

Local Development Plan | 2030

Draft Plan Strategy

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)
Incorporating Strategic Environmental
Assessment (SEA)

SA Non-Technical Summary
June 2019

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Have your say

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council is consulting on the Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Development Plan draft Plan Strategy 2030.

Pre-Consultation on the draft Plan Strategy

To allow everyone time to read and understand the draft Plan Strategy and all its associated documents, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council is publishing all documentation in advance of the formal 8 week period of public consultation. This period of pre-consultation will run from Friday 28 June 2019 to Thursday 25 July 2019.

Please note that no representations should be made during this period.

Formal Consultation on the draft Plan Strategy

The draft Plan Strategy is published for formal public consultation for a period of 8 weeks beginning on **Friday 26 July and closing at 5 pm on Friday 20 September 2019.**

The draft Plan Strategy is published alongside a range of assessments which are also open for public consultation between Friday 26 July 2019 and Friday 20 September 2019 including a Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating the Strategic Environmental Assessment), a draft Habitats Regulations Assessment and a Section 75 Screening and Rural Needs Impact Assessment Report.

Please note that representations received after the closing date on Friday 20 September 2019 will not be considered.

How to respond

The purpose of the consultation is to determine if the draft Plan Strategy is 'sound'. There are 12 tests of soundness and further information on these tests is available in the Department for Infrastructure's published Development Plan Practice Note 6 'Soundness'. We strongly recommend that you read this and other Departmental guidance if you intend to make a representation to the draft Plan Strategy. It is also recommended that you read the Planning Appeal Commission's published guidance entitled 'Procedures for Independent Examination of Local Development Plans' as this also gives information in relation to soundness and representations. Representations, should be made in writing and we would encourage you to use the methods set out below:

Online

- Via our online consultation hub at:
www.antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/draftplanstrategy
- Downloading a copy of the response form from our website and forwarding it to the Forward Planning Team; or
- Requesting a copy of our response form to be posted to you or you may collect a hard copy from Antrim Civic Centre or Mossley Mill and return it to the Forward Planning Team.

By Mail

- Email us at planning@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk
- In writing to the following postal address:

Forward Planning Team
Mossley Mill,
Carnmoney Road North,
Newtownabbey BT36 5QA

Come and Meet us

We are also holding a series of drop-in events and public meetings where you will be able to speak to a member of the Forward Planning Team about our Draft Plan Strategy. Full details are available on our website or by contacting the Team. Planning Officers are also available between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday at Mossley Mill. They are also available at Antrim Civic Centre by contacting us in advance to arrange an appointment.

Keeping the Community Involved

The Council wishes to encourage the ongoing involvement of the local community in the plan process. You can sign up to receive our Local Development Plan emails to keep up to date on the progress of the Plan and upcoming events.

If you would like to receive our Local Development Plan emails, please contact the Forward Planning Team.

General Data Protection Regulation

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. A copy of our Local Development Plan Privacy Notice is available on our website. All representations received will be published on our website and made available at Mossley Mill and Antrim Civic Centre for inspection at the addresses above. All representations will be forwarded to the Department of Infrastructure in advance of Independent Examination

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List of Abbreviations

DM	Detailed Management
LDP	Local Development Plan
POP	Preferred Options Paper
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SP	Strategic Policy

1. Purpose and Context of the Sustainability Appraisal Report

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a statutory process incorporating the requirements of the European Union's Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (the SEA Directive'). It provides the process for assessing potential effects of proposed plans or programmes, to ensure that potential significant environmental impacts are considered from the earliest opportunity and addressed in decision-making.

The purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal Report is to:

- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the Local Development Plan (LDP) and its reasonable alternatives; and
- Provide an early and effective opportunity for statutory consultees, interested parties and the public to offer views on any aspect of the SA process which has been carried out to date.

The SA process aims to ensure that the policies and proposals in the LDP are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. It is presented in two main reports, the SA Scoping Report and the SA Report.

The first stage of the SA process is the SA Scoping Report. The SA Scoping Report identifies and describes relevant aspects of the current state of the environment in the Council area. It also identifies key sustainability issues for the Borough. The SA Scoping Report then establishes and describes the sustainability framework against which the plan is assessed and sets out the proposed approach to the appraisal of the LDP.

The Sustainability Appraisal Report contains:

- Section 1: An introduction to the SA process, the LDP and the Plan Area;
- Section 2: The relationship of the LDP with other plans, programmes and strategies and overview of the SA Framework;
- Section 3: Summary of the appraisal of options for the draft Plan Strategy, significant effects identified and account of how the SA influenced plan making;
- Section 4: Review of the cumulative impact of the draft Plan Strategy for the sustainability objectives;
- Section 5: A description of the measures envisaged to monitor delivery of a sustainable LDP.
- Appendices presenting detail in support of the sections above.

2. The Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Local Development Plan

The Local Development Plan (LDP) is a spatial land use Plan which primarily is about place. It will guide future development and use of land in Antrim and

Newtownabbey's towns, villages, hamlets and rural areas by addressing the spatial implications of social, economic and environmental change.

The purpose of the LDP is to inform the public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested parties of how the Borough should develop in the years ahead. It will balance competing demands and aim to ensure that appropriate development occurs in the right place, at the right time. The policies and proposals of the LDP will be used to determine planning applications. A good LDP will lead to decisions that are consistent. This allows people to know what to expect in terms of change, and the locations where development will be encouraged.

The LDP comprises of two development plan documents:

- The Plan Strategy; and
- The Local Policies Plan.

The Plan Strategy is the first stage of the LDP. It sets out how the Council considers the Borough will grow and develop up to 2030. It contains the following:

- The Plan Vision for Antrim and Newtownabbey;
- A set of strategic objectives to deliver the Plan Vision based upon the theme of sustainable development and interlinked with the Community Plan Outcomes;
- A spatial growth strategy setting out the approach to development across the Borough and indicating at a strategic level where growth will occur up to 2030;
- Strategic Policies (SP), to implement the Plan's strategic objectives;
- Detailed Management (DM) Policies which supplement the Strategic Policies, that together will guide decisions in the development management process; and
- Details of how the Council intends to monitor the Strategic Objectives of the Plan to ensure the Council is delivering what it set out to achieve.

The Local Policies Plan forms the second stage of the plan making process. The Local Policies Plan will provide site specific policies and proposals, including settlement limits, land use zonings and environmental designations. The Local Policies Plan will not be brought forward until the Plan Strategy has been adopted.

In addition to the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan, the Council may publish other documents such as planning guidance, advice notes and information to assist developers and applicants in the planning process.

The LDP must also take account of the regional policy context set by the NI Executive and central government Departments. The following regional or local strategies and plans are overarching and form a backdrop to the Local Development Plan. These were also considered in the preparation of the Sustainability Appraisal.

- Draft Programme for Government 2016-2021;
- Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy - 'Everyone's Involved';

- Regional Development Strategy 2035;
- Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future – 'A New Approach to Regional Transportation' (2011);
- The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (2004), Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (2005) and Sub Regional Transport Plan (2007);
- Sustainable Water – A Long- Term Water Strategy for Northern Ireland 2015-2040;
- Delivering Resource Efficiency – NI Waste Management Strategy 2015;
- Lifetime Opportunities – Government's Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy for NI 2010;
- Valuing Nature - A Biodiversity Strategy for NI 2020;
- Marine Plan for Northern Ireland 2018 (draft) and UK Marine Policy Statement (2011);
- Strategic Planning Policy Statement (2015);
- Planning Policy Statements;
- A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (1993);
- Supplementary Planning Guidance; and
- Belfast Region City Deal 2018.

A wide range of other plans, programmes, policies and strategies were also reviewed in the Sustainability Appraisal. These are documented in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council shares a land or water boundary with five neighbouring Councils – Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Belfast City Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and Mid Ulster District Council.

In order for cross-boundary issues to be effectively addressed, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council will continue to coordinate with these neighbouring Councils throughout the LDP process to address cross-cutting issues and identify how these can be best taken forward as part of the plan process. This is particularly important in relation to the delivery of key elements of the Regional Development Strategy, to ensure a holistic approach to strategic matters is pursued and for policies in neighbouring Council areas to be aligned with each other.

Antrim and Newtownabbey also shares a border with the marine area through its coastline, and is linked to it by its watercourses and river systems. Effects on the marine area must also be a consideration in developing the LDP.

3. Sustainability Appraisal Scoping

The SA Scoping Report was published for consultation in 2017 alongside the Preferred Options Paper (POP). The information presented in the SA Scoping Report for the draft Plan Strategy has been updated to reflect the current evidence and also to take account of the representations received in the previous consultation.

Characteristics of the area

The social, economic and environmental features of the plan area have been presented across 14 topics. For each topic the international, national, regional and strategic context is presented. This is followed by baseline information which presents the most up to date evidence for each topic. An assessment of what might happen if a new LDP is not brought forward is included. Finally, key sustainability issues for the Borough are presented for each topic, some examples of which are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Examples of Key Sustainability Issues

Topic	Examples of Key Sustainability Issues
1. Health and Well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a lack of data at the Borough level for health, information on obesity and mental health could provide useful measures for the future. From 2015 to 2030 the population aged 65 plus is expected to increase by 42.1%. Within this grouping those 80 -84 are expected to increase by 63%, those aged 85 – 89 by 74% and those aged 90 plus by 88%.
2. Community (strengthen society)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be a growing population, although this is at a slower rate than for NI, and the plan will need to meet the needs of a changing population. Older people have a higher rate of disability and as they will represent a growing proportion of the population the overall needs to accommodate disability will increase.
3. Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two thirds of social housing waiting list applications are in housing stress with single people, older people and small family households making up nearly 90% of these applications. There are a significant number of houses in the Borough in fuel poverty.
4. Education and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an imbalance in class sizes and enrolment levels in schools across the Borough.
5. Economic Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A cornerstone of the private sector in the Borough is micro-businesses, those employing less than nine staff. There is potential to encourage these types of business to develop and innovate. Belfast International Airport is located within the Borough and is defined as a Regional Gateway.
6. Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Borough has a high reusing/recycling/ composting rate of household waste and continues to be a top performing Council in NI but new local level measures are likely to be needed to help further increase these rates. Electrical infrastructure is likely to become more of a local consideration as diversity of supply increases and access to renewables is encouraged.

Topic	Examples of Key Sustainability Issues
7. Physical Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An identified strategic resource of lignite is located in the south west of the Borough, at the eastern shore of Lough Neagh close to Crumlin. • There are only a few active quarries in the Borough. • There is potential access to a productive source of geothermal energy for heating and electricity.
8. Transport and Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dominant mode of travel to work or place of study is the motorised vehicle with 66% of residents opting for this. • Nearly 20% of residents do not own their own vehicle and are reliant upon taxis, public transport and/or active travel.
9. Air	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is one Air Quality Management Area in the Borough for recurring exceedances of NO2 directly linked to the volume of traffic and traffic emissions. • The Borough benefits from gas infrastructure and the number of users could potentially increase.
10. Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures to encourage/ enable electric vehicles, active travel and car sharing are needed to help reduce reliance on the car and to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector. • The Borough has a mix of renewable energy generating sites with wind and solar the most evident.
11. Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality in Belfast Lough is failing to meet 'good' ecological status and shellfish cultivated in the Lough are not meeting microbiological standards. • Newtownabbey, Glengormley and Mallusk are identified as Areas of Potential Significant Flood Risk.
12. Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a variety of natural heritage designations across the Borough with Lough Neagh, Lough Beg and Belfast Lough of particular importance for wetland birds and habitats. • Ancient woodland is a unique habitat and its presence across the borough is notable.
13. Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a relatively short section of coastline within the Borough but it provides important physical and visual access to coastal views of Belfast Lough. • The Antrim Plateau has been highlighted as a 'dark skies' area, and the Lough Neagh Basin as a 'tranquillity' area - both requiring specific protection of their landscape to maintain these characteristics.
14. Historic Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Borough has a rich record of archaeological sites and historic monuments. • The Borough has a strong industrial heritage, primarily associated with the various waterways in the area. • The Borough has a number of examples of well-preserved defence heritage, mainly associated with the 3 former wartime airbases at Nutts Corner, Langford Lodge and Aldergrove.

What Might Happen Without the Local Development Plan

It is necessary to describe the likely evolution of the baseline without the LDP. An assessment of what might happen if a new LDP is not brought forward is therefore included for each topic. As an overview, there are a number of current development plans that apply to the Borough. While the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan was prepared relatively recently, and is generally up to date, the Antrim Area Plan which is applicable to much of the Borough is 30 years old and was in preparation over 35 years ago. This means that it does not take account of changes in demography, patterns of employment and lifestyle. None of the current plans take account of the Council's Community Plan, 'Love Living Here'.

In the absence of a new Plan, there is a risk that development will not reflect today's needs or support delivery of the Community Plan, 'Love Living Here' and the Corporate Plan. There may be a higher risk of inappropriate development occurring in parts of the Borough and opportunities may be missed to deliver more sustainable development and protect, conserve or enhance local sites of particular importance.

Sustainability Objectives

The Sustainability Objectives for the Borough were developed through the scoping process and form the framework for sustainability appraisal. The rationale for each objective is summarised in Section 6.1 of the Scoping Report.

The Sustainability Objectives are to:

1. To improve health and well-being;
2. To strengthen society;
3. To provide good quality, sustainable housing ;
4. To enable access to high quality education;
5. To enable sustainable economic growth;
6. To manage material assets sustainably;
7. To protect physical resources and use sustainably;
8. To encourage active and sustainable travel;
9. To improve air quality;
10. To reduce causes of and adapt to climate change;
11. To protect, manage and use water resources sustainably;
12. To protect natural resources and enhance biodiversity;
13. To maintain and enhance landscape character; and
14. To protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage.

4. Appraisal of Preferred Options Paper

The first phase of the LDP process took place in early 2017 when the Council published a Preferred Options Paper (POP). The purpose of the POP was to:

- Promote debate on issues of strategic importance that will influence the shape of future development in our Borough up to 2030;
- Set out a number of planning issues that we wanted to engage with the public on; and
- Provide possible options for the strategic direction that our new Local Development Plan might take.

The POP underwent Sustainability Appraisal and a SA Interim Report was published for consultation at the same time as the POP document. The consideration of POP representations has been part of the process of updating the evidence base that informed the draft Plan Strategy. Representations received in relation to the SA Interim Report were also considered in the SA Report published for the draft Plan Strategy.

The Appraisal of Strategic Alternatives

Several of the strategic options and alternatives for policy were appraised in the SA Interim Report published alongside the POP, which helped to shape the draft Plan Strategy. Therefore, for many of the strategic policies in the draft Plan Strategy, it was not necessary to re-appraise reasonable alternatives. Strategic alternatives that were appraised for the draft Plan Strategy included Housing Growth (2 options) and Housing Allocation (3 options).

5. Appraisal of Draft Plan Strategy

Assessment of Alternative Options

The 10 Strategic Policies (SP) and 54 Detailed Management (DM) policies proposed for delivering the draft Plan Strategy underwent further appraisal. In many cases, no reasonable alternative was identified for the policy option. This mainly occurred for the following reasons

- The option is required to uphold the aims of current legislation, regulations, or directives, or
- The option is required to uphold the aims or policy approach of the RDS, SPPS or other regional or local plans or strategies.

Each policy option was assessed against the sustainability framework to ensure consistency in the approach.

A summary of the potential effects of the draft Plan Strategy, presented by SA Objective, is provided in Section 4 of the SA Report and an overview of the total effects of the draft Plan Strategy is presented in Table 2. This also includes 'potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects' which describes how the objectives may support each other, for example providing good quality housing contributes to health and well-being, and supports other plans such as the Community Plan, 'Love Living Here'.

Table 2. Cumulative Impacts of the Plan

SA Objective	Effect of draft plan preferred options (total effects)	Potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects
Improve health and well-being	The provision of quality housing supported by increased employment opportunities, and urban design which adopts principles of positive placemaking and enhanced connectivity should help to provide high quality living environments that benefit health and well-being for the whole Borough.	The cumulative effect of the relevant policies working together, along with the Community Plan is to further strengthen the effect of the significant positive impact.
Strengthen society	<p>Growth focused on main towns aims to maximise positive outcomes for society, but by sustaining population in smaller settlements, local services are supported and vitality is maintained in villages and rural areas. This acts positively in terms of social cohesion, sense of place/belonging and identity for communities and individuals.</p> <p>The policies under Strategic Policy 6 which encourage high quality new development contribute towards perceived safety and community cohesion.</p>	<p>Housing policies SP 4.8 and DM 17 make provision for affordable homes which will encourage people from different community and income backgrounds to live together and should help to support sustainable communities.</p> <p>The cumulative effect of all of the relevant policies working together, along with the Community Plan is to strengthen the effect of the significant positive impact.</p>
Provide good quality sustainable housing	Strategic Policy 4 alongside DM 17 to DM 19 and DM 21 - DM 22 make a significant positive contribution to the delivery of housing in the Borough. Strategic Policy 6, Placemaking and Good Design helps to enhance the impacts by integrating housing with its surroundings and encouraging design that is led by people, not vehicle movement, as the primary focus - enabling linkages to nearby places, paths, streets and open spaces. This facilitates access to local facilities and services for people with impaired mobility and strongly helps to support the principle of 'lifetime homes'.	<p>These policies have a synergistic effect on health and well-being and strengthen the effect of the positive impact.</p> <p>The principles of placemaking and good design help to enhance the quality of housing on a wider basis, by making the Borough a more attractive place to live. This will strengthen the positive effect to significant positive.</p>

SA Objective	Effect of draft plan preferred options (total effects)	Potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects
Enable access to high quality education	Strategic Policy 4 Housing Allocation aims to maintain sustainable populations for schools in both urban and rural settlements. Positive influences can come from economic development through training and apprenticeships. Strategic Policy 2 enhances the opportunity to deliver for this objective, in that it encourages major planning applications to provide for employment and skills training.	There are synergies between sustainable economic growth, health and a stronger society. These cumulative effects work together to raise the effect on the objective from negligible to minor positive.
Enable sustainable economic growth	Providing the conditions for the creation of a range of job types that are accessible across the Borough, and especially to areas of deprivation, has significant positive impacts. The 'town centre first' approach also seeks to promote and sustain vitality and vibrancy of town centres which has a positive impact. Promoting good design and protecting / enhancing open space, natural and built heritage has a positive impact in respect of making the Borough a more attractive place and should help to support tourism ambition.	The establishment of a LDP which establishes areas for economic development which are accessible to strategic transport routes is a key aspect of delivering the RDS. All policies in the draft Plan Strategy work together to cumulatively strengthen the effect of the significant positive impact.
Manage material assets sustainably	Sustainable economic and housing growth has significant positive impacts through facilitating the location and provision of material assets (e.g. waste management, energy generation, telecommunications, electric vehicle charging points, etc.). However, the scale of positive impacts in respect of renewable energy may be constrained by landscape designations.	The establishment of a LDP which will identify the areas where growth is projected and which manages spatial growth sustainably will help to coordinate the provision of new infrastructure. Forward planning and coordination between service providers can help to reduce costs. This would help to strengthen some of the positive effects.

SA Objective	Effect of draft plan preferred options (total effects)	Potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects
Protect physical resources and use sustainably	Spatial growth will lead to an inevitable consumption of land which has a negative impact on the objective. Mineral extraction is supported in appropriate areas, or where regionally significant positive economic impacts would occur, which benefits the objective. Encouraging sustainable drainage systems under DM 47 and remediation of contaminated land under DM 52 can help to improve soil quality.	Strategically focusing core growth where existing settlements are already located enables a more efficient use of land in terms of housing and economic development and promotes more sustainable patterns of development, reducing the scale of the negative impacts. Policies which support sustainable minerals extraction can have an indirect positive impact on jobs and economic growth, including through the supply chain and equipment sectors. The cumulative impact of the policies is minor positive.
Encourage active and sustainable travel	Strategic policy supports and facilitates the delivery of active travel and public transport related measures, which cumulatively support the delivery of the objective. Strategic Policy 6, Placemaking and Good Design helps to enhance the impacts by encouraging design that is led by people, not vehicle movement, as the primary focus - enabling linkages from new housing and economic development to nearby places, paths, streets and open spaces.	The establishment of a LDP which will identify the areas where housing and employment growth is projected helps to inform future local and regional Transport Plans and enables service providers to plan for the future more effectively. This, alongside a holistic approach to ensuring that new development is accessible by active travel, could help to stimulate behavioural change to reduce reliance on cars as the preferred mode of transport and enhance the impacts from mainly negligible to positive over time.

SA Objective	Effect of draft plan preferred options (total effects)	Potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects
Improve air quality	Spatial and population growth is likely to give rise to increased emissions from transport, energy/heating and industry. Allocating the majority of housing growth to main towns may reduce the scale of negative impacts by providing a wider range of options for active and sustainable travel or lower emission forms of central heating in areas of greater housing density. Similar effects may occur through directing economic development to defined areas where opportunities exist to reduce impacts. Policies DM 50 and DM 28 will help to prevent negative effects. The total impact is uncertain.	<p>All policies in draft Plan Strategy work together to cumulatively reduce the scale of negative impacts and enhance positive impacts. This may lead to positive secondary effects on health and well-being, biodiversity and climate change.</p> <p>While the LDP may help to create conditions which could deliver improvements to air quality, significant effects are reliant on behavioural change, and consequently the long term impact remains uncertain.</p>
Reduce causes of and adapt to climate change	Strategic policy seeks to enable sustainable growth that is mainly focused on settlements and centres and encouraging more sustainable modes of travel, which has a positive impact on the objective. However, the plan also encourages and facilitates development – housing, roads, facilities/services and industry/business - which can increase greenhouse gas emissions and may have negative impacts. DM 25 promotes the incorporation of energy efficiency and climate change resilience measures in new urban development which strongly supports the objective. DM 47 has the potential to deliver significantly for this objective through Sustainable Drainage Systems, however there is no certainty that the additional benefits of integrating 'soft' systems in preference to those that qualify for adoption by NI Water would be delivered. The total impact is mixed / uncertain, as many positive effects are reliant on behavioural change.	<p>All policies in draft Plan Strategy work together to cumulatively reduce the scale of negative impacts and enhance positive impacts.</p> <p>The holistic approach taken by the draft Plan Strategy in ensuring that new development is accessible by active travel, could help to stimulate behavioural change to reduce reliance on cars as the preferred mode of transport. However, significant effects are reliant on developers being proactive and behavioural change, and consequently the long term impact remains uncertain.</p>

SA Objective	Effect of draft plan preferred options (total effects)	Potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects
Protect, manage and use water resources sustainably	Spatial growth and the construction of new houses and economic / industrial development places pressure on surface water quality and quantity.	The establishment of a LDP which will identify the areas where growth is projected and which manages spatial growth sustainably will help to enable the co-ordination of waste water infrastructure upgrades (where necessary) and aid in the delivery of Sustainable Water - A Long-Term Water Strategy for NI (and potentially also the Living with Water Programme). Together these may help to address some of the water quality issues in the receiving waters of Lough Neagh and Belfast Lough. These cumulative effects may reduce the scale of minor negative impacts and remove some of the uncertainty.
Protect natural resources and enhance biodiversity	Spatial and population growth can place pressure on the natural environment. Natural heritage policies DM 37 – 39 have been developed in accordance with regional planning policy and statutory legislative requirements. Directing housing and economic development towards settlements and centres helps to deliver more efficient land use. For rural development, Policy DM 27 seeks to avoid the loss of mature native vegetation with the aim of reducing loss of biodiversity. Strategic Policy 8 also seeks to maintain 'green' corridors and wedges to maintain biodiversity in built up areas and establish green infrastructure links between areas.	The policies to protect the landscape, provide open space and safeguard the coastal zone also work to support this objective. These cumulative effects may remove some of the uncertainty and help to reinforce the minor positive impacts.

SA Objective	Effect of draft plan preferred options (total effects)	Potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects
Maintain and enhance landscape character	Development places pressure on landscape, however consideration of the Borough's sensitive and unique landscapes forms a large element of strategic policy in the plan. The focus of strategic growth is directed towards settlements and away from areas of high landscape quality and positive impacts on the objective are anticipated.	The policies to protect natural resources also work to support this objective. Liaison with neighbouring Councils and aligning policies where they have potential cross-boundary influence also helps to reinforce the minor positive impacts and should increase the effects to significant positive.
Protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage	Development has the potential to conflict with the historic environment. Strategic Policy and detailed management policies are protective towards identified / designated assets, in accordance with statutory requirements and legislation. Detailed management policy is also protective towards undesignated assets of heritage value, through encouraging development that is integrated with its surroundings and encouraging the protection and restoration of vernacular and locally important buildings. The overall impact tends towards significant positive, but total effects include a high proportion of uncertainty.	Policies which protect landscape character and natural heritage work together to strengthen the protection towards the historic environment and the setting of historic features. Policies also strongly encourage design that integrates new development with its surroundings. These cumulative effects will help remove much of the uncertainty and help to reinforce the positive effects leading to significant positive impacts.

Many of the potential adverse impacts have been minimised through the cross-referencing of policies within the draft Plan Strategy and are capable of being mitigated. Therefore, no significant adverse effects are expected to arise as a result of the draft Plan Strategy. Measures have however been presented in Section 3 of the SA Report to reduce minor negative effects and promote positive effects.

Limitations and Assumptions

During the appraisal of each Option, where possible, effects were predicted. In some cases it was found that the effect will depend upon the type and scale of development and its location. Many of the proposals affect multiple locations, or locations for which boundaries have not been defined. This can make it difficult to determine at this stage whether overall effects are likely to be negative or positive. These effects may remain uncertain until detailed supplementary planning guidance and/or specific site proposals are known.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

A draft Habitats Regulations Assessment has been carried out to record the assessment of the proposals made in the draft Plan Strategy and the Plan's potential impacts on international sites.

'International sites' include Special Areas of Conservation, designated under the 'Habitats Directive' together with Special Protection Areas, designated under the 'Birds Directive'. They also include Ramsar sites which are wetlands of international importance identified under the provisions of the Ramsar Convention. A total of 28 international sites that have the potential to be connected to the plan area were identified and examined.

This considered threats to each site, its condition and the potential impacts of the draft Plan Strategy proposals. It was found that the draft Plan Strategy could have the potential to affect international sites through one or more of the following impacts:

- Habitat loss;
- Direct and indirect disturbance;
- Introduced species;
- Aerial emissions;
- Water pollution; and
- Hydrological change.

Significant effects could not be entirely ruled out for 20 of the international sites identified, therefore potential impacts on those sites were further assessed through a process called 'appropriate assessment'. The appropriate assessments concluded that, subject to mitigation already included in the draft Plan Strategy and a number of recommendations made for inclusion at the Local Policies Plan stage and through development management, the implementation of the draft Plan Strategy will not adversely affect the integrity of any international sites.

6. Outcome of Appraisal and Next Stages

Outcome of Appraisal

The SA process has helped influence the content of the draft Plan Strategy by contributing to the critical review of the strategic policies and policy options including their reasonable alternatives. Through the SA process, preferred options for implementing strategic and detailed management policies were identified. In all cases the preferred option represented the most sustainable option.

Overall, significant positive sustainability effects are predicted to result from the draft Plan Strategy throughout the plan term and beyond, in relation to the sustainability objectives to:

- Improve health and well-being;
- Strengthen society;
- Provide good quality, sustainable housing ;

- Enable sustainable economic growth;
- Maintain and enhance landscape character; and
- Protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage.

It should be noted that in the case of the housing, landscape character and historic environment sustainability objectives, the overall effects have been raised from minor positive to significant positive through the cumulative impact of the plan.

Minor positive effects are identified for enabling access to high quality education; managing material assets sustainably; protecting physical resources and using sustainably; encouraging active and sustainable travel; and protecting natural resources and enhancing biodiversity. Again, the beneficial impacts on the education, material assets and physical resources sustainability objectives are enhanced through the cumulative impacts brought about by the plan.

Mixed effects (some minor positive, some minor negative and some uncertain effects) are identified on three objectives. These are the objectives to:

- Improve air quality;
- Reduce causes of and adapt to climate change; and
- Protect, manage and use water resources sustainably.

The cumulative impact of the plan is to reduce the range and scale of the minor negative impacts and enhance some of the minor positive effects, but some uncertainties remain. This reflects that a plan for growth is unlikely to improve air quality or reduce greenhouse gas emissions, however it can aim to provide conditions and support wider initiatives to encourage the behavioural changes required for this to happen. Establishing a LDP which identifies the areas where growth is projected and which manages spatial growth sustainably will help to enable the co-ordination of new waste water infrastructure and upgrades to existing infrastructure. However, the delivery of waste water treatment is outside the scope of the LDP.

Measures which will help to reduce negative effects and enhance positive effects of the LDP include:

- The requirement for developer impact assessments;
- Establishing key site requirements at the local policies plan stage;
- Supplementary design guidance; and
- Supplementary planning guidance.

How has the SA influenced Plan Making

The entire plan-making process is one of decisions, change and fine-tuning in response to many factors, including the SA. Identifying and clarifying these changes is therefore a key element of the SA process as it shows how the plan-making process has been influenced, in particular how the plan has changed and what mitigation measures have been incorporated into the plan. This is detailed further in

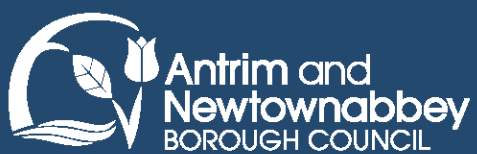
Section 3.6 of the SA Report. In summary, the Council's draft Plan Strategy has been influenced by changes to deal with policy gaps or to provide points of clarification.

Next Steps

The SA Scoping Report and SA Report have been published alongside the draft Plan Strategy for consultation. Representations received in response to the consultation may lead to the modification of the Plan Strategy. If these modifications are significant, this may lead to additional appraisal against the SA/SEA Framework.

Monitoring

Preliminary indicators for monitoring effects of the LDP have been identified for the key sustainability issues and significant effects identified through the SA. These will be aligned where possible with LDP and Community Plan monitoring.



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