



# **On Behalf of Department for Education Lands at Hightown Road, Newtownabbey**

Representation to Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough  
Council Local Development Plan 2030 - Draft Plan Strategy

September 2019

# Draft Plan Strategy Representation – Lands at Hightown Road, Newtownabbey



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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This representation to the **Antrim Newtownabbey Borough Council ('ANBC') Local Development Plan 2030 ('LDP') Draft Plan Strategy Document ('DPSD')** is made on behalf of the **Department for Education ('DE')**, who represent lands at **Hightown Road, Newtownabbey**. This representation builds upon the previous submission in relation to **ANBC's Preferred Options Paper ('POP')**, a copy of which is enclosed at **Appendix 1** and includes a site location plan.
- 1.2 As per the previous POP submission, this representation is made principally to set out DE's aspiration for the above mentioned lands to be brought within the Settlement Development Limit ('SDL') of Metropolitan Newtownabbey for the purposes of delivering a new build school and single nursery unit for Gaelscoil Éanna.
- 1.3 It is noted that this proposal is identified and referenced within the DPSD at **Section 2: Setting The Context, Education**, where it identifies *inter alia* at **paragraphs 2.47 to 2.48**:
- "Proposals for a new school for Gaelscoil Eanna, Newtownabbey was announced in 2016. This project is currently awaiting approval of a feasibility study".***
- 1.4 This representation is also made in support of Council's Plan Vision and Plan Objectives, in particular, relating to the provision of necessary community facilities and education provision.
- 1.5 On behalf of our client, we comment on the DPSD on the following pages. For ease and to assist Council, this response follows the format of Council's *Local Development Plan 2030 Draft Plan Strategy Response Form* and sets out:
- 2.0 Section A – Data Protection and Consent;
  - 3.0 Section B – Your Details; and
  - 4.0 Section C – Representation
- 1.6 Should Council have any queries or wish to discuss this submission we would be happy to do so.
- 1.7 We reserve the right on behalf of DE to expand and supplement this submission in due course in response to any relevant Counter Representations that may be submitted to the Draft Plan Strategy stage of the LDP process and also to comment further at the Draft Local Policies Plan stage.





## 2.0 Section A – Data Protection and Consent

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council complies with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) by producing a specific Local Development Plan Privacy Notice, which lets you know how we manage any personal information we receive from you. It contains the standards you can expect when we ask for, or hold, your personal information and an explanation of our information management security policy.

The Local Development Plan Privacy Notice can be found on our website at [www.antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/gdpr/planning-gdpr/](http://www.antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/gdpr/planning-gdpr/).

**Please note that when you make a representation (or counter-representation) to the Local Development Plan your personal information (with the exception of personal telephone numbers, signatures, email addresses or sensitive personal data) will be made publicly available on the Council's website.**

Copies of all representations will be provided to the DfI and an Independent Examiner (a third party) as part of the submission of the Local Development Plan for Independent Examination. A Programme Officer will also have access to this information during the IE stages of the Plan preparation

DfI, the Programme Officer the Independent Examiner will, upon receipt, be responsible for the processing of your data in line with prevailing legislation.

1. Please tick to confirm that you have read and understood the Council's Local Development Plan Privacy Notice.
  - ✓ I confirm that I have read and understood the Local Development Plan privacy notice and I give my consent for Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council to hold my personal data for the purposes outlined.

You can contact the Council's Data Protection Officer via:

**Post** - Antrim Civic Centre, 50 Styles Way, Antrim BT41 2UB

**Email** - [DPO@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk](mailto:DPO@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk)

**Phone** - 028 9446 3113





### 3.0 Section B – Your Details

Please specify if you are responding as an individual, as an organisation, or as an agent acting on behalf of an individual, group or organisation?

*If you are responding as an agent or representing an organisation you will be the main point of contact for your client/organisation.*

*(Please select only one item)*

- Individual
- Organisation
- Agent

	Personal Details	Agent Details (If Applicable)
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<b>First Name</b>	Stephen	Michael
<b>Last Name</b>	Creagh	Graham
<b>Job Title (where relevant)</b>	Deputy Director Investment & Infrastructure	Director
<b>Organisation (where relevant)</b>	Department of Education	WYG Planning
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## 4.0 Section C – Representation

4.1 This representation relates to the following parts of the Draft Plan Strategy Document:

- ***Section 2: Setting the Context (Paragraphs 2.47 to 2.48, Pages);***
- ***Section 3: Plan Vision & Strategic Objectives (Paragraphs 3.1 -3.15, Pages 53-60);***
- ***Section 4: Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development (Page 62);***
- ***Section 5: Employment - Policy DM 7: Development outside Centres (Pages 99-100);***
- ***Section 8: Community Infrastructure (Pages 168) & Strategic Policy 5;***
- ***Section 8: Community Facilities - Policy DM 24: Community Facilities (Page 176-179) Paragraphs 8.21 to 8.27;***
- ***Section 11: Natural Heritage - Policy DM 37.5 Designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (Page 241); and***
- ***Section 11: Natural Heritage - Policy DM 39 Habitats and Heritage importance (Pages 246 to 248).***

4.2 DE is broadly in support of the DPSD and we comment on the sections listed above in the following paragraphs.





**If you consider the draft Plan Strategy to be 'SOUND' and wish to support the draft Plan Strategy, please set out your comments below.**

4.3 DE considers that the DPSD is sound in several areas, which on their behalf we comment on.

**Section 2: Setting the Context (Paragraphs 2.47 to 2.48, Pages)**

4.4 DE is fully supportive of **Section 2** of the DPSD, which relates to '**Setting the Context**'. Appropriately, Council has identified education as part of this and specifically references the proposed project for Gaelscoil Éanna, where it identifies *inter alia* at **paragraphs 2.47 to 2.48**:

***"The Education Authority (EA) has identified a number of key challenges for the education system across Northern Ireland. These include matching the provision of places available in schools to population trends, addressing school provision which is not sustainable and improving the quality of provision.***

***Linked to this there are a number of specific development proposals likely to arise in the Borough over the Plan period in part caused by the ongoing rationalisation of education provision:***

- ***Proposals for a new school for Gaelscoil Eanna, Newtownabbey was announced in 2016. This project is currently awaiting approval of a feasibility study".***

4.5 DE is also fully supportive of the DPSD's proposed '**Outcome 4: Our citizens achieve their full potential**' (Page 37) and in particular '**Priority (c) Our children and young people achieve throughout their education and progress to employment**'.

4.6 The proposal for a new Gaelscoil Éanna will assist in achieving these outcomes and priorities for ANBC's LDP through delivering a new educational facility for the area in question. Gaelscoil Éanna is an Irish Medium Primary School located on Hightown Road, Glengormley. The original school Naíscoil Éanna (Nursey School) was established in 2004. Gaelscoil Éanna was established in 2007 and was endorsed by the DE in 2008, when it received grant funding. The school's catchment area includes the greater Glengormley, Ligoniel, Whitewell, Bawnmore and Longlands areas of ANBC.





4.7 Enrolment in the school has grown from 12No. in 2007 to 185No. in 2017 with the Naíscoil adding an additional 26No., bringing a total of 211No. for both schools. Council’s ***Evidence Paper 8: Community Facilities*** at its *Table 5: Primary School Enrolments 2017/2018* (page 20) indicates that in this only a small percentage (10%) of spaces within Gaelscoil Éanna were unfilled within the 2017/2018 enrolment period.

4.8 The proposed new school development will assist in facilitating the growing enrolment and positive uptake of places within Gaelscoil Éanna and assist its future growth, whilst also providing an improved community facility for the greater Glengormley, Ligoniel, Whitewell, Bawnmore and Longlands areas of ANBC.

**Section 3: Plan Vision & Strategic Objectives (Paragraphs 3.1 -3.15, Pages 53-60)**

4.9 DE fully support the ‘Plan Vision and Strategic Objectives’, as set out at **Section 3 (pages 53-60)** of the DPSD, in particular, that part of the vision which states:

***"In 2030 Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough will have a reputation as an excellent, attractive and diverse place in which to live and work. It will be a place that all citizens can take pride in and that is appealing to new residents, investors and visitors alike, with improved job opportunities, housing availability and connectivity that meets the needs of our community"***

[underlining emphasis].

4.10 If the Plan Vision is to be delivered, it is important that the correct ‘Strategic Objectives’ be pursued. DE welcomes and supports a number of the ‘Strategic Objectives’ detailed within the DPSD. These include:

- **Strategic Objective 1** which aims to: ***Promote sustainable growth by managing development and securing new infrastructure provision in our settlements and countryside to meet the needs of all our citizens;***
- **Strategic Objective 8** which aims to: ***Ensure a sufficient supply of land for new homes, provide a diverse choice of housing and strengthen community cohesion;***





- **Strategic Objective 7** which aims to: *Promote positive placemaking and ensure that high quality new development respects, enhances and integrates with our historic environment and natural heritage;* and
- **Strategic Objective 9** which aims to: *Accommodate and promote well-designed and accessible community, education and health facilities.*

4.11 DE welcome **Strategic Objective 9**, which places emphasis on accommodating and promoting well designed and accessible education facilities.

4.12 In achieving **Strategic objective 9** and facilitating the other objectives referenced above, appropriate land must be identified within the LDP in order to accommodate necessary community facilities across the plan area.

4.13 Whilst a matter for the Local Policies Plan stage, this should be delivered through appropriate additional lands being brought within the SDL and preferably through identification of such additional lands in or around appropriate existing land uses, which already provide community benefits and community facilities.

4.14 This is reiterated in the Council's **Evidence Paper 8: Community Facilities** which states:

***"The Local Development Plan (LDP) has an important role in ensuring community facilities such as health, education and other community facilities can be accommodated through the planning process.***

***It is important to note that the provision of most public services, including health and education, does not lie within the remit of the Council or the LDP and are the primary responsibility of Government Departments and statutory bodies. Where a need has been identified by these providers, it shall be the role of the LDP to facilitate these services, zone potential sites and to ensure that existing infrastructure is protected, unless it has been demonstrated that it is no longer required.***

***If Antrim and Newtownabbey is to continue to grow as an attractive place to live, invest and do business in, then our public services need to be continually adapting and improving.***





**The LDP will have a supportive role in facilitating the provisions of community facilities through policy and the zoning of land specifically for such use".**

[underlining emphasis].

- 4.15 It is noted that there are several strategic policies proposed within the DPSD which will assist in the delivery of future community facilities, including for education purposes of which DE is wholly supportive.
- 4.16 DE is therefore supportive of the 'Plan Vision' and 'Strategic Objectives' for the ANBC LDP, and believe that the lands in question being brought within the SDL of Newtownabbey for the purposes of a new Gaelscoil Éanna will provide flexibility for the school and also assist in meeting the 'Plan Vision' and 'Objectives' in providing adequate land to accommodate necessary community facilities including those for education purposes.

**Section 4: Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development (Page 62)**

- 4.17 Sustainable Development **SP 1.1** of the DPSD states:

***"When considering individual development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS). The Council will work with applicants to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in our Borough".***

- 4.18 Given the nature of the Gaelscoil Éanna proposal (in that it seeks to utilise additional lands at and adjacent to an existing education/community facility for the local area), the lands and their proposed use are therefore deemed wholly sustainable and in line with the thrust of the LDP, which aims to take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 4.19 DE is fully supportive of **Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development**.





**Section 5: Policy DM 7: Development outside Centres (Pages 99-100)**

4.20 **Policy DM7** relates to development outside of centres. The DPSD states:

***"The aim of this policy is to protect the role, viability and vitality of existing town centres from the adverse impacts that can arise from competing development proposals for retail and other town centre uses in other locations. A sequential test must therefore be undertaken for relevant proposals on sites located outside our Borough's centres and, where appropriate, a retail impact assessment must also be undertaken. This aim has taken account of and is consistent with the provisions of the SPPS".***

4.21 It is noted that **Policy DM 7.4** states:

***"The Council will however, apply flexibility in considering proposals for community, education and healthcare facilities to ensure these are located where they are easily accessible to the communities that they are intended to serve".***

[underlining emphasis]

4.22 DE is supportive of this policy as it gives flexibility to the location of proposals so that they can be located where they are easily accessible to the communities that they are intended to serve. This policy will assist the Gaelscoil Éanna proposal given it seeks a new school at or adjacent to its existing site where an overall 'community hub' already exists in order to serve its existing/established catchment.

4.23 DE support this policy and it is recommended that it be retained as part of any final Plan Strategy Document.

**Section 8: Community Infrastructure (Pages 168) & Strategic Policy 5**

4.24 Section 8 of the DPSD relates to community infrastructure and states at its **paragraph 8.10**:

***"Whilst the remit of the Council does not extend to the provision of health and education facilities, the Council will continue to work closely with its health and education partners and the Local Policies Plan will identify and safeguard sites required to meet the need for future facilities".***





4.25 DE is supportive of this approach and welcomes the confirmation from Council that there will be identification and safeguarding of sites for future education facilities.

4.26 Whilst identifying such sites will be a matter for Local Policies Plan, in assisting this approach the DPSD also provides a supporting strategic policy, **Strategic Policy 5: Community Infrastructure**. The DPSD sets out:

***"The aim of this policy is to safeguard and enhance existing community services and facilities that serve the needs of our Borough's residents and to support the appropriate provision of new or enhanced facilities. This aim has taken account of and is consistent with the provisions of the SPPS".***

4.27 Strategic Policy, **SP 5.1** states:

***"The Council, working with its statutory health and education partners and other stakeholders, including the community and voluntary sector, will seek to ensure that all communities in our Borough have access to health, education, community and recreational facilities as well as parks and other open spaces that meet the needs of the communities they serve".***

4.28 Again, DE is supportive of **SP 5.1**, which echoes the overarching aim of the strategic policy for community facilities in that the Council will facilitate identification and safeguarding of sites for future education facilities to ensure the needs of the ANBC area are met.

4.29 DE supports this aspect of the policy and is of the opinion that it should be retained as part of any final Plan Strategy.

4.30 **SP 5.2** states that:

***"The Council will operate a presumption against the loss of existing community infrastructure, including open space of public value, to competing uses. Proposals for new community facilities and services will be supported and the Council will seek to ensure***





***these are located in places that will promote accessibility and increased usage by the communities they are intended to serve”.***

4.31 Again, DE supports this policy, as it confirms Council will support proposals which are located in places that will promote accessibility and increased usage by the communities they are intended to serve.

4.32 The Gaelscoil Éanna proposal seeks to utilise land at and adjacent to the existing school which already provide community benefits and facilities for the local area. It is to be located where an overall ‘community hub’ already exists.

4.33 **SP 5.4** states:

***“The Council will also bring forward land allocations in the Local Policies Plan to address any deficiencies identified in open space provision, as well as to meet any needs identified by statutory health and education authorities for future facilities and development”.***

[underlining emphasis]

4.34 DE has identified a need for a new Gaelscoil Éanna as part of its broader capital programme in the ANBC area, which is in the region of £50million and includes major work schemes already on site and in design and a number of School Enhancement programme schemes. The new build school and single nursery unit for Gaelscoil Éanna was announced in March 2016 with an estimated construction value of c£3.5million (refer to **Appendix 1**).

4.35 As per the preceding sections, there has been year on year growth in enrolment with extremely strong uptake of places. There is therefore a need to expand and facilitate the growth of this important education/community facility. Policy SP5.4 will assist in achieving this and is therefore supported by DE.

4.36 **SP 5.5** states:

***“The Council will also expect new development proposals to facilitate and improve linkages and accessibility to local community infrastructure and help maximise opportunities to promote healthy and active lifestyles. Major residential development proposals will be expected to support active travel options, encourage the reduction in use***





***of the private car, provide adequate public open space, demonstrate high-quality design and promote balanced communities and the creation of sustainable neighbourhoods”.***

[underlining emphasis]

- 4.37 Given the location of the existing Gaelscoil Éanna in relation to, and its links with, the existing St Enda’s GAA club at this location, the Gaelscoil Éanna project will be locationally connected to an existing ‘Community Hub’. As such, there is an established and existing linkage which will be built upon as part of any new school proposal to facilitate accessibility to the GAA club, the healthy and active lifestyle it can facilitate and the existing important community infrastructure it provides.
- 4.38 As such, DE is supportive of **SP 5.5**.

**Section 8: Community Facilities**

**Policy DM 24: Community Facilities (Page 176-179) Paragraphs 8.21 to 8.27**

- 4.39 The DPSD identifies in relation to **Policy DM 24** that:

***“The aim of this policy safeguard and enhance existing community services and facilities that serve the needs of our Borough’s residents and to support the appropriate provision of new or enhanced facilities. This aim has taken account of and is consistent with the provisions of the SPSS”.***

- 4.40 The policy is further divided into sub-sections relating to **Development within Settlements** and **Development in the Countryside**. These state:

***“Development within Settlements***

***DM 24.1 The Council will support proposals that provide new or enhanced community facilities and services. New facilities should be located within or adjacent to town, district or local centres or other locations that are easily accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.***

***DM 24.2 In exceptional circumstances, the Council will support siting a community facility at an accessible location on the edge of a settlement where the proposal:***





- (a) Represents a logical extension to the built-up area;***
- (b) Is of an appropriate scale in relation to the size of the settlement; and***
- (c) Will not cause any significant adverse effect on the landscape setting or character of the settlement.***

***Development in the Countryside***

***DM 24.3 The Council will sympathetically view proposals for new community buildings and facilities, including outdoor recreational activities and play facilities at accessible locations in the countryside, where it is demonstrated these are necessary to serve the local rural population”.***

4.41 DE supports the above policy provisions and the amplification behind them at **paragraph 8.25**, which states:

***“New community facilities should be located in places that promote accessibility for the communities they are intended to serve. Whilst the majority of facilities will be located within or adjacent to our Borough’s settlements, it is recognised that certain facilities may also be acceptable at accessible locations in the countryside where a demonstrable case of need can be made”.***

4.42 These policy provisions provide a level of flexibility in terms of the location of new education/community facilities both within settlements and within the countryside and are supported by DE.

4.43 At present the existing Gaelscoil Éanna is outwith but directly adjacent to the existing settlement of Metropolitan Newtownabbey and the proposed new site adjacent to but outwith the existing SDL. As part of the Local Policies Plan it will be the intention of DE to seek the SDL’s amendment to include the lands in question for the reasons set out. Given the planning history attached to the lands in question and the nature of these lands as an existing community facility for the local area, it is DE’s position that they are best placed to be brought within the SDL of Metropolitan Newtownabbey and formally recognised as a necessary education/community facility.





**Section 11: Natural Heritage - Policy DM 37.5 Designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (page 241)**

4.44 **Policy DM 37** of the DPSD relates to Designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance. **Paragraph 11.10** of **Section 11** of the DPSD states:

*"The aim of this policy is to protect designated sites of nature conservation importance from the potentially damaging impact of inappropriate development, taking account of international, national and local obligations. This aim has taken account of and is consistent with the provisions of the SPPS".*

4.45 **Paragraph 11.12** goes on to state:

*"As well as international and national designations, there are a range of locally important sites some of which have been designated by the Council under the provisions of the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985, as a Local Nature Reserve. Examples in our Borough include Monkstown Wood and Carnmoney Hill. Other areas of local nature conservation importance will be considered as part of the LDP process, to be designated as Sites of Local Conservation Importance in the Local Policies Plan".*

4.46 DE notes the fact that other areas of local nature conservation importance will be considered as part of the LDP process, to be designated as Sites of Local Conservation Importance in the Local Policies Plan and reserves the right to comment further on this aspect at that stage of the LDP process.

4.47 **Policy DM 37.5** relates to **Local Designations** and states:

*"The Council will only permit development likely to have a significant adverse impact on a Local Nature Reserve or other site identified for its local nature conservation importance where local public benefits clearly outweigh the nature conservation value of the site and there is a specific locational requirement for the development. In such cases, appropriate mitigation and/or compensatory measures will be required".*



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- 4.48 DE supports this policy as it is reflective of current operational policy under **Policy NH4 of Planning Policy Statement 2 – Natural Heritage** and the provisions of the **SPPS**.
- 4.49 It should be noted that as part of the Gaelscoil Éanna project and given the site's current status within the Cave Hill/Collinward Site of Local Conservation Importance (**SLNCI BT84/12** within **BMAP**) a submission was made to **NIEA NED** in **October 2018** by WYG which included an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey/Ecological Appraisal<sup>1</sup>.
- 4.50 In short, this submission set out that **Policy NH4 of PPS2** allows for 'adverse impact' on the SLNCI without the need to demonstrate the proposed development's benefits but that in any case, this scheme undoubtedly brings a suite of benefits. Furthermore, the submission set out that appropriate mitigation and/or compensatory measures are only required when 'significant adverse impact' is deemed to occur. It is not the case that such measures apply when an 'adverse impact' or lesser impact occurs (a situation which is reflective of proposed Policy DM37.5 under the DPSD). The submission to NIEA NED ultimately confirmed that as no 'significant adverse impact' occurs on **SLNCI BT84/12** from the proposed Gaelscoil Éanna project, it is considered to be compliant with current operational Policy **NH 4 of PPS 2** and the provisions the **SPPS**.
- 4.51 The submission was considered by **NIEA NED** and a positive response was received on the **19<sup>th</sup> December 2018** in which it was 'in principle' accepting of such development occurring within **SLNCI BT84/12** so long as the recommended measures set out within the WYG Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey/Ecological Appraisal to ensure protection of any species that may be present or move onto the site prior to any works commencing, and to enhance general biodiversity and habitat opportunities for species are incorporated (this being caveated by the fact that updated surveys will need to be undertaken).
- 4.52 Given the above and the mirroring of current operational planning policy within the DPSD in relation to such matters, the proposed Gaelscoil Éanna project is therefore deemed to be compliant with **Policy DM 37.5** and DE is of the view that this policy should be retained as part of any final Plan Strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> *Should the Commissioner seek copies of the WYG submission to NIEA NED of October 2018 and subsequent response correspondence, we can provide this as evidence if required.*



**Section 11: Natural Heritage - Policy DM 39 Habitats and Heritage importance (Pages 246 to 248)**

4.53 In respect of **Policy DM 39**, which relates to '**Habitats and Heritage importance**', the DPSD states:

***"The aim of this policy is to ensure that adequate protection is afforded to those features of natural heritage or biodiversity value which fall beyond designated sites. This aim has taken account of and is consistent with the provisions of the SPPS".***

4.54 The various aspects of the policy state:

***"DM 39.1 The Council will only permit development likely to result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the features listed below, where the benefits of the development outweigh the value of the habitat, species or feature. In such cases appropriate mitigation and/or compensatory measures will be required.***

- ***Priority Habitats;***
- ***Priority Species;***
- ***Active peatland;***
- ***Ancient and long-established woodland;***
- ***Features of earth science conservation value;***
- ***Features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna;***
- ***Rare or threatened native species;***
- ***Wetlands (includes river corridors); or***
- ***Other natural heritage features worthy of protection.***

***DM 39.2 Where there is evidence to suggest that a habitat, species or other feature of natural heritage importance exists on a site or is likely to be impacted by development, the developer will be required to carry out an appropriate survey of the site's interests and undertake a suitable ecological appraisal.***

***DM 39.3 New development proposals should protect and, where appropriate, create new natural and semi-natural habitats for their ecological and recreational benefits. Developers will be required to demonstrate that they have considered measures to***





***promote biodiversity or potential improvements in habitat in the design of their proposals and have sought wherever possible to link in with existing networks”.***

- 4.55 DE supports this policy as it mirrors current operational policy under **Policy NH5** of **PPS2 – Natural Heritage** and the provisions of the **SPPS**. It is also noted that the wording of **Policy DM 39.1** is slightly less restrictive than the provisions of **Policy NH5** of **PPS2** and the **SPPS** in that appropriate mitigation and/or compensatory measures will only be required, where unacceptable adverse impact occurs on the listed features and not where damage to the listed features occurs. DE welcomes this policy and the flexibility within and is of the view that it should be retained as part of any final Plan Strategy.
- 4.56 The thrust of **Policy DM 39.1** and its subsequent bullet point list is that planning permission will only be granted where it is not likely to result in unacceptable impact, or damage to, any of the listed bullets, similar to **Policy NH5** of **PPS2** and the provisions of the **SPPS**. The WYG Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey/Ecological Appraisal which formed part of the October 2018 submission to NIEA NED identified that the only habitats, species, or features of natural heritage importance relevant to this proposed site are priority species, rare and threatened native species, and features of earth science conservation importance.
- 4.57 The WYG submission also addressed **Policy NH5** of **PPS2** and relevant provisions of the **SPPS** which, as indicated are reflected within proposed **Policy DM 39** of the **DPSD**. The submission identified that as the proposed Gaelscoil Éanna project is small scale, it is unlikely to have an unacceptable adverse impact on, or damage to, habitats, species, or features of natural heritage importance. This is further supported by the fact that planning permission for a wind turbine has already been granted on the same site, which remains extant.
- 4.58 Even if it was considered that unacceptable impact on, or damage to, would occur on habitats, species, or features of natural heritage importance by the proposed Gaelscoil Éanna project, then under the proposed policy it is still permissible for planning permission to be granted, in circumstances where the benefits outweigh the value of the habitat concerned. Clearly, there are substantial benefits in delivering a modern fit for purpose 7No. classroom Irish Medium Primary School and a nursery at a location, where an overall ‘community hub’ already exists.



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- 4.59 Turning to the use of the wording 'In such cases', appropriate mitigation and/or compensatory measures is only required when 'unacceptable adverse impact on' is deemed to occur. It is not the case that such measures apply when an 'acceptable adverse impact on', or lesser impact occurs.
- 4.60 Nevertheless, as part of the Gaelscoil Éanna project it is proposed to incorporate appropriate mitigation and/or compensation as part of the proposed development. Such measures will be detailed in due course following further appropriate ecological surveys.
- 4.61 Overall, it is considered that the proposed development will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on, or damage to habitats, species, or features of natural heritage importance, but if it were considered to, its benefits outweigh that impact; and in that scenario, appropriate mitigation/compensation can be provided.
- 4.62 The response from NIEA NED confirmed that it was ***"...content with the conclusion that no Northern Ireland priority habitats or protected species were identified on site"*** and went on to ***"welcome the recommendations in Section 5.0 which aim to ensure protection of any species that may be present or move onto the site prior to any works commencing, and to enhance general biodiversity and habitat opportunities for species"***. Again, this response was caveated by the fact that updated surveys will need to be undertaken)
- 4.63 Given the above and the mirroring of current operational planning policy within the DPSD the proposed Gaelscoil Éanna project is therefore deemed to be compliant with the proposed **Policy DM 39**.

Signature: [Redacted Signature]

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019



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Newtownabbey



# Appendix 1



**Investment & Infrastructure  
Directorate**



Department of  
**Education**  
[www.education-ni.gov.uk](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk)

**Michael Graham  
Director of Planning  
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BT19 7PR

**Date:** 18 May 2017  
**Our Ref:** 304-6685

Dear Michael,

**Gaelscoil Éanna, Newtownabbey – Antrim and Newtownabbey Local  
Development Plan 2030 Preferred Options Paper (POP)**

Thank you for your e-mail of 5 May 2017 and our subsequent discussion by telephone regarding the above.

I can confirm that the Department supports the Council's approach to developing a Local Development Plan. We understand that the plan will contain policies and proposals that will be used to inform and determine planning decisions. It is therefore important that the Department engages fully with the Council at a strategic level in developing its Local Development Plans to ensure that the Department's capital investment programme is reflected, wherever possible, within the emerging Local Development Plan.

The Department's broader capital programme in the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area is in the region of £50Million and includes major works schemes already on site and in design and a number of School Enhancement Programme schemes. The Department will engage with the Council directly on its broader programme.

The new build school and single nursery unit for Gaelscoil Éanna was announced to advance in planning in March 2016 with an estimated construction value c.£3.5million. The project is at an early stage in development and the key issue is securing a site for the new school. The emerging preferred site is just outside the development zone. The Department is keen to explore with the Council the inclusion of this site within the emerging Settlement Development Limit.

White Young Green (WYG) has been commissioned by the Department, on behalf of the School Authority, to take forward the early feasibility work, subsequent design and project management for this new build project. In this capacity, WYG has written to the Council on 12 April 2017 to set out the position in regard to this project. The Department will engage with the Council directly on the broader Community Plan as it develops.

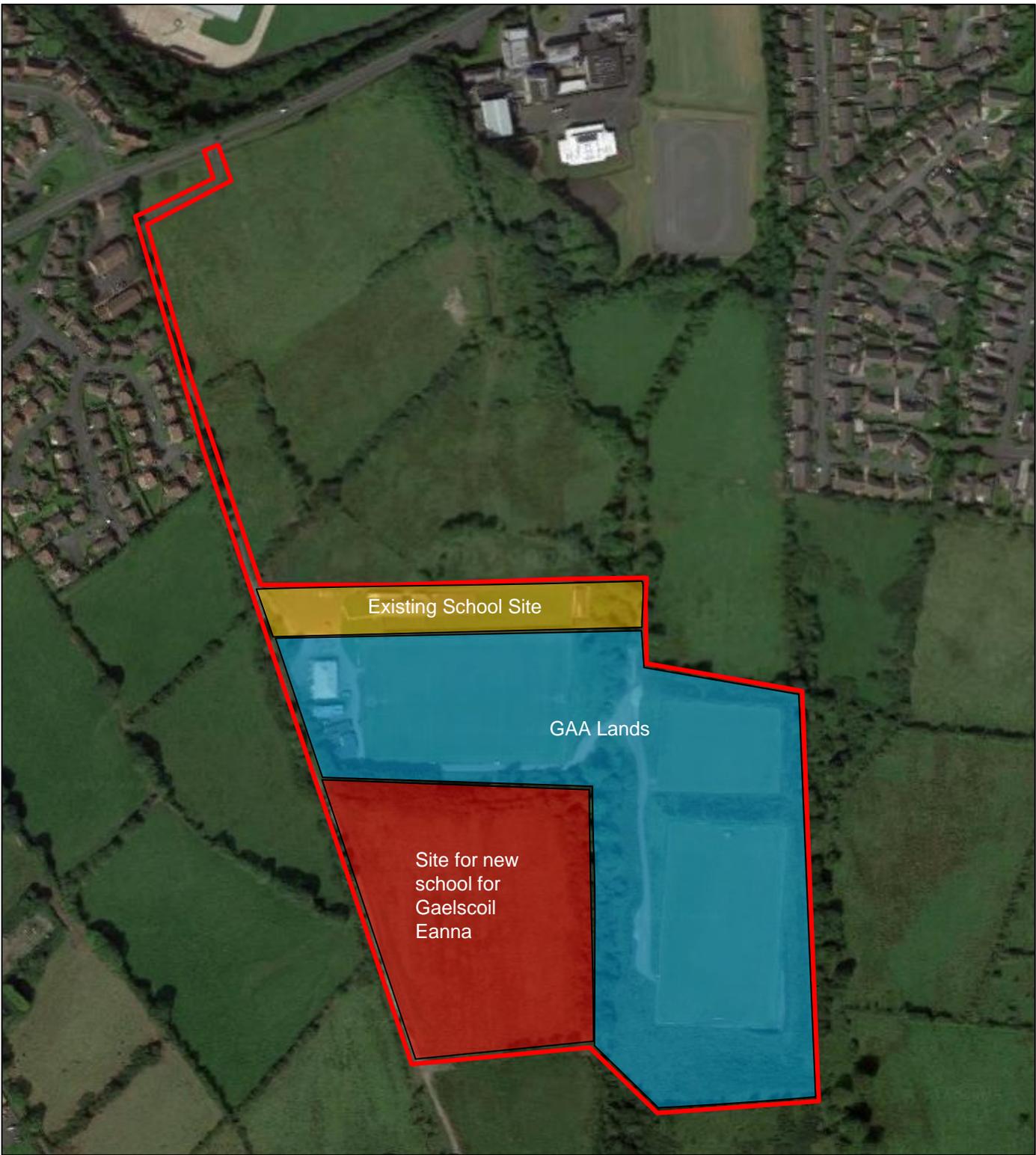
The WYG letter, on behalf of the Department and the School, relates to a site for the new school for Gaelscoil Éanna and retention of the existing school site for potential youth provision. The Department has no locus in regard to the other areas which relate to a local GAA Club, contained within this map. I have attached a revised map setting out the area upon which the Department would wish to engage with the Council, with a view to including within the new Development Limit.

Yours sincerely,

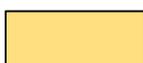


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*Copied: Philip Irwin*  
*MCIT*



**Legend**

-  Site for new school for Gaelscoil Eanna
-  Existing School Site – Retention for potential youth provision
-  GAA Lands



**Lands at Hightown Road, Newtownabbey**

**Site Location Plan**

Scale: NTS

Job No: A102352

Date: June 2017