# Local Development Plan 2030

## Updated Timetable

October 2026




Antrim and Newtownabbey BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Getting in Touch

Should you have a planning query, you can contact the Council's Planning Section in the following ways:

**By email** to: planning@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

**By post** to: Planning Section
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
Mossley Mill
Newtownabbey
BT36 5QA

**By telephone** on: 0300 123 6677

**By text phone** on: 18001 0289034 0000

Should you require a copy of this revised Timetable in an alternative format, it can be made available on request in large print, audio format, DAISY or Braille. It may also be made available in minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.

## Keeping Informed

The Planning Section has a community involvement database of persons with an interest in planning matters in the Borough. Should you wish to have your details added to this database, **please complete our Community Involvement Form**, which is available on our website. You can also contact us to request a hard copy of this form, which you can return upon completion.

Further information on all of the Council's planning responsibilities can be found on our website www.antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk.

## Foreword

I am very pleased to announce that on 3 July 2025 the Council the formally adopted its Local Development Plan 2030 – Plan Strategy. The adoption of this document provides an important plan-led framework, to allow development to take place in a sustainable manner and one that will help to bring forward investment, support the development of new homes and jobs, whilst protecting our important natural and built environment.

Following the section 14 Direction issued to the Council on 28 October 2025, the Council are preparing a single topic Plan Strategy Revision, which will be informed with the publication of a Preferred Options Paper (POP).

The Council is also proactively working on the second stage of its Local Development Plan with the preparation of a Local Policies Plan. This will build upon the framework provided by the Plan Strategy and gives a spatial expression of the policies contained within it.

We look forward to working in partnership with local communities and stakeholders across the Borough to achieve this aim, and the publication of this updated Local Development Plan Timetable 2026, represents an important legislative requirement in the overall Local Development Plan process.





Richard Baker GM MSc
Chief Executive

## Introduction

The purpose of the Timetable is to set out the key stages and the indicative timescale to produce the Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Development Plan 2030 (LDP).

***A copy of the Timetable is included in Appendix 1 and is based upon the financial year, which runs from 1st April one year to 31st March the following year.***

The Timetable has been prepared within the context of the Council's Corporate Plan, and meets the requirements of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, which require the Council to prepare and keep under review a Timetable for the preparation and adoption of its LDP.

This document also sets out further information on the new concept of 'soundness' to give interested parties an indication of the requirements should they wish to comment on the LDP.

## Purpose of the Local Development Plan

The purpose of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Development Plan 2030 is to inform the general public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested parties of the policy framework and land use proposals that will guide development decisions within the Borough up to 2030.

The new Local Development Plan (LDP) will be prepared within the context of the Council's Corporate Plan and associated documents, and Community Plan to enable us to plan positively for the future of our Borough.




The LDP will guide future development and use of land in our towns, villages, and rural areas by addressing the spatial implication of social, economic, and environmental change. The LDP will balance competing demands and aims to ensure that good development occurs in the right place and at the right time. It is therefore a powerful tool for place-shaping.

The LDP must also take account of the regional policy context set by the Northern Ireland Executive and Central Government Departments. This includes, amongst others, the Sustainable Development Strategy, the Regional Development Strategy and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement. The Council will also continue to work in partnership with neighbouring councils, to ensure policies and proposals are sustainably integrated.

The LDP will be produced in two stages and will comprise two separate development plan documents that will shape development within our Borough in the period to 2030. The first new development plan document is the **Plan Strategy** (PS), which will be followed by a **Local Policies Plan** (LPP).

The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) has published a number of guidance documents, known as '*Development Plan Practice Notes'*, which relate to the key stages of the LDP process. These are available to view online at www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk.

## Plan Strategy

On 3 July 2025 the Council adopted its PS, which identifies the strategic objectives for the future development of the Borough and includes a range of Strategic Policies and a spatial growth strategy that indicates in broad strategic terms, the locations where different types of development will be promoted.

The PS also contains a range of Detailed Management Policies encompassing various topic areas, to help deliver the aims of the Strategic Policies. These are the operational policies, which together with the Strategic Policies, are used to help determine the outcome of planning applications across the Borough.

## Transitional Arrangements

Upon adoption of the PS, the existing suite of Departmental Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) which contained policies previously used to help determine the outcome of planning applications, ceased to have effect.

Until such times as the LPP identifies the boundaries of settlement limits, local designations and zonings, these spatial provisions contained within the current legacy Departmental Development Plans will continue to apply in the decision-making process. The legacy plans are available to view online at www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk.

Once the LPP is adopted, the entirety of the legacy Departmental Development Plans for the Borough, will cease to have effect.

## Section 14 Plan Strategy Revision

Following the IE into the PS, in September 2024 DfI issued a binding Section 12 Direction to the Council regarding adoption of the PS and advising of a subsequent Direction (under s.14 of the 2011 Act) which will require the Council to prepare a revision to the adopted Plan Strategy to provide a new planning policy for Abbey Centre retail area.

The Council received a Section 14 Direction, in October 2025 to make a Plan Strategy Revision relating to matters concerning the Abbey Centre retail area only. The Plan Strategy Revision will be subject to public consultation and will be the subject of an IE. Further information is set out in Appendix 1.

In advance of this, the Council will undertake a Preferred Options Paper (POP) relating specifically to the

Section 14 Plan Strategy Revision: supported by a number of assessments to inform the range of options to be considered following the legally binding Section 14. The POP will be subject to a period of public consultation.

## Local Policies Plan

The Council is moving towards the preparation of its LPP. This plan will include site-specific proposals, policy designations, and land-use zonings that will be required to deliver the Plan Vision, Strategic Objectives, Spatial Growth Strategy, and Strategic Policies. It will also define development limits for all the settlements across the Borough. It is a legislative requirement under Section 9(5) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, that the LPP is consistent with the PS.

As with the PS, the LPP will initially be published in draft format and then be subject to a public consultation exercise. The Draft LPP will also be subject to an Independent Examination (IE) to determine its soundness and take account of all representations and counter representations received during the public consultation process.

In addition to the PS and LPP, the Council will also bring forward, as appropriate, a range of supplementary planning guidance documents to support the implementation of the LDP together with advice notes and information to assist applicants in the planning process.

Once both the PS and LPP are adopted, it will be monitored annually to determine if it meets its objectives. The provisions of the LDP will also be reviewed every five years to determine whether any amendments are required.

## Soundness

The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 sets out the general requirements for local development plans. Once the Council is satisfied that the LDP is ready for IE, the Plan is then submitted to the Department who will cause an IE to be held.

The purpose of the IE is to determine whether the Plan satisfies the requirements relating to the preparation of the Plan and whether it is 'sound'.

Soundness is a new test in the Northern Ireland plan process, and we have included information in this publication to make interested parties aware of the forthcoming new process for the examination of the Plan.

A summary of the tests of soundness is set out in **Appendix 2** of this document for information. The Department for Infrastructure has published advice relating to the soundness tests and further details are available on the Department for Infrastructure's website at www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk.

The Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) has also published guidance, entitled '*Procedures for Independent Examination of Local Development Plans*' (Version 2, 2019), which is

available on their website at www.pacni.gov.uk.

They explain in this guidance that those who make representation to the LDP and wish to participate at the IE will be required to identify how the LDP is unsound and provide supporting evidence.

## The LDP Timetable

The Timetable **(Appendix 1)** provides indicative[1] dates for several key stages in the production of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Development Plan 2030. It shows how the LDP is progressing and when there will be opportunities to have your say.

The Timetable also sets out dates for the key assessments that will be undertaken as part of the Plan preparation and when they will be consulted on. This will include a **Sustainability Appraisal** incorporating a **Strategic Environmental Assessment**, which aims to ensure that the policies and proposals in the LDP are socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable.

In addition, a **Habitats Regulation Assessment** to consider the potential impact of LDP policies and proposals on European nature conservation sites.

**A Rural Needs Assessment** throughout the process will scrutinise whether LDP policies ensure fair and equitable treatment of rural communities and that the policies do not indirectly have a detrimental impact on rural dwellers and rural communities.

Finally, an **Equality Impact Screening** will be required to assess if the LDP is likely to have an impact on different sections of the community. If so, an **Equality Impact Assessment** will be undertaken.

## Have your Say

We will continue to engage with you throughout the plan preparation process.

Further details on how we will engage with interested parties throughout the plan process is set out in our Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

The SCI is available on our website, or by contacting the Planning Section using the details outlined at the start of this document.

## Delivery of the LDP

There are several factors that could potentially impact upon the timescale for delivery of the LDP. These include changes to regional policy, legislation or guidance during the lifetime of the Plan; a sudden major change in local circumstances e.g. impacts of a pandemic or potential delays associated with IE and subsequent Report and Department Direction; or available resources with statutory stakeholders.

This updated Timetable sets out several steps and safeguards to manage the

[1] *In accordance with Regulation 6 of The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (NI) 2015.*

plan making process and bring forward any early warning signs to the attention of the Council. These steps include the following steps:

- A work programme will be presented to Council Members for each stage of the Plan process;
- Papers will be presented to Council Members on a regular basis regarding local development plan matters;
- A Steering Group has been established and comprises the Chair and Vice Chair of the Planning Committee, in conjunction the senior officers from the Council;
- Stakeholder engagement groups on various topic areas where required;
- Progress Reports on the LDP have been, and will continue to be, submitted on a quarterly basis to the Planning Committee. The reports show how the LDP is progressing through each stage of the Timetable.

## Review of the Timetable

The Council will continue to review and update the Local Development Plan Timetable as necessary.

A copy of the Timetable (updated 2026) is included at **Appendix 1**. It illustrates our progress so far, provides the latest indicative dates for work yet to be completed, and when there will be opportunities to have your say.

This Timetable has been approved by resolution of the Council, and the PAC has been consulted under Regulation 5 of The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. The Timetable has also been submitted to DfI in accordance with Regulation 7 of The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

## Appendix 1: Revised Indicative LDP Timetable 2026

### Plan Strategy and S14 Revision Timetable

| KEY STAGES IN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROCESS | ASSESSMENTS | ESTIMATED TIMESCALES |
|---|---|---|
| **Publication of the Plan Timetable and Statement of Community Involvement** | | Complete<br>Timetables -January 2016, July 2018, October 2020, November 2025 and October 2026.<br>(Revised) SCI – November 2025 and October 2026. |
| **Publication of Preferred Options Paper (POP) for public consultation** | Publication of Sustainability Appraisal Interim Report (incorporating SEA & HRA), Scoping Report plus publication of Equality Screening Assessment Interim Progress Report | Complete<br>January 2017 |
| **Publication of draft Plan Strategy (DPS)**<br>PUBLIC CONSULTATION[2]<br>(8 WKS: REPRESENTATIONS)<br>(8 WKS: COUNTER-REPRESENTATIONS) | Publication of Sustainability Appraisal Report incorporating SEA, Scoping Report, draft HRA & Rural Needs Assessment and Section 75 Screening | Complete<br>June 2019 |
| **Soundness Based Independent Examination**<br>Submission of the Plan to DFI - Hearing Sessions - Followed by Independent Examination Report to Central Government - Central Government issues Binding Report[3] to Council - Changes made to finalise the Plan | | Complete<br>IE May/June 2022<br>PAC Report October 2023<br>DfI Direction September 2024 |
| **Adoption of the Plan Strategy (PS)** | Publication of Sustainability Appraisal Adoption Report (inc. SEA), HRA, Rural Needs Assessment & EQIA (where required) | Complete<br>03 July 2025 |
| Statutory Stakeholder Engagement: Member engagement on key issues and public consultation where required. | Invite comments from Consultation Body on draft Sustainability Appraisal (inc. SEA) and updating of Scoping Report | Ongoing |
| | | |
| **Section 14 Revision to the Plan Strategy[4]** | Departmental Direction received and publicised. | Complete<br>October/November 2025 |
| **Publication of Preferred Options Paper (POP) for public consultation** | Publication of Assessment Scoping Report to include - Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating SEA), HRA, EQIA and RNIA | Q3 2026/27 |

[2] *Included 4 weeks pre-consultation*
[3] *There is no statutory timeframe for this period*
[4] *Preparation of supporting evidence to include Abbey Centre as a District Centre in the Antrim and Newtownabbey Retail Hierarchy (SP 2.12, Table 4, page 79, Plan Strategy).*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Publication of Plan Strategy draft Revision**<br>PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON PLAN STRATEGY DRAFT REVISION[5]<br>(8 WKS: REPRESENTATIONS)<br>(8 WKS: COUNTER-REPRESENTATIONS) | Publication of Sustainability Appraisal Interim/Addendum Report (incorporating SEA), draft EQIA and RNIA Addendum and HRA Addendum | Q4 2026/27 |
| **Soundness Based Independent Examination**<br>Submission of Section 14 Plan Strategy Revision to DFI – Independent Examinations - Followed by Independent Examination Report to Central Government - Central Government issues Binding Report[6] to Council - Changes made to finalise the Section 14 Plan Strategy Revision. | | Date will be dependent on DfI[7]/PAC timetabling |
| **Adoption of Plan Strategy Revision as amended.** | Publication of Sustainability Appraisal Adoption Report (incorporating SEA), final EQIA and RNIA Addendum and HRA Addendum. | Q3<br>2027/28 |

## Local Polices Plan Timetable

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Publication of draft Local Policies Plan (DLPP)**<br>PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON DRAFT LOCAL POLICIES PLAN[8]<br>(8 WKS: REPRESENTATIONS)<br>(8 WKS: COUNTER-REPRESENTATIONS) | Publication of Sustainability Appraisal Report incorporating SEA, Scoping Report, draft HRA & Rural Needs Assessment and Section 75 Screening | 2027 |
| **Soundness Based Independent Examination**<br>Submission of the Plan to DFI – Independent Examination - Followed by Independent Examination Report to Central Government - Central Government issues Binding Report[9] to Council - Changes made to finalise the Plan. | | Date will be dependent on DfI[10]/PAC timetabling |
| **Adoption of the Local Policies Plan (LPP)** | Publication of Sustainability Appraisal Adoption Report (inc. SEA), HRA, Rural Needs Assessment & EQIA (where required) | 2028/2029 |

## Monitoring and Review Timetable

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Monitoring and Review of Local Development Plan Incorporating Public Engagement**<br>• Annual Review<br>• 5- & 10-Year Review<br>• Commence Preparation of new Local Development Plan | Monitoring of Sustainability Appraisal (inc. SEA, HRA, EQIA) | Ongoing |

[5]/[8] Included 4 weeks pre-consultation
[6]/[9] *There is no statutory timeframe for this period.*
[7]/[10] DfI have secured funding to bring forward Independent Inspectors under Section 10(4) of The Planning Act (NI) 2011. PAC has advised that previous timeframe of 2029 may come forward depending on resources.

## Appendix 2: Soundness Tests (as set by Department for Infrastructure)

**Procedural Tests**

P1 Has the DPD been prepared in accordance with the council's timetable and the Statement of Community Involvement?

P2 Has the council prepared its Preferred Options Paper and taken into account any representations made?

P3 Has the DPD been subject to sustainability appraisal including Strategic Environmental Assessment?

P4 Did the council comply with the regulations on the form and content of its DPD and procedure for preparing the DPD?

**Consistency Tests**

C1 Did the council take account of the Regional Development Strategy?

C2 Did the council take account of its Community Plan?

C3 Did the council take account of policy and guidance issued by the Department?

C4 Has the plan had regard to other relevant plans, policies and strategies relating to the council's district or to any adjoining council's district?

**Coherence and Effectiveness Tests**

CE1 The DPD sets out a coherent strategy from which its policies and allocations logically flow and where cross boundary issues are relevant it is not in conflict with the DPDs of neighbouring councils;

CE2 The strategy, policies and allocations are realistic and appropriate having considered the relevant alternatives and are founded on a robust evidence base;

CE3 There are clear mechanisms for implementation and monitoring; and

CE4 It is reasonably flexible to enable it to deal with changing circumstances.

*Source: Dept. for Infrastructure Development Plan Practice Note 6, Soundness, V2 May 2017*