister on March 24<sup>th</sup> 2025<sup>33</sup>

### **Greenways and Disused Transport Routes**

- 4.25 As stated in paragraph 2.9 above, the District has two operational greenways that utilise the Newry Canal. Proposals exist for new greenways on former railway lines such as from Newry to Armagh and Downpatrick to Ardglass. Planning Policy protects such disused infrastructure from development to preserve the possibility of its re-use for a range of schemes. Greenways can also be developed on a local scale to connect neighbourhoods, policy will allow for the provision and protection of such 'community greenways.'

### **Harbours and Ferries**

- 4.26 Warrenpoint Harbour is located upon Carlingford Lough and is the third busiest general cargo port in Northern Ireland and the fifth busiest on the island of Ireland. The port operates daily roll-on roll-off services to Heysham in Lancashire and Container Services to Cardiff and Bristol. Warrenpoint Harbour received its first Cruise ship in July 2014 and there have been regular visits to the harbour from cruise ships in the following years.
- 4.27 There are currently two car ferry services operating across the two sea loughs that form part of the District's coastline. The Strangford Lough Ferry service is operated by DfI on a year-round basis and connects Strangford with Portaferry. A service connecting Greencastle with Greenore in County Louth is operated by a private company during the summer months

## **5.0 Consultee and Councillor Engagement**

- 5.1 In order to meet the requirements set out in the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 relating to the need for the Plan Strategy to take account of the RDS, other policy and guidance issued by the Department and other relevant government strategies and plans, the Council has engaged with key consultees representing relevant central government departments and agencies. This engagement was undertaken in three parts over the period June 2022 – June 2023. Stakeholders were provided with LDP Plan Strategy strategies and policies and afforded the opportunity to review and provide written comment.

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<sup>33</sup> [DfI - Minister announces Active Travel and Greenways Projects](#)



- 5.2 Elected Members have been engaged in the LDP Plan Strategy from the POP stage. An initial preparatory studies paper on Transportation was presented to Council in February 2017. This paper's purpose was to provide Council with an overview of matters relating to Transportation and implications for land use in the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Area.
- 5.3 The draft Plan Strategy Transportation policies were subsequently presented to Members of the Council's Planning Committee on March 10 2022.
- 5.4 The draft policies and associated designations were approved by Members with no amendments.
- 5.5 Finalised draft policies and designations were brought back to Members at a Special Committee on the 31 March 2025, these were approved and the decision ratified by full Council on the 6 May 2025.

## **6.0 Draft Plan Strategy Policy Approach**

- 6.1 In bringing forward transportation policy for the district the Council has been mindful to ensure that changes to operational policy, as currently set out in the Planning Policy Statements and the current LDPs, are aligned with regional policy requirements for transportation currently contained within the SPPS.
- 6.2 The Local Transport Study for Newry, Mourne and Down prepared by DfI set out in Appendix 5A seeks to support the policies contained within the draft Plan Strategy. This will also be used to inform the emerging Local Transport Plan being prepared by the Department to accompany the Local Policies Plan. Those transportation projects already identified by DfI and those yet to emerge from their planning stages will also be afforded protection through the LDP.
- 6.3 The draft Plan Strategy plays an important role in implementing regional planning policy through its own strategic and operational planning policies and supporting the Council's Corporate and Community Plans. The vision for the LDP set out in Chapter 4 recognises the importance of making the District a connected place as this will improve the lives of residents and make the District more attractive for investment and tourism.
- 6.4 The objectives of the LDP seek to capitalise on Newry's role as a gateway and Downpatrick's role as a hub, provide a generous supply of land for economic development in locations which are accessible by means other than the private car, as well as promoting integration between transportation and new development to reduce the need for journeys and to encourage alternatives to the private car and protect strategically important transport routes.  
Overarching Strategic Policies and Spatial Growth Strategy.
- 6.5 Part 1 of the Draft Plan Strategy sets out a number of strategic policies and a Spatial Growth Strategy in support of its aims and objectives, these in turn link

into the operational policies contained within Part 2. The following strategic policies relate to transportation issues: -

Strategic Policy SP1 – Sustainable Development and Climate Change

- 4. Create and enhance opportunities for active travel and trips by public transport (Policy TRA8);

Strategic Policy SP3 – Developer Contributions and Planning Agreements

- Contributions may be sought for the provision of transport infrastructure as part of the Key Site Requirements for a site.

- 6.6 Part 1 also contains the Transportation Strategy which is a key component underpinning the Spatial Growth Strategy. The Strategy sets out how regional policy and the Local Transport Study have been used to inform the development of the policies contained within the LDP.
- 6.7 Strategic Policy TRS1 – Sustainable Transport states that “The Plan will support development proposals that improve connectivity through promoting the integration of sustainable transport and land use which supports a modal shift (such as walking, cycling, and public transport) in accordance with the Local Transport Study and Local Transport Plan.”

## Operational Policies

- 6.8 Part 2 of the Draft Plan Strategy sets out the operational planning policies, and also contains a General Policy GP1, which applies to all developments. In relation to transportation it states:

*“Planning permission will be granted for development proposals where the development accords with the policies and proposals as set out in the Plan Strategy and provided there is no unacceptable adverse impact in relation to the following criteria:*

*2. Access, Movement and Parking*

- *The development provides suitable access, servicing and parking arrangements in accordance with the latest guidance published by the Department for Infrastructure;*
- *A movement pattern is provided that, insofar as possible, supports walking and cycling, respects existing public rights of way, meets the needs of those with disabilities and other mobility impairments and provides safe and convenient movement within the development and access to public transport and local community facilities; and*
- *The existing road network has sufficient capacity or can be adequately upgraded to safely manage any extra vehicular traffic that the proposed development will generate;”*

- 6.9 The Justification and Amplification section of the Policy states that achieving a reduction in car usage through the implementation of Active Travel leading to

more usage of walking and cycling will also help to contribute to the achievement of other LDP objectives such as reducing air pollution.

- 6.10 A total of 11 subject policies relating to Transportation are set out under Policies TRA1-TRA11. The policies largely update the legacy policies from PPS3 and the Clarification of Policy AMP3 to reflect the current regional planning policy approach. They also take into account the LDP Aims and Objectives and the Key Issues identified in the POP.
- 6.11 Policy TRA8 entitled Active Travel, expands upon the equivalent PPS3 policy on cycling to include all aspects of Active Travel including walking and the linkages between pedestrian and cycling infrastructure with public transport provision.

## 7.0 Soundness

- 7.1 The draft Plan Strategy has been prepared to take due regard to meeting the tests of soundness as set out in the DfI Development Plan Practice Note 6: Soundness (Version 2, May 2017). The draft Plan Strategy insofar as it relates to the strategic policies and proposals relating to transportation development is regarded as sound because it meets the various tests of soundness as summarised below.

<b>Procedural Tests</b>	
P2	The POP has been published and any relevant comments received have been taken into consideration
P3	Policies TRS1, GP1 and TRA1-11 have been subjected to sustainability appraisal. Details of which are in the Sustainability Appraisal Report
<b>Consistency Tests</b>	
C1	Policies TRS1, GP1 and TRA1-11 have taken account of relevant provisions of the Regional Development Strategy – 2035, as set out in paragraphs 2.2-2.4 of this Technical Supplement.
C2	Policies TRS1, GP1 and TRA1-11 have taken account of the Council's Community Plan, it provides a framework for the determination of planning applications to provide Transportation Facilities, which will help to achieve the identified outcomes, and protect land designated for such facilities from inappropriate development, as per paragraphs 2.13 - 2.16 of this Technical Supplement.
C3	Policies TRS1, GP1 and TRA1-11 have taken account of the provisions of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement as it relates to Transportation as per paragraphs 2.6-2.8 of this Technical Supplement.
C4	Policies TRS1, GP1 and TRA1-11 have taken regard of the existing Local Development Plans in Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, and has incorporated their relevant provisions, and to any relevant provisions of published LDP documents of

	neighbouring Councils, as per paragraphs 2.12 – 2.22 of this Technical Supplement.
<b>Coherence and Effectiveness Tests</b>	
CE1	Policies TRS1, GP1 and TRA1-11 have taken account of the published LDP of a neighbouring Council, there is no conflict between the Policies TRA1-11 and the equivalent provisions of this LDP, as per paragraphs 2.12 – 2.22 of this Technical Supplement.
CE2	Policies TRS1, GP1 and has been formulated on a sound evidence base, drawing on the baseline information set out in LDP Preparation Paper 5, which has been updated as required during the preparation of this Technical Supplement.
CE3	Annual monitoring is not considered necessary as DfI will make any changes to its list of capital projects known to the Council either through the preparation of the Local Policies Plan, or where necessary the Development Management Process.
CE4	Policies TRS1, GP1 and TRA1-11 will be reviewed during the statutory review of the Plan Strategy and any changes necessary will be made through this process.

## 8.0 Evolution of Policies

Existing Policy PPS3 Access, Movement and Parking	Regional Planning Policy	POP Preferred Option	Comments received to POP	Draft Plan Strategy Policy
Policy AMP1 Creating and Accessible Environment. Aims to create an accessible environment for everyone, new developments should take account of the needs of those with disability or mobility impairment.	<b>RDS</b> Newry and Warrenpoint part of South Eastern Gateway, Downpatrick and Newcastle also form a hub cluster  RG2 – ‘Deliver a balanced approach to Transport Infrastructure,’	KY15 – Proposed Transportation Schemes  KY16 – Park and Ride Schemes  KY17 – Sustainable/Active Travel and Identification of Greenways	N/A	Policy TRA1 Creating an Accessible Environment. The new policy is an update of the equivalent policy in PPS3 taking account of changes in regional planning policy and other factors.
Policy AMP2 Access to Public Roads. Aims to ensure that new accesses to public roads, or intensification of existing ones are provided in a safe manner.	RG9 – ‘Reduce our Carbon Footprint and facilitate mitigation and adaptation to climate change while improving air quality,’  SFG14 – ‘Improving access for rural communities.’			Policy TRA2 Access to Public Roads. The new policy is an update of the equivalent policy in PPS3 taking account of changes in regional planning policy and other factors.
Policy AMP3 Access to Protected Routes (as clarified) Aims to restrict access to protected routes unless an exception	SFG15 – ‘Strengthen the Gateways for regional competitiveness,’  <b>SPPS</b>			Policy TRA3 Access to Protected Routes. The new policy is an update of the equivalent policy in PPS3 (and its subsequent

can be demonstrated.	Core principle of "Improving Health and Well-Being. Para 4.5 – 'better connected communities with safe pedestrian environments,' and 'better integration between land use planning and transport,'			clarification) taking account of changes in regional planning policy and other factors. Policy also includes provisions for Petrol Filling Stations in the Countryside that are located on Protected Routes.
Policy AMP4 Protection for new Transport Schemes Permission will not be granted for development which would prejudice the implementation of a transport scheme identified in a plan.	Para 6.297 – Regional Strategic Objectives  Para 6.299 – 'assess the transport needs, problems and opportunities within the plan area,'  Para 6.300 – 'identify active travel networks and provide a range of infrastructure improvements to increase use of more sustainable modes'			Policy TRA4 Protection of New Transport Schemes. The new policy is an update of the original taking account of changes in regional planning policy and other factors. The Policy now includes new rail, public transport park and ride/share and pedestrian/cycle schemes among the schemes that will be afforded protection.
Policy AMP5 Disused Transport Routes Permission will not be granted for development				Policy TRA5 The new policy is an update of the original taking account of changes in regional

which would prejudice the future re-use of a disused transport route identified in a Development Plan for transport or recreational purposes.				planning policy and other factors. The policy also provides greater clarity as to which disused routes will be protected eg, former railways and canals. Where there is no current proposal for re-use for transport related purposes, they will instead be protected for nature conservation, recreation or tourism purposes.
Policy AMP6 Transport Assessment Outlines that developers will be required to submit a Transport Assessment where appropriate.				Policy TRA6 Transport Assessment The new policy is an update of the original taking account of changes in regional planning policy and other factors. It also expands the definition of proposals that will require a TA and states that they may also need to be accompanied by a Travel Plan.



Policy AMP7 Car Parking and Servicing Arrangements Outlines proposals will be required to provide adequate provision for car parking and servicing arrangements.				Policy TRA7 Car Parking and Servicing Arrangements The new policy is an update of the original and other factors.
Policy AMP8 Cycle Provision Permission will only be granted for development providing jobs, shopping, leisure and services, where the needs of cyclists are considered.				Policy TRA8 Active Travel Policy is retitled to include all aspects of Active Travel such as cycling, and to ensure linkages to public transport provision taking account of changes in regional planning policy
Policy AMP9 Design of Car Parking Permission will only be granted for car parking of a high standard of design, layout and landscaping.				Policy TRA9 Design of Car Parking The new policy is an update of the original taking account of changes in regional planning policy and other factors. The policy contains a new provision that the needs of people with disabilities or impaired mobility should be taken into

				account in designing car parking
<p>Policy AMP10 Provision of Public and Private Car Parks Permission will only be granted for the development or extension of public or private car parks when they meet the criteria listed within.</p>				<p>Policy TRA10 Provision of Public and Private Car Parks The new policy is an update of the original taking account of changes in regional planning policy and other factors.</p>
<p>Policy AMP11 Temporary Car Parks Permission will only be granted for temporary car parks when a proposal meets the criteria listed within.</p>				<p>Policy TRA11 The new policy is an update of the original taking account of changes in regional planning policy and other factors. New provision that all provisions must comply with the requirements of Policy TRA10.</p>
<p>PPS13 General Principles 1-12 Outlines the general principles of transportation and land use planning.</p>				<p>Strategic Policy 1 - Sustainable Development and Climate Change. Policy requires the creation of new opportunities for active travel and public transport, it</p>

				<p>links to Policy TRA8.</p> <p>Strategic Policy SP3 – Developer Contributions and Planning Agreements Contributions for the development of infrastructure needed to support the development of transport links to a site may be required as part of Key Site Requirements.</p> <p>Strategic Policy TRS1 – Sustainable Transport LDP aims to encourage a modal shift away from the private car and the integration of sustainable transport and land use.</p> <p>General Policy GP1 – Applies to all development proposals, requires that schemes have adequate access to public roads, provide for alternatives to private cars</p>
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				and there is sufficient capacity on the existing road networks to accommodate the additional traffic.
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## Appendices

### **Appendix 5A Newry, Mourne and Down Local Transport Study**

Note: The above Appendix is a separate document and can be viewed on the Council's website.

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