

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

Forlíonadh Teicniúla 6 – Tithíocht

Meitheamh 2025

Technical Supplement 6 – Tourism

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

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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 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) draft Plan Strategy. It forms one of the subject based technical supplements that should be read alongside the Plan Strategy to provide justification for the policies proposed therein.
- 1.2 This builds on LDP Paper 7: Tourism (January 2017) which provides baseline information on tourism and formed part of the evidence base for the Preferred Options Paper.
- 1.3 This technical supplement provides an overview of the regional and local policy context and the district profile of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council in respect of tourism development.

Planning and Tourism

- 1.4 Tourism incorporates a wide range of activities. It can include visits and travel associated for professional, business and domestic purposes as well as for holidays and recreation. In some circumstances, more than one purpose may be involved, the duration of tourist trips is variable as they may include an annual family holiday as well as a wide range of shorter trips, weekend breaks and day trips. As a result, Tourism is an extremely diverse form of activity which is subject to changing trends in the types, distribution and duration of tourist activity.
- 1.5 Tourism expenditure supports a varied range of economic activities. Visitors directly spending on tourist accommodation and use of tourist amenities, tourism plays an important role in helping to support viability of many local suppliers, services and facilities. It improves assets and provides infrastructure for local people and tourists.
- 1.6 Through utilising existing environmental, historical, cultural and geographic assets, tourism can be a key economic driver capable of stimulating further growth and development opportunities. Tourism can benefit the assets on which it depends for example through assisting in the financing of conservation or enhancement initiatives. In towns and cities tourism can contribute positively to urban regeneration.
- 1.7 In rural areas, tourism is important to the development of the rural economy by offering, for example, opportunities for farm diversification.
- 1.8 Sustainable tourism development is brought about by balancing the needs of tourists and the tourism industry along with protecting the assets of the

destination. This requires management and the land use planning system has a key role in managing tourism-related development through planning policies that provide a framework for identifying appropriate development opportunities and safeguarding tourism assets from harmful development.

2.0 Policy Context

Regional Policy Context

Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Doing What Matters Most'

- 2.1 The Programme for Government (PfG) was agreed by the Executive on February 27th 2025. The PfG framework sets out the Executive for our society and provides a strategic context for key policies and strategies. The Draft Programme has identified immediate priorities, "Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy" and specially "We will set up a new Skills Fund to assist sectors struggling to recruit into vital roles. This will include a new Tourism and Hospitality Careers Programme".

Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)

- 2.2 The RDS 2035 provides an overarching strategic planning framework to facilitate and guide decisions and investments. It recognises that Northern Ireland's environment is one of its greatest assets which benefits in terms of the economy and quality of life.
- 2.3 It provides strategic guidance- Regional Guidance (RG) that applies regionally across NI and Spatial Framework Guidance (SFG) which is additional to the RG and is tailored to each of the 5 components of the Spatial Framework.
- 2.4 RG4 promotes a sustainable approach to the provision of tourism infrastructure by:
- Promoting a balanced approach that safeguards tourism infrastructure while benefiting society and the economy;
 - Improving facilities for tourists in support of the Tourist Signature Destinations, including The Mournes and the St. Patrick and Christian Heritage Trail, as identified in the former Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment's draft Tourism Strategy 2010;
 - Encouraging environmentally sustainable tourism development.
- 2.5 RG 11 seeks to "conserve, protect and, where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment" which are key assets for attracting tourism.
- 2.6 The spatial framework of the RDS identifies The Mournes, Strangford Lough and Coast and the Ring of Gullion as Strategic Natural Resources. It recognises the setting of Newry, close to the Mourne Mountains, makes it an attractive tourist destination. It also recognises Downpatrick as a key tourism centre of

regional significance due to its historical and archaeological interest largely connected to St Patrick. It notes it has potential to cluster with Newcastle which, with its surrounding natural landscape, has year round activity based tourism opportunities for walking, climbing, fishing, cycling and golf. It notes that the promenade and coastal walk were completely transformed by a significant regeneration project that further enhanced the tourism offering. However, it notes that Newcastle's location positioned between 2 Special Areas of Conservation, the Eastern Mourne and Murlough National Nature Reserve means that any development in and around the town needs to take account of the potential environmental impact.

- 2.7 SFG13 identifies tourism as one industry that can provide jobs and opportunities in rural areas. and notes the expansion of rural tourism and associated development that is both sustainable and environmentally sensitive should be encouraged.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

- 2.8 The SPPS recognises the planning system has a key role in managing tourism related development through planning policies that provide a framework for identifying appropriate development opportunities and safeguarding tourism assets from harmful development. It aims to manage the provision of sustainable and high-quality tourism developments in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment.
- 2.9 The Regional Strategic Objectives for tourism are:
- Facilitate sustainable tourism development in an environmentally sensitive manner;
 - Contribute to the growth of the regional economy by facilitating tourism growth;
 - Safeguard tourism assets from inappropriate development;
 - Utilise and develop the tourism potential of settlements by facilitating tourism development of an appropriate nature, location and scale;
 - Sustain a vibrant rural community by supporting tourism development of an appropriate nature, location and scale in rural areas; and
 - Ensure a high standard of quality and design for all tourism development.
- 2.10 The SPPS states that policies to safeguard tourist assets will be contained in the LDP, together with policies for tourism development such as tourism accommodation, amenity facilities, and holiday parks, and the criteria for consideration of such proposals. There should be a general presumption in favour of tourism development within settlements.

- 2.11 In the countryside there is a need, in the interests of rural amenity, and wider sustainability objectives, to manage the level of new build for tourism purposes. The guiding principle should be to facilitate tourism development where it supports rural communities and promotes a healthy rural economy and tourism sector.

Planning Policy Statement 16: Tourism

- 2.12 Planning Policy Statement 16 Tourism (PPS 16) was published in 2013. It aims to manage the provision of sustainable and high-quality tourism developments in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment and shares the objectives of the SPPS. It provides planning policy for tourism development, including the main forms of tourist accommodation and tourist amenities. It also provides policy for the safeguarding of tourism assets from development likely to adversely impact upon the tourism value of the environmental asset.

- 2.13 The main objectives of PPS 16 are to:

- facilitate sustainable tourism development in an environmentally sensitive manner;
- contribute to the growth of the regional economy by facilitating tourism growth;
- safeguard tourism assets from inappropriate development ;
- utilise and develop the tourism potential of settlements by facilitating tourism development of an appropriate nature, location and scale;
- sustain a vibrant rural community by supporting tourism development of an appropriate nature, location and scale in rural areas;
- ensure a high standard of quality and design for all tourism development.

Planning Policy Statement 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside

- 2.14 Planning Policy Statement 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside was published in June 2010. It aims to manage development in the countryside in a manner which strikes a balance between the need to protect the countryside from unnecessary or inappropriate development, while supporting rural communities.

- 2.15 The main objectives of PPS 21 are to:

- to manage growth in the countryside to achieve appropriate and sustainable patterns of development that meet the essential needs of a vibrant rural community;

- to conserve the landscape and natural resources of the rural area and to protect it from excessive, inappropriate or obtrusive development and from the actual or potential effects of pollution;
- to facilitate development necessary to achieve a sustainable rural economy; including appropriate farm diversification and other economic activity; and
- to promote high standards in the design, siting and landscaping of development in the countryside.

2.16 Policy CTY 11 – Farm Diversification provides scope for Tourism activity as per para 5.47, “This policy aims to promote forms of diversification that are sustainable in the countryside, including suitable tourism or agri-tourism schemes. It is important that the countryside is not spoilt by the unfettered development of urban uses. Diversification proposals, therefore, should be of a scale and nature appropriate for the location and be capable of satisfactory integration into the rural landscape. Applications for large-scale proposals more suitable to the urban area or existing urban-based enterprises seeking relocation will not be acceptable”.

Planning Policy Statement 8: Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation

2.17 Planning Policy Statement 8: Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation was published in February 2004. The main objectives of this Planning Policy Statement are:

- to safeguard existing open space and sites identified for future such provision;
- to ensure that areas of open space are provided as an integral part of new residential development and that appropriate arrangements are made for their management and maintenance in perpetuity;
- to facilitate appropriate outdoor recreational activities in the countryside;
- to ensure that new open space areas and sporting facilities are convenient and accessible for all sections of society, particularly children, the elderly and those with disabilities;
- to achieve high standards of siting, design and landscaping for all new open space areas and sporting facilities; and
- to ensure that the provision of new open space areas and sporting facilities is in keeping with the principles of environmental conservation and helps sustain and enhance biodiversity.

2.18 Policy OS 3 Outdoor Recreation in the Countryside, para 5.30 states “The development of golf courses can facilitate agricultural diversification and encourage tourism, but can also have a detrimental impact on the environment particularly because of the scale of such development.

Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage

- 2.19 Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage was published in March 1999. Policy BH 15, The Re-use of Non-listed Vernacular Buildings justification, para 9.3, states "The Department wishes therefore to encourage the re-use of such vernacular buildings by sympathetic renovation or conversion for a range of appropriate uses. This may include proposals for tourism or recreation use, small-scale employment uses or new rural enterprises".

Draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland

- 2.20 The draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland (2018) will inform and guide the regulation, management, use and protection of our marine area. It is a single document made up of two plans, one for the inshore region and one for the offshore region. The draft plan sets out Tourism and Recreation as a key activity policy and states that proposals for tourism and recreation will be considered favourably where there will be no unacceptable adverse impact on marine activities, uses and/or the marine area and a legitimate public access to marine and coastal areas is retained.

Local Policy Context

Existing Area Plans

- 2.21 The existing development plans that apply to Newry, Mourne and Down District are:
- Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 (ADAP)
 - Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 (BNMAP)

Ards and Down Area Plan 2015

- 2.22 The Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 recognises the district has excellent growth potential which rests firmly on the beauty of the landscapes and variety of interests and heritage features to be enjoyed. It notes Strangford Lough/St Patrick's country, the Lecale Coast, Slieve Croob and the Mourne Mountains are recognised for the rarity and quality of their landscapes and offer opportunities for touring and diversity of recreational activities.
- 2.23 The Plan Strategy of ADAP seeks to promote appropriate growth of the tourism industry however no specific plan policies with regards to tourism development were included. It refers to the signature projects of St Patrick/Christian Heritage and The Mournes and identifies Strangford Lough as a growth opportunity.

Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015

- 2.24 The Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 acknowledges that tourism is an important industry within the Plan area. It recognises the contribution that tourism can make both in terms of the economy and in relation to the quality of life for both visitors and residents. The Plan's overall tourism strategy includes the promotion of the development of sustainable tourism. This means facilitating tourist development in suitable locations without adversely impacting on environmental and man-made assets which attract tourists. This is achieved through the promotion of settlements as sustainable locations for development and conserving assets through environmental designations. An example being the Mourne Special Countryside Area², which affords appropriate protection to one of NI's primary landscape and tourist assets. The coast is also recognised as being a traditional tourist destination resulting in the Plan area being able to offer existing tourist facilities including various types of tourist accommodation.
- 2.25 BNMAP did not generally seek to designate local policy areas for tourism as proposals for tourism development are to be considered in accordance with prevailing regional policies. The plan offers no specific plan policies with regards to tourism development in the area. It does however note cross border trade and shopping as a growth opportunity. It also notes development opportunity sites were identified to accommodate tourist and leisure facilities in towns.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Community Plan 'Living Well Together'

- 2.26 The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 introduced a statutory link between the Local Development Plan and Council's Community Plan. The Plan, which was published in 2017, is the overarching strategic plan for the integrated planning and delivering 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 the outcomes in the community plan and it is based on a detailed analysis of future risks and opportunities for the district.
- 2.27 It identifies 5 positive outcomes for the district which it aims to focus the delivery of services over the Plan to 2030. One of the outcomes is "All people in Newry, Mourne and Down benefit from prosperous communities". It suggests that enhancing the local tourism product for the district by developing a strong, cohesive, holistic and well integrated product and brand, will attract both increased visitors and increased visitor spend to the area. It states the district is an area rich with tourism assets, natural beauty, cultural heritage and opportunities for outdoor recreation, that when properly utilised, will contribute to substantial economic growth in the district. The level of

² BNMAP designated three Special countryside Areas: The Mourne, Ring of Gullion and Slieve Croob

overnight visitors, average spend per trip by visitors and the occupancy level are identified as indicators for measuring the success of this outcome.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Corporate Plan 2024 – 2027

- 2.28 The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's vision, objectives and themes that improve the lives and livelihoods of the people who live and work within the District. The corporate plan aims to facilitate the aims alongside the Council's Community Plan. It sets out eight strategic objectives that are aligned to the five themes of the Community Plan and will be delivered in collaboration and partnership with a range of stakeholders.
- 2.29 One of the eight strategic objectives is to "support regenerative tourism opportunities which promotes culture, heritage and the environment". This objective is to be delivered by a number of key actions including the delivery of the Council's Tourism Strategy. The measures of success include the level of visitor spend, the number of overnight stays, the level of visitor satisfaction and the number of visitors to the Council's Arts Centres and Museums.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy 2020-2025

- 2.30 The Council's Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy 2020- 2030 was published in November 2020. The strategy has been prepared to enable the outcomes of the Council's corporate plan and its vision is:
- An increase in infrastructure investment that enables the future economic growth of the district.
 - Creating opportunities for local people and helping our communities to thrive by supporting economic development which is sustainable and helps them lead fulfilling lives.
 - Supporting businesses adopt in their response to Brexit, and Covid-19 recovery.
 - Invest in and support new and growing businesses, job creation and employment skills.
 - Promote the revitalisation of our city, towns, villages and rural communities.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2023 - 2028

- 2.31 The Council published its Draft Tourism Strategy and Action Plan in November 2023. The Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2028 clarifies the goals, objectives and strategic priorities that can maximise opportunities and position Newry, Mourne and Down Council as a leading tourism destination in Ireland. To that end, this plan is set out in two parts:

- Strategic Analysis: a summary of the research and recommendation outcomes that inform the Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2028.
- Action Plan 2023-2028: outlining the strategic priorities and associated actions that should be undertaken over the upcoming years.

2.32 It sets out the following strategic priorities:

1. Invest in Communications
 - 1.1 Redefine a new destination brand for NMD
2. Invest in NMD's Community
3. Maximise Commercial Capability
4. Engage in Data Collation and Analysis
5. Prioritise Investment in tourism related infrastructure

Cross Boundary Policy Context

2.33 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 following table offers a short summary of each Council's position with regards to economic development.

Table 1: Cross Boundary Policy Context

Neighbouring Council	Position
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Brough Council	<p>Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Brough Council published its preferred options paper in March 2018. Key Issue ECN 10 Supporting sustainable tourism development and carried forward two options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option ECN 10A Carry forward an approach in line with existing policy and further regional direction to support and facilitate appropriate sustainable tourism development in both settlements and the countryside, with additions that are tailored to meet specific local tourism needs and protect tourism assets within the Borough. • Alternative Option - Option ECN 10B Retain an approach in line with existing policy in relation to tourism development.
Ards and North Down Borough Council	<p>Ards and North Down Borough Council published its Preferred Options Paper in March 2019. Key Issue 37: Sustainable Tourism Development and carried forward the two options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 37a: Promote appropriate sustainable tourism developments in identified priority tourism areas (primarily at the edge of settlements). • Option 37b: Promote appropriate sustainable tourism developments throughout the Borough.

	<p>The preferred option would allow for tourism development which requires a countryside or coastal location due to its unique site specific requirements. Given that the majority of the tourism potential in our Borough exists along our coastline and in other rural areas, this option would allow these areas to respond to tourist demand, whilst checks remain in place to safeguard the integrity of the assets upon which the tourism draw depends.</p> <p>Option 37a and 37b scored similarly across several sustainability objectives but Option 37b scored more significant positives in the longer term and is the preferred option.</p>
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Borough Council	<p>Lisburn and Castlereagh City Borough Council published its Local Development Plan in September 2023. The Plan sets out Plan Objective D: An Attractive Place, facilitated through enhanced tourism opportunities in the Borough. Strategic Policy 16 Tourism supports development that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a sustainable approach to tourism development and accommodation across the district, • Safeguard key tourism assets, • Provide further opportunities for tourism growth having regard to the environment recognising its contribution to economic development, conservation and urban regeneration. <p>Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOU1 Tourism Development in Settlements • TOU2 Proposals for Tourism Amenity in the Countryside • TOU3 Proposals for Tourist Accommodation in the Countryside • TOU4 Self-Catering Tourist Accommodation in the Countryside • TOU5 Holiday Parks in the Countryside • TOU6 Proposals for Major Tourism Development in the Countryside • TOU7 General Criteria for Tourism Development • TOU8 Safeguarding of Tourism Assets <p>These policies enable and promote tourism development throughout the Borough and will contribute towards the Plan Objective for the area to be an attractive place.</p>
Louth County Council, Republic of Ireland	<p>Louth County Council adopted its Local Development Plan in September 2021. The Plan Objectives for tourism are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOU 1 To co-operate with all relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the 'Boyne

	<p>Valley Tourism Strategy 2016 - 2020', and any subsequent strategy published during the life of this Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOU 2 To support the implementation of the 'County Louth Tourism & Heritage Action Plan 2016 -2021' and any subsequent plans published during the life of this Plan. • TOU 3 To support the implementation of the National Climate Action Plan 2019, Climate Action Charter and the Louth Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 by integrating climate change action measures into future tourism plans. • TOU 4 To promote and facilitate tourism as one of the key economic pillars of the County's economy and major generator of employment and to support the provision of necessary significant increase in facilities, visitor attractions and improvement in public spaces to promote attractive and vibrant town centres as key places for tourists. • TOU 5 To support the work of the Boyne Valley Strategy Working Group and its core objective of making the Boyne Valley a leading sustainable tourism destination. • TOU 6 To support the implementation of the Boyne Valley Food Strategy 2016- 2021 and any subsequent plans published during the life of this Plan. • TOU 7 To promote and co-operate with all relevant stakeholders to facilitate the development of the Mourne Cooley Gullion Geotourism Project. • TOU 8 To promote and facilitate the development of walkways and cycleways at appropriate locations throughout the County utilising disused transport links where feasible. • TOU 9 To protect the integrity and scenic quality of existing and future walking and cycling routes and their setting. • TOU 10 To work in conjunction with adjoining authorities including Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and Meath County Council to extend and design new walking and cycling routes, including the Great Eastern Greenway and the Boyne Greenway. Ensure all proposals include appraisal of environmental impacts and take full account of the potential for negative impacts on European Sites through the process of Appropriate Assessment. • TOU 11 To continue the development of a network of greenways in County Louth in
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	<p>accordance with the 'Strategy for Future Development of National and Regional Greenways'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOU 12 To work with the relevant stakeholders including the OPW, the Heritage Council, Fáilte Ireland, the Arts Council, local communities and businesses to support the development of heritage and cultural tourism in Louth. • TOU 13 To recognise the medieval and industrial heritage of Dundalk and its surrounding district through engagement with Fáilte Ireland and associated agencies. • TOU 14 To support the development of the food and craft tourism sector within the County and the promotion of food trails which enhance and promote a blended tourism experience model. • TOU 15 To protect beaches, and bathing areas as valuable local amenities and as a tourism resource and support the maintenance, protection and improvement of access to these amenities. • TOU 16 To support and promote existing festivals and sporting events to increase the cultural, heritage and lifestyle profile of the county, and where appropriate to promote and facilitate the development of new events and venues to host these events. • TOU 17 To facilitate the sustainable development of the tourism sector and provide for the delivery of a unique combination of tourism opportunities drawing on the network of attractions in County Louth and potential future attractions. • TOU 18 To enable, facilitate and encourage the growth and sustainability of the tourism sector through the provision of tourism enterprise developments in rural areas subject to the provision of adequate infrastructure and compliance with normal planning considerations. • TOU 19 To co-operate with the relevant authorities and government agencies north and south of the Border in the provision of Narrow Water Bridge. • TOU 20 To promote the sustainable development of County Louth as a quality tourist destination in partnership with Fáilte Ireland and associated agencies themed on heritage, culture and an unspoilt natural environment and support innovative tourism projects that would boost employment and promote County Louth as a tourism destination, subject to compliance with
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	<p>the requirements of the Development Zones as detailed in Chapter 3 of the Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOU 21 To seek best-practice environmental management and climate proofing of tourism related developments and activities to include the circular economy, energy efficiency, waste management, procurement and recycling. • TOU 22 To assist in the development and marketing of identified Tourism Destinations including the Boyne Valley and Mourne Cooley Gullion destinations, in conjunction with the relevant stakeholders. • TOU 23 To support and promote Drogheda as a designated 'Destination Town' and engage with Fáilte Ireland in developing and promoting the tourism potential of the town. • TOU 24 To support and work with Fáilte Ireland on the development and implementation of Destination Experience Development Plans and to engage with Fáilte Ireland to deliver the implementation of the Ancient Destination Development Plan 2020 - 2024 within County Louth. • TOU 25 To promote and support the development of additional tourism accommodation at appropriate locations throughout the County in particularly in the Regional Growth Centres of Drogheda and Dundalk. • TOU 26 To direct tourism-based development including Hotels, Guesthouses and B&B's to Level 1, 2 and 3 Settlements where there is adequate infrastructure to service the development, except where the proposal involves the re-use or diversification of an existing building, subject to normal planning criteria. • TOU 27 To facilitate the provision of self-catering accommodation in locations within existing towns and villages, of a scale that the settlement can sustain. • TOU 28 To prohibit proposals for the development of self-catering accommodation in the countryside except where existing buildings of character are to be converted or where the restoration of vernacular dwellings including thatched cottages is proposed. • TOU 29 To encourage new caravan parks and camping sites to locate within existing settlements which are appropriately screened and which are served by an adequate and acceptable road network and foul drainage. In
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	<p>exceptional circumstances caravan and camping sites may be permitted in previous worked sites, forest or woodland or demesne setting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOU 30 To consider the provision of glamping/camping accommodation outside of settlements only where it can be demonstrated that there is a justifiable tourist product/demand or where it is proposed to re-use existing vernacular buildings. The need to develop in a particular area must be balanced against environmental, social and cultural impacts of the development and benefits to the local community. In such cases, documentary evidence shall be submitted to substantiate the proposed development and each individual application will be assessed on its merits. TOU 31 To facilitate the upgrade of existing caravan parks and camping sites in approved locations and to ensure that such upgrades are climate resilient. • TOU 32 To support the provision of camper van facilities at appropriate locations in the County subject to any facilities being acceptable in terms of location, visual impact, and compliance with any environmental assessments required. • TOU 33 To facilitate the provision of budget hostels within existing Level 1, 2 and 3 Settlements ensuring high quality design and architecture, provision of adequate infrastructure, compliance with normal planning criteria and subject to the protection of the unspoilt natural environment and landscape amenity. • TOU 34 To seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance and ensuring that new any projects, such as greenways, are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities, such as riparian zones. • TOU 35 To consider the potential environmental effects of a likely increase in tourists/tourism-related traffic volumes in particular locations/along particular routes shall be considered and mitigated as appropriate. Such a consideration should include potential impacts on existing infrastructure (including drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) resulting from tourism proposals.
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<p>Monaghan County Council</p>	<p>The Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031 was adopted on Monday 26th May 2025 and shall have effect from 7th July 2025. The Plan sets out the following tourism policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOUP 1 Proposals for tourist development shall comply with Section 15.16 in Chapter 15 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031. 15.16 Tourism It is important that the Tourism sector within County Monaghan is developed in a sustainable manner that supports integration within communities and optimises the economic benefit for the County. In general, the Council shall encourage and promote the development of tourist facilities, attractions and accommodation in order to develop this industry throughout County Monaghan. In the rural area, the Council shall encourage the provision of tourist accommodation and facilities in appropriate locations where the development is considered necessary to the nature and purpose of the proposed development and meets a clearly identified site-specific tourism need. • The provision of additional hotel and guest house bed spaces, bed and breakfast and self-catering accommodation within defined settlements will be encouraged and facilitated. Any proposed change of use or replacement of tourism accommodation to a non-tourism use, including short-term let to permanent residential accommodation, shall be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the facility is not viable in the long term, and there is sufficient alternative provision in the locality to offset the loss of tourism accommodation and benefit. • Proposals for tourism development shall generally comply with the following: • a) In rural areas, a clearly identified site-specific tourism need shall be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority. • b) It shall incorporate a high standard of design and materials, particularly when sensitively located. • c) It shall not be detrimental to scenic and heritage assets, in Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area, Natural Heritage Areas and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas, areas of
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	<p>primary amenity value or secondary amenity value, and along scenic routes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • d) Where relevant, ensure the sensitive redevelopment of derelict and vacant properties.
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- 2.34 The Council has engaged and responded to neighbouring Councils POP's or draft Plan Strategies (where published). The Council is also represented on a number of working groups to discuss cross-boundary issues, including the Development Plan Working Group.
- 2.35 The draft Plan Strategy was presented to neighbouring councils in a workshop on 9th 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 the south on 8th 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).
- 2.36 In consideration of neighbouring Council's development plan documents and discussions held with their officials, it is the opinion of this Council that no conflict is apparent with our draft Plan Strategy, insofar as it related to tourism.

3.0 Preferred Options Paper

- 3.1 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. 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 one key issue related to Tourism Development.

Key Issue 13 – Tourism Development

Options for Tourism Development

- 3.4 Option 1 – Retain existing policy led approach as set out within PPS16 with minor amendments.
- 3.5 Option 2 – As per Option 1 and in addition bring forward Tourist Opportunity Zones.

Preferred Option for Tourist Development

- 3.6 The Council's Preferred Option was Option 2.
- 3.7 *"As per Option 1 and in addition bring forward Tourist Opportunity Zones"*
- 3.8 The identification of Tourist Opportunity Zones would give the Council the means to actively enhance the district's tourist infrastructure in particular areas. This would identify tourism sites for attractions and accommodation to promote opportunities for dedicated sustainable tourism options over the plan period, for example, Kilbroney Park, Cranfield and Delamont Country Parks.
- 3.9 Justification for this choice, as outlined in the POP was as follows: "Tourist Opportunity Zones are considered to offer opportunities for the development of a range of appropriate quality tourism and recreation schemes to build on the existing tourism base, and enhance the tourism product. These would generally be outside urban and rural settlements". The preferred option would facilitate appropriate tourism related development close to key tourism assets within the district, facilitating growth in line with the Council's Corporate Plan and Tourism Strategy.
- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 A number of respondents agreed with the option to retain PPS16 and bring forward Tourist Opportunity Zones (TOZs). The National Trust suggested that TOZs should be identified in appropriate locations where there was pre-existing development and infrastructure proposals. However, some of these respondents felt that the environmental impact could be addressed with policy rather than through TOZs.
- 3.12 In terms of responses from statutory consultees, the NIHE disagreed with the Council's preferred option and suggested that tourism development should be focused within cities and towns to enhance regeneration and vibrancy of their centres. In addition, a point was raised referring to the need to consider tourism proposals that fell outside a proposed TOZs. Some consultees did not

want TOZs to prevent development in areas other than settlements and TOZs.

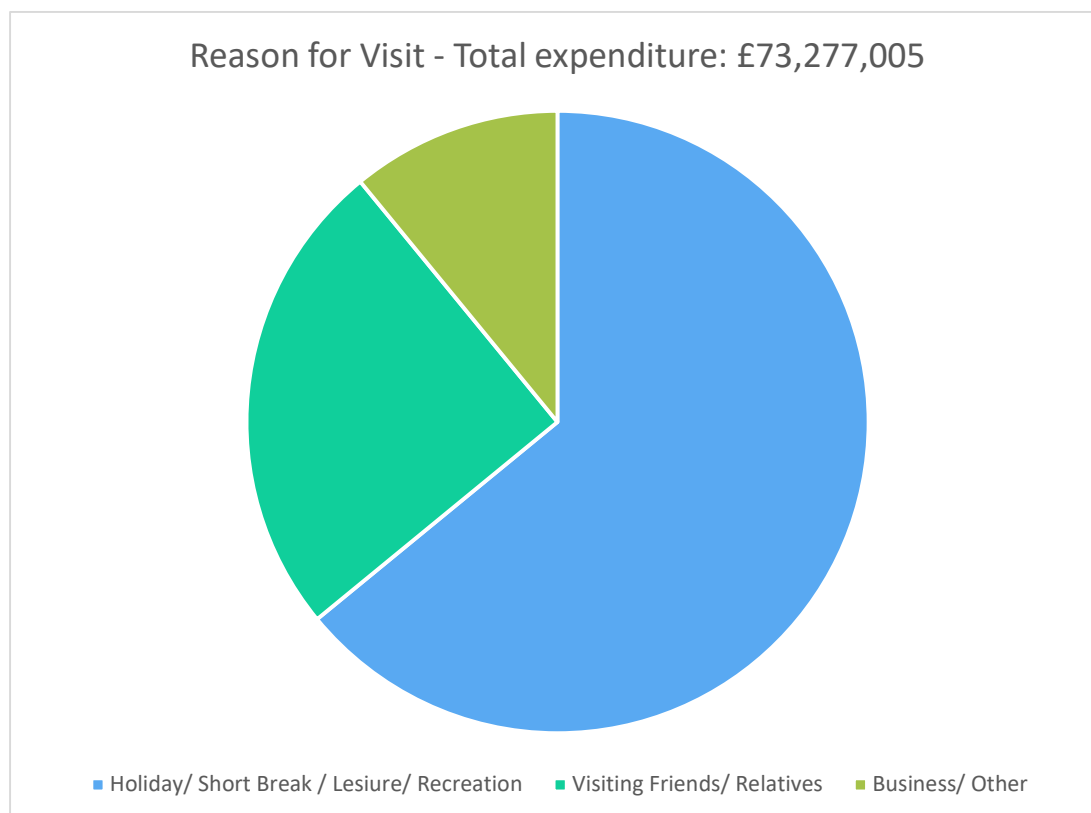
- 3.13 DfI were non-committal in their response stating that without the precise detail of how the policy would be amended it was difficult to provide further comment.
- 3.14 DfC Historic Environment Division (HED) expressed mixed views, whilst welcoming the promotion of the historic environment they considered that an opportunity to put forward options focusing on specific tourist heritage assets had been overlooked.

4.0 District Profile

Newry, Mourne and Down Key Tourism Assets and Resources

- 4.1 The potential to attract tourism and to sustain interest and investment has been historically based on a mixture of both private and public interests and investments. Natural and built heritage resources are often deemed to be the key players in the ability to generate and attract tourism and revenue; however the ability to attract visitors through cultural tourism such as the hosting of events and activities also plays an important role. The district's three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Mourne, Ring of Gullion and Strangford and Lecale are important in terms of their rich natural heritage and high quality landscape value. These areas attract tourists and provide opportunities for a wide range of outdoor activities including hiking, mountain biking and water sports.
- 4.2 The district has a vast range of archaeological heritage with a stone circle, standing stones, monuments, cairns and raths located across the area. The District's cultural and historical heritage includes visitor attractions such as The Saint Patrick Centre, Down Arts Centre in Downpatrick and Sean Hollywood Arts Centre. The ability of these assets to attract tourists can be further supported and enhanced by hosting events such as markets and festivals, by Council or other organisations seeking to promote sustainable tourism in the District.

Figure 1: Reason for visit to Newry Mourne and Down District Council area 2024



Source: NISRA Northern Ireland Tourism 2024, Overnight visits to NI, total nights and spend.

Tourism Statistics

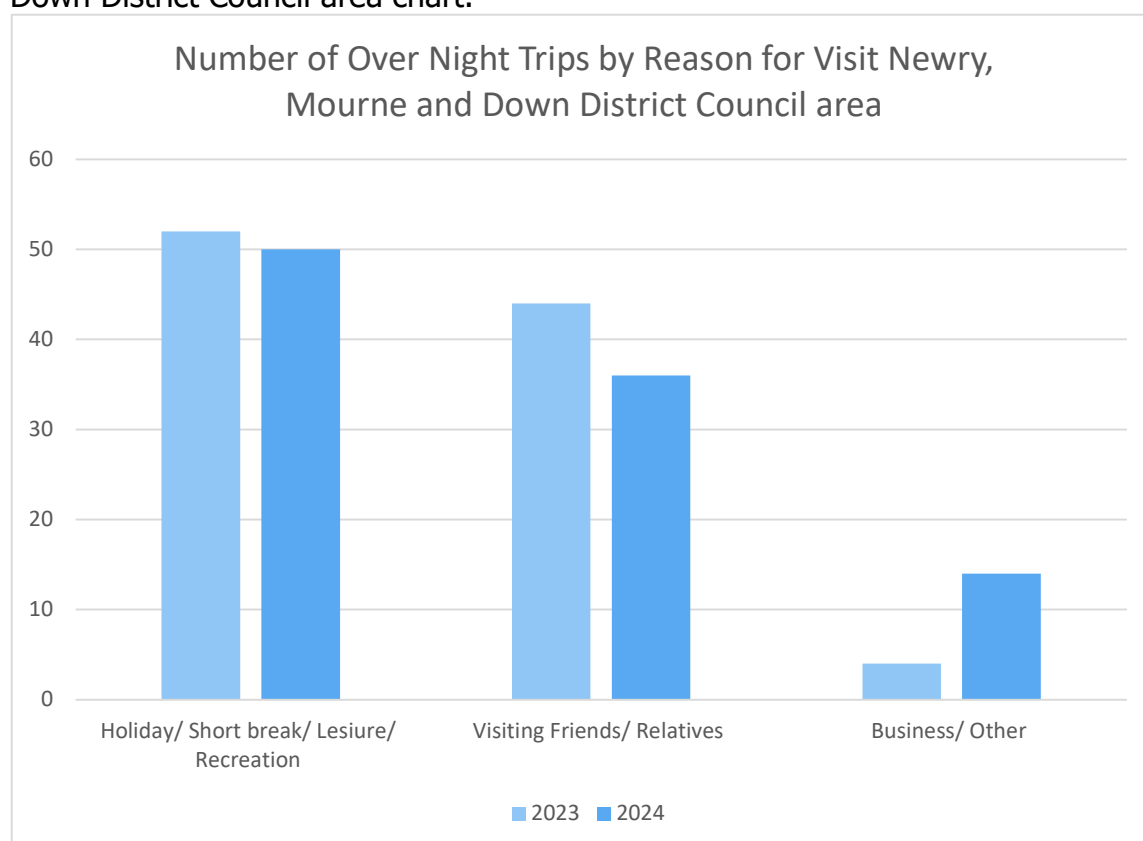
Overnight trips and expenditure

- 4.3 In 2024¹, a total of 443, 776 overnight trips were made to Newry, Mourne and Down Council area, with 50% visiting for Holiday/Short break/Leisure/Recreation and 36% visiting friends/relatives also 14% Business/Other. In total the number of nights spent in 2024¹ was 1,244,731 with 40 % of visitors travelling for a Holiday/Short break/Leisure/Recreation and 47% visiting Friends/Relatives also 13% visitors associated with Business/Other.

¹ NISRA Northern Ireland Tourism 2024, Overnight visits to NI, total nights and spend.

² NISRA, NI Tourism 2024 PUBLICATION TABLE (1)

Figure 2: Number of Over Night Trips by Reason for Visit Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area chart.



Source: NISRA Northern Ireland Tourism 2024, Overnight visits to NI, total nights and spend.

Tourist Accommodation

- 4.4 The Council area is served by a wide range of hotels across Newry City and Towns, providing tourists with sufficient choice. Newry City currently has 1 hotel situated in the City Centre, one other hotel within close proximity to the City, one hotel is situated in Downpatrick Town and Newcastle providing 6 hotels within close proximity to the Town. In 2023, the District had a total of 12² Hotels.
- 4.5 In 2024, there was a 25 %³ occupancy rate in Small Service Accommodation across Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area, the Council area is ranked fourth³ for number of trips in 2024. In 2024, had 619⁴ Self Catering stock across the Council area, alongside Belfast, ranked second across all NI Council areas and represents a strong tourism accommodation offering across the District. Small Service room (Bed & Breakfast, Guesthouses and Guest accommodation) in 2024⁵, indicated 30% occupancy across the District.
- 4.7 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has approximately 150 kilometres of coastline and boots several touring caravan/ motorhome parks across the

³ NISRA 2024 – Table 4 NI Small Service Accommodation Occupancy Rates 2024

⁴ NISRA, NI Tourism 2024 PUBLICATION TABLE (1)

⁵ NISRA, NI Tourism 2024 PUBLICATION TABLE (1)

district providing a wide range of opportunities for tourists. There are currently Kilbroney Caravan Park, Castlewellan Caravan Park, Delamont Park – Caravan Park, Murlough Cottage Caravan Park, Windsor Holiday Park, Sandilands Holiday Park, Annalong Holiday Park, Cranfield Caravan Park and Chestnutt Holiday Park.

Visitor Attractions

- 4.8 Activity tourism such as golfing, which has increased in popularity in recent years with events such as the Amgen Irish Opens held at Royal County Down Golf Club in 2024 and it is reported that golfers have a higher expenditure compared with regular tourist when visiting, supporting the economy within the district.
- 4.9 The Mourne Mountains, Ring of Gullion and Strangford and Lecale are among the top visitor attractions in the district, while also benefiting from a variety of outdoor trails, walks and hiking and community walking trails as follows: Glendesha Wood, Seaforde Plantation Wood, Corry Wood, Bunkers Hill Walking Trail, Drumkeeragh Forest, Windmill Hill/ Lough Park and Tievenadarragh Wood. The Mourne Mountains and the Ring of Gullion has several walks benefiting from a varied range of trail types for all users, the Mourne Mountains benefits from access trails from coastal towns, on the Mourne Coastal Route, such as Annalong and Newcastle.
- 4.10 The district benefits from a coastal position and includes a wide range of water sport activities in Loughs, streams, rivers and the Irish Sea. Water Sport activities across the district include, Boat Tours and Sailing Experiences at Newcastle Yacht Club, Game of Thrones Boat Tour on Strangford Lough and East Coast Adventure Centre in Rostrevor offers Boulderling, Banana Boating or Sea Kayaking.

Employment in Tourism related Industries

- 4.11 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area has the second⁶ highest number of persons employed in Tourism related jobs across all Council areas in Northern Ireland, 8.3%⁶ in 2024. Tourism related jobs in the Council area which represents a strong Tourism industry across the district. In 2021⁷, 5,729 persons were employed in Tourism related jobs and in 2022, 5,949 persons, this reflects a growing tourism industry across Newry, Mourne and Down District.

Tourism (VAT/PAYE) Businesses Operating in the District

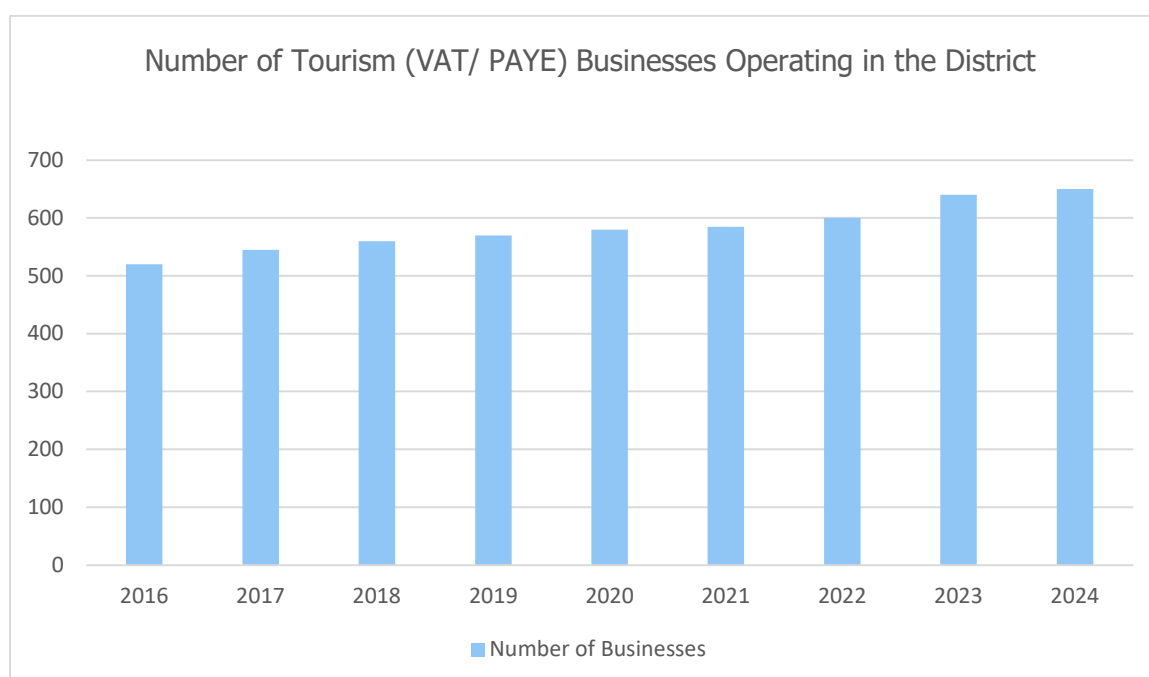
- 4.12 Between 2016 and 2024, the number of VAT and or PAYE Tourism Businesses operating across Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has increased steadily over the 9-year period. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area ranked second highest across all Council areas in Northern Ireland, with 650⁸ Tourism businesses operating.

⁶ NISRA Northern Ireland Statistics Explorer

⁷ NISRA, NI Tourism 2024 PUBLICATION TABLE (1)

⁸ NISRA, NI Tourism 2024 PUBLICATION TABLE (1)

Figure 3: Tourism (VAT/ PAYE) Businesses Operating in the District



Source: NISRA, NI Tourism 2024 PUBLICATION TABLE (1)

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.
- 5.2 Elected Members have been engaged in the LDP Plan Strategy from the POP stage. An initial preparatory studies paper on Tourism was presented in January 2017. This paper's purpose was to provide Council with an overview of matters relating to tourism in the district including the area's tourism assets and growth areas and how these fitted with regional and local plans.
- 5.3 The draft Plan Strategy Tourism policies were presented to the planning committee on 20th October 2021. The policy review paper highlighted that following further review of the proposal for Tourist Opportunity Zones it was now considered that as the existing tourism offer was well developed, the alternative option within the POP to provide equal support for tourism proposals across the whole district was preferable to a focus on a few specified zones. The proposals were considered by Members and no concerns were raised in respect of this revised approach.

- 5.4 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 tourism policies for the district, the Council has been mindful to ensure that changes to operational policies, as set out in Planning Policy Statement 16: Tourism and the current LDPs are aligned with regional policy requirements for Tourism currently contained within the SPPS.
- 6.2 The principal approach of the draft Plan Strategy is to facilitate the aims and objectives of the RDS and SPPS by providing a strategic policy framework that manages the provision of sustainable tourism in appropriate locations whilst taking account of the natural environment and natural heritage within Newry, Mourne and Down Council area.
- 6.3 The LDP strategic approach to tourism development is set out within the LDP's objectives. These objectives take account of regional policy detailed within the RDS and the SPPS. The LDP objective relating to tourism development is as follows:
- To support the district as a major leisure destination which promotes sustainable tourism initiatives underpinned by tourism infrastructure in appropriate locations.
- 6.4 This objective is supported by Strategic Policy TS1 Sustainable Tourism and the operational policies set out in Part 2 of the Plan Strategy.

Strategic Policies

- 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 policies relate to Tourism:
- 6.6 Part 1 also contains the Tourism Strategy which is a key component underpinning the Spatial Growth Strategy, the Strategy sets out how regional policy have been used to inform the development of the policies contained within the LDP.
- 6.7 The Plan will support tourism development proposals that:
- Promote a sustainable approach to tourism development, including tourist accommodation and tourist amenities to meet future demand;
 - Protect and safeguard existing tourism assets; and
 - Contribute to sustainable economic development, urban regeneration and conservation.

Operational Policies

- 6.8 Part 2 of the draft Plan Strategy sets out the operational planning policies,
- 6.9 The justification and amplification section of the policy states that the strategic policy seeks to promote sustainable tourism development for accommodation and amenities that avoids adverse impact on the historic environment or natural heritage, and safeguard tourist assets from unnecessary, inappropriate or excessive development that could damage the intrinsic character and quality of the asset.
- 6.10 A total of 8 subject policies relating to Tourism are set out, headed Policies T0U1 – T0U8. These policies are largely updated from PPS16 and clarification of Policy RG4 to reflect the current regional planning policy approach. They also take into account the LDP Aims and Objectives and the Key Issue defined in the POP.
- 6.11 As highlighted in Section 5, a revised approach to Tourist Opportunity Zones to that indicated in the Preferred Options Paper has been brought forward. This has taken account of feedback from the POP and further consideration of the existing provision of tourist assets across the district. It is considered that the revised approach will provide greater flexibility to support tourist development proposals across the whole district.

7.0 Soundness

- 7.1 The LDP has been prepared to achieve the indicators of soundness as set out in the DfI Development Plan Practice Note: Soundness (Version 2, May 2017). The Draft Plan Strategy, in relation to the historic environment subject policies and other relevant policies in this document is regarded as sound, as it is considered they have met the tests of soundness as summarised below.

Table 2: Soundness

Procedural tests	
P2	Council's Tourism strategy and policies have been developed from and evolved from the POP, POP Consultation Report, Consultee and Councillor Engagement as set out in Preferred Options Paper section.
P3	Council's Tourism strategy and policies TS1 and TOU1- 8 have been subject to an Sustainability Appraisal. Details of which are in the sustainability appraisal.
Consistency tests	
C1	Policies TS1 and TOU 1- 8 have taken account of the Regional Development Strategy 2035 when preparing the Tourism strategy and policies, with particular focus on RG4 as it is linked with Tourism Development.
C2	Policies TS1 and TOU 1 – 8 have taken account of the Council's Community Plan, it provides framework for the determination of planning applications for Tourism Development, which will help achieve the identified outcomes and provide Tourist Opportunity Zones.
C3	Policies TS1 and TOU 1 – 8 have taken account of of the provisions of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement as it relates to Tourism.
C4	Policies TS1 and TOU 1 – 8 have taken account of the existing Local Development Plans in Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, and has incorporated their relevant provisions of published documents of neighbouring Council's.
Coherence and effectiveness tests	
CE1	Policies TS1 and TOU 1 – 8 have taken account of the published LDP of a neighbouring Council, there is no conflict between policies TOU 1-8 and the equivalent provisions of this LDP.
CE2	Policies TS1 and TOU 1 – 8 has been formed on a firm evidence base, drawing on the baseline information set out in LDP Preparation Paper 7.
CE3	The Tourism policies will be reviewed at Plan Review Stage. During the Local Policies stage, amendments to review the policies and amend if necessary.
CE4	Policies TS1 and TOU 1 – 8 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

Table 3: Evolution of Policies

Existing Policy	Regional Planning Policy	POP Preferred Option	Comments received to POP	Draft Plan Strategy Policy
<p>Policy TSM 1: Tourism Development in Settlements</p> <p>This policy sets out a general presumption in favour of tourism development in settlements whilst ensuring the development respects the site context, in terms of scale, size and design.</p>	<p>The aim to facilitate sustainable tourism is reflected in 6.259, as it states there will be a general presumption in favour of tourism development within settlements, subject to meeting normal planning requirements.</p>	<p>The SPPS's is generally consistent with the policies of PPS16 although it is less prescriptive.</p> <p>Adopt a policy led approach. Carry forward TSM 1 taking account of the provisions of the SPPS.</p>	<p>The NIHE They suggested that tourism development should be primarily located in cities and towns to enhance regeneration and vibrancy of their centres.</p> <p>QPANI suggested the need to support the delivery of hotel accommodation, including Downpatrick, and increase focus on outdoor activities, culture, arts, live music and sport.</p>	<p>Policy TOU1 Tourism Development in Settlements</p> <p>The policy carries forward the existing policy with some clarification and changes to reflect the wording of the SPPS.</p>

<p>Policy TSM 2: Tourist Amenities in the Countryside</p> <p>Focuses exclusively on tourist amenities (defined as an amenity, facility or service provide primarily for tourists but does not include tourist accommodation) in the countryside. New development will be permitted provided there is locational need or the type of tourist activity requires a rural location.</p>	<p>The SPPS acknowledges tourism development must be carefully managed that is necessary in rural amenity, wider sustainability objectives and the long-term health of the tourism industry. The SPPS expresses the guiding principal should be to ensure policies and proposals facilitate appropriate tourism development in the countryside.</p>	<p>The SPPS's is generally consistent with the polices of PPS16 although it is less prescriptive.</p> <p>Adopt a policy led approach. Carry forward TSM 2 taking account of the provisions of the SPPS.</p>	<p>No specific comments received from statutory consultees or public respondents to this policy.</p>	<p>Policy TOU2 Tourist Amenities in the Countryside</p> <p>The policy carries forward the existing policy with some clarification and changes to reflect the wording of the SPPS.</p>
<p>Policy TSM 3: Hotels, Guest Houses and Tourist Hotels in the Countryside</p> <p>States that new or replacement hotels, guest houses and hostels will be permitted in the countryside in 2 circumstances:</p> <p>(i) replacement of an existing rural building or</p> <p>(ii) a new build proposal on the periphery of a settlement.</p>	<p>The SPPS states clearly that if no suitable site within settlement limits can be identified, a new build hotel, guesthouse or tourist hostel may be appropriate on the periphery of a settlement subject to meeting normal planning requirements.</p>	<p>The SPPS's is generally consistent with the polices of PPS16 although it is less prescriptive.</p> <p>Adopt a policy led approach. Carry forward TSM 3 taking account of the provisions of the SPPS.</p>	<p>No specific comments received from statutory consultees or public respondents to this policy.</p>	<p>Policy TOU3: Hotels, Guest Houses, B&Bs, Tourist Hostels and Bunkhouses in the Countryside</p> <p>The policy carries forward the existing policy with some clarification and changes to reflect the wording of the SPPS.</p>

<p>Criteria are set out for each circumstance e.g. buildings to be replaced must be of permanent construction, be of suitable size and must not be listed, and vernacular buildings to be replaced have to demonstrate that they are not capable of being made structurally sound.</p> <p>Proposals for a new build facility on the periphery of a settlement must demonstrate that there is no suitable site within the settlement or nearby settlement and demonstrate that there are no existing opportunities in the locality either through the conversion and re-use of a suitable building or replacement of a suitable building.</p>				
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<p>Policy TSM 4: Major Tourism Development in the Countryside – Exceptional Circumstances</p> <p>States major tourism development will be permitted in the countryside only in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>3 tests have to be demonstrated –1. exceptional benefit to the tourism industry 2. a site specific reason for the choice of site 3. sustainable benefit to the locality.</p>	<p>The SPPS states that policies and proposals for major tourism development in the countryside may be provided for in exceptional circumstance. Proposals must meet other tests set out in Policy TSM 4.</p>	<p>The SPPS's is generally consistent with the policies of PPS16 although it is less prescriptive.</p> <p>Adopt a policy led approach. Carry forward TSM 4 taking account of the provisions of the SPPS.</p>	<p>No specific comments received from statutory consultees or public respondents to this policy.</p>	<p>Policy TOU4: Major Tourism Development in the Countryside – Exceptional Circumstances</p> <p>The policy carries forward the existing policy with some clarification and changes to reflect the wording of the SPPS.</p>
<p>Policy TSM 5: Self Catering Accommodation in the Countryside</p> <p>Tourist Development in the Countryside and in any of the following circumstances:</p>	<p>The SPPS states self catering accommodation development in the countryside may be acceptable, particularly in areas where tourism amenities and</p>	<p>The SPPS's is generally consistent with the policies of PPS16 although it is less prescriptive.</p>	<p>No specific comments received from statutory consultees or public</p>	<p>Policy TOU5: Self-Catering Accommodation in the Countryside</p> <p>The policy carries forward the existing policy with some clarification and changes to reflect the wording of the SPPS.</p>

<p>(a) one or more new units all located within the grounds of an existing or approved hotel, self-catering complex, guest house or holiday park; (b)a cluster of 3 or more new units are to be provided at or close to an existing or approved tourist asset that is / will be a significant visitor attraction in its own right;</p>	<p>accommodation have become established or is likely to be through tourism initiatives.</p>	<p>Adopt a policy led approach. Carry forward TSM 5 taking account of the provisions of the SPPS.</p>	<p>respondents to this policy.</p>	
<p>Policy TSM 6: New and Extended Holiday Parks in the Countryside</p> <p>Policy TSM 6 states that a new or extended holiday park in the countryside the proposal will create a high quality and sustainable form of tourism development. Such parks may offer a range of accommodation, including static caravans, holiday chalets, and pitches for touring caravans, motor-homes and camping, as well as a diverse range of infrastructure and amenity provision.</p>	<p>The SPPS requires new or extended holiday parks to be of a high quality and a sustainable form of tourism development.</p>	<p>The SPPS's is generally consistent with the policies of PPS16 although it is less prescriptive.</p> <p>Adopt a policy led approach. Carry forward TSM 6 taking account of the provisions of the SPPS.</p>	<p>No specific comments received from statutory consultees or public respondents to this policy.</p>	<p>Policy TOU6: New and Extended Holiday Parks in the Countryside</p> <p>The policy carries forward the existing policy with some clarification and changes to reflect the wording of the SPPS.</p>

<p>Policy TSM 7: Criteria for Tourism Development Policy TSM 7 states that a proposal for a tourism use, in addition to the other policy provisions of the statement included, will be subject to design and general criteria.</p>	<p>Due to the SPPS having a strategic role it does not specify the criteria listed in Policy TSM 7. Although, the SPPS states that all development tourism must be of appropriate nature, scale and design of the specific proposal must be appropriate to the site context.</p>	<p>The SPPS's is generally consistent with the policies of PPS16 although it is less prescriptive.</p> <p>Adopt a policy led approach. Carry forward TSM 7 taking account of the provisions of the SPPS.</p>	<p>No specific comments received from statutory consultees or public respondents to this policy.</p>	<p>Existing policy is carried forward under different policy provision.</p> <p>Policy GP1 General Policy sets out a range of general criteria that would have previously been addressed under TSM7.</p> <p>Policy SP2 Enhancing Design and Place Shaping incorporates design aspects that were also addressed under TSM7.</p> <p>Policy SP1 Sustainable Development and Climate Change and Policy FRD6 Sustainable Drainage Systems also contain relevant provisions.</p>
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<p>Policy TSM 8: Safeguarding of Tourism Assets</p> <p>Policy states that planning permission will not be granted for development that would in itself or in combination with existing and approved development in the locality have an adverse impact on a tourism asset such as to significantly compromise its tourism value.</p>	<p>The SPPS acknowledges that there are many diverse features of built and natural heritage that can be regarded as tourism assets. The SPPS reflects the wording in Policy TSM 8.</p>	<p>The SPPS's is generally consistent with the policies of PPS16 although it is less prescriptive.</p> <p>Adopt a policy led approach. Carry forward TSM 8 taking account of the provisions of the SPPS.</p>	<p>No specific comments received from statutory consultees or public respondents to this policy.</p>	<p>Policy TOU8 Safeguarding of Tourism Assets</p> <p>The policy carries forward the existing policy with some clarification and changes to reflect the wording of the SPPS.</p>
<p>New Policy TOU 7: New and Extended Glamping Accommodation in the Countryside</p>			<p>No specific comments received from statutory consultees or public respondents to this policy.</p>	<p>Policy TOU7 New and Extended Glamping Accommodation in the Countryside</p> <p>A proposal for the provision of new, small scale glamping accommodation or an extension to an existing site in the countryside will be permitted where it meets Policy TOU1 Tourist Development in the Countryside, and will be subject to the following specific criteria:</p>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) It is closely associated with a tourist asset OR It is part of a farm diversification scheme. b) The site positively contributes to the natural character, biodiversity and cultural heritage of the surrounding area. c) The site fits unobtrusively within the landscape and is well screened by existing landscape features. d) Ancillary facilities are provided by conversion of existing buildings (subject to compliance with Policy HE14). Where this is not possible, such facilities could be considered as ancillary to the accommodation, subject to other relevant policy considerations, including landscape impact. e) The site is for short-term holiday accommodation only. f) The site has no more than 5 units of accommodation.
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9.0 Appendices

Appendix A: Country Parks, Parks and Forests

Appendix B: Beaches

Appendix A: Country Parks, Parks and Forests

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

Slieve Gullion Forest Park covers an area of 2500 acres. The Forest Park offers walking trails, a scenic drive, an Adventure Play park, Giant's Lair children's story trail and Courtyard with coffee shop. The area has some of the best biodiversity in the region and has a multitude of protected areas and visitors have the chance to see wildlife on the Red Squirrel Safari.

The Slieve Gullion Forest Adventure Park provides award winning play facilities for children and young people and has also attained the 'Green Apple Environment Award' and 'NITB Best Tourism Partner Initiative Award'.

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

Kilbroney Park

Kilbroney Park is 92 acres in area and offers a wide range of facilities and services, which includes tennis courts, children's play area, playing fields, an arboretum, barbeque and picnic areas and cafe and a well serviced caravan and camping site. There are three waymarked trails, which vary in length from two kilometres to seven kilometres, and take the visitor to various areas within the forest to enjoy the many magnificent views and beauty of the woodlands.

These trails in Kilbroney Park bring to life the story of Narnia and other stories, myths and legends associated with this special area of the Mourne. The Narnia legends are interpreted along a short family loop trail, entered like the magical world itself, through a Wardrobe, and leading the visitor to several interpretative stations with themes including, The Tree People, The Beavers' House, The Citadels and many more. A more challenging walk has been created to the legendary Cloughmore Stone, linking another important legend - that of the Giant Fionn McCumhaill - to the Narnia theme.

Donard Forest Park

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

waterfalls. Nearby are some ornamental trees including monkey puzzle and giant red wood.

Tollymore Forest Park

Tollymore Forest Park was the first state forest park in Northern Ireland, established on 2 June 1955. Tollymore Forest Park caters for many outdoor activities including walking, caravanning/camping, horse riding and orienteering and the park has designated areas for camping and caravans.

There are four official walking trails within the forest each marked with different coloured sign posts. All the trails start and end in the main car park. The blue trail (Arboretum Path) is half a mile long and passes through the arboretum. The red trail (River Trail) is three miles long and follows the Shimna River up one side as far as Parnell's bridge and then back along the other side. The black trail (Mountain Trail) is five and half miles long and the black trail 1 (The Drinns Trail) adds another three miles to the black trail by passing behind The Drinns (two forested hills) and following the boundary wall. The Ulster Way also passes through the forest.

Castlewellan Forest Park

Castlewellan Forest Park caters for many outdoor activities including walking, caravanning and camping, horse riding, orienteering and many others. The park offers camping and caravanning sites with tarmac and grass pitches for the caravan or camping enthusiast.

One of the Forest Park's key attractions, the Peace Maze, is one of the world's largest permanent hedge mazes, representing the path to a peaceful future for Northern Ireland. Planted in 2000 with community involvement, it is maturing quickly and visitors attempt to solve their way to the peace bell in the centre of the maze.

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

Delamont County Park

The Park features an adventure playground, walking trails, boat trips, a shop, bbq area and visitors centre. It also features a miniature Thomas the Tank Engine Railway. There are five waymarked walks: Mullagh Walk 1km; Garden Walk 1.2km; Strangford Walk 2km; Corbally Walk 4km; and Longwalk 7km. It also provides all year round events such as Magnificent Birds of Prey Display,

Silly Tilly Magic Show, Model Aircraft Display, Medieval Artisan Food & Craft Market and Crossgar Vintage Tractor Club.

Drumkerragh

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

Mournes

The Mournes are visited by many tourists, hillwalkers, cyclists and rock climbers. The Mournes tourism profile is made up of mostly day visitors and visitors from within Northern Ireland with visitors being families, while may are couples and all of those visiting participate in hiking/walking.

Key locations in the Mournes Signature Destination are;

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

Appendix B: Beaches

Murlough National Nature Reserve

This 5 mile stretch of golden sands is still a key attraction and is hugely popular for swimming, sunbathing and other forms of recreation.

Cranfield Beach

Cranfield beach is an attractive sandy beach with Blue Flag status. Due to the estimated 4,000-5,000 caravan users who stay in the area over the summer, the beach, the café and local amenities are well used. On many days in the summer Cranfield struggles to cope with the number of visitors. East Coast Adventure host outdoor activities at Chesnutt Caravan Park every summer at the weekends but this is open to the public as well as people staying in the caravan park. Tourists regularly walk from Cranfield to Greencastle on an informal path but few go north towards Kilkeel.

Tyrella Beach

Tyrella Beach is a small, enclosed beach within Dundrum Bay, Downpatrick, County Down. It is a wide, flat, sandy beach two kilometres long and backed by 25 hectares of mature dunes in a conservation area offering scenic walks and an insight into the habitat of local flora and fauna. An ideal destination for locals and visitors alike, the clean waters invite water sport enthusiasts and the beach provides a safe haven for families and groups who wish to picnic in a clean environment. The beach boasts a car free zone, off-beach parking facilities and a lifeguard on duty for safe bathing in the summer months and holidays. There is also a tourist information centre nearby offering advice to visitors on the immediate and surrounding area.

Warrenpoint Beach

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

Newcastle Beach

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

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