
Consultation Period

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council has published its draft Plan Strategy, the first formal stage of the new Local Development Plan 2030, for public consultation.

The draft Plan Strategy is the first of two documents, which comprise the Local Development Plan 2030. It has been developed following extensive engagement with the public, stakeholders and our elected Members, including the publication of our Preferred Options Paper.

The draft Plan Strategy sets out how our Borough will grow and change up to the year 2030. It puts forward our Plan Vision for the future. It also contains a Spatial Growth Strategy indicating at a strategic level where growth should go in the Borough. It also sets out a range of Strategic Policies and Detailed Management Policies, which together will guide future planning decisions.

The draft Plan Strategy is published for formal public consultation over an 8-week period and the Council is inviting the submissions of representations, beginning on **Friday 26 July and closing on Friday 20 September 2019 at 5pm.**

The submission of representations in relation to the Council's draft Plan Strategy provides an opportunity for the public to influence the policies and proposals for the future planning and development within Antrim and Newtownabbey.

Please note that representations received after the closing period will not be accepted and will be subsequently returned.

Published alongside the draft Plan Strategy are a range of assessments including Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating the Strategic Environmental Assessment), a draft Habitats Regulation Assessment and an Equality (Section 75) Screening and Rural Needs Impact Assessment Report. These assessments are also subject to public consultation during the formal public consultation period closing on Friday 20 September 2019 at 5pm.

Copies of the draft Plan Strategy and all supporting documents are available to view and download from our website at:

www.antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/draftplanstrategy.

Copies of all documents are also available for inspection at the Council Offices in Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey and Antrim Civic Centre, Antrim from Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm. Hard copies of the draft Plan Strategy are also available upon request.



Soundness Testing

A key feature of Northern Ireland's new Planning System is 'Soundness' which requires the draft Plan Strategy document to be tested at Independent Examination (IE) in terms of content, conformity and the process by which it has been prepared. Derived from established practices in England and Wales, it is considered that 'Soundness' testing will provide a more effective basis for examining Local Development Plans and consequently contribute towards a shorter IE process.

The purpose of the IE is to determine if the draft Plan Strategy satisfies statutory requirements and is 'sound'. The presumption will be that the draft Plan Strategy is 'sound' unless it is shown to be otherwise as a result of evidence considered at the IE stage.

The tests of soundness are based upon three categories which relate to how the draft Plan Strategy has been produced, the alignment of the document with central government regional plans, policy and guidance and the coherence, consistency and effectiveness of the content of the draft Plan Strategy. The tests of soundness are set out below:

| 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. |
| CE4 | It is reasonably flexible to enable it to deal with changing circumstances. |
| *Development Plan Document (DPD) – Comprises of the draft Plan Strategy | |

Further information on Soundness can be found in Development Plan Practice Notes published by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). Of particular relevance is Practice Note 6 'Soundness' (Version 2) and Practice Note 9 'Submission and Handling of Representations', both are available to view at <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/development-plan-practice-notes>.

In addition, the Planning Appeals Commission has also produced guidance entitled 'Procedures for Independent Examination of Local Development Plans' available at <https://www.pacni.gov.uk/procedural-guides>.

Making a Representation

As the main purpose of the IE is to determine whether the Development Plan Document (DPD) is 'sound', any person(s) wishing to make a representation to any part of the Plan should do so on the grounds of soundness. Any representation proposing a change to the Plan must demonstrate why the document is not sound having regard to the tests of soundness. Every representation should say precisely how the Plan should be changed in order to achieve soundness and should be supported, succinctly, by all the evidence thought necessary to justify the proposed change. Once the public consultation period has closed, **there will be no further opportunity to submit information unless the Commissioner requests it.**

Where several people share a common view on how the draft Plan Strategy should be changed, we encourage you to co-operate with each other, pool resources and make a single representation, for example, a local community group.

Those who make representations to the draft Plan Strategy should state whether they wish to have their representation considered at IE in writing or as an oral hearing. Unless people specifically request an oral hearing, the Commission will proceed on the basis that you are content that your representation will be considered in writing. The Commissioner will give every representation the same careful consideration regardless of whether the person who made it is heard orally or in written form.



Points to Remember:

- Representations will be made publicly available for inspection at the Council's Offices and online for counter-representations;
- Complete all relevant sections of the response form;
- Clearly state why you consider the draft Plan Strategy to be 'unsound', having regard to the soundness tests;
- There will be no further opportunity to submit information once the public consultation period closes unless the Commissioner requests it;
- We would encourage you to submit separate forms for each representation you wish to submit;
- Every representation should say precisely how the draft Plan Strategy should be changed in order to achieve soundness;
- Representations should be supported, succinctly, by all the evidence thought necessary to justify the proposed change; and
- Clearly, state whether you wish for your representation to be heard orally or in writing.

Submitting Your Representation

We recommend that you submit your representation via our on-line consultation hub, at www.antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/consultations, as this is the most efficient way to make a representation.

However, you can make a representation by completing this form and returning to us by **5pm on Friday 20 September 2019** either by email or by post.

Representations received after the closing period will not be accepted and will be subsequently returned.

What Happens Next

When the consultation has closed, the Forward Planning Team will collate the representations received and as soon as reasonably practicable, publish these online for a further 8-week period of consultation to allow counter-objections to be made. The representations will also be available for public inspection during this period at the Council's Offices in Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey and Antrim Civic Centre, Antrim from Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5pm.

Once this period of counter-representations has closed, the Forward Planning Team will collate the counter-representations and publish these online. They will also be made available for public inspection at the Council's Offices in Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey and Antrim Civic Centre, Antrim from Monday to Friday 8:30am to



5pm. The next anticipated step will be for the Council to contact the Department for Infrastructure to request an Independent Examination of the draft Plan Strategy.

Contact Us

For further assistance, please contact the Forward Planning Team at Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey:

By Post – Forward Planning Team

Mossley Mill

Carnmoney Road North, Newtownabbey

BT36 5QA

By Email – planning@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

By Telephone – 0300 123 6677



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/.

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

Phone - 028 9446 3113



SECTION B – YOUR DETAILS

2. 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) |
|--|---|---|
| Title | Mr | Mrs |
| First Name | Ben | Angela |
| Last Name | Collins | Wiggam |
| Job Title (where relevant) | Chief Executive | Director |
| Organisation (where relevant) | Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA) | Turley |
| Client Name (where relevant) | | |
| Address | 6c Citylink Business Park Albert Street Belfast | Hamilton House 3 Joy Street Belfast |
| Post Code | BT12 4HQ | BT2 8LE |
| Telephone Number | 028 9023 0446 | 028 9072 3900 |
| Email Address | bcollins@nifha.org | angela.wiggam@turley.co.uk |



SECTION C – REPRESENTATION

Your comments should be set out in full. This will help the Independent Examiner understand the issues you raise. You will only be able to submit further additional information to the Independent Examination if the Independent Examiner invites you to do so.

3. To which part of the draft Plan Strategy does your representation relate?

i) Paragraph Number: _____

ii) Policy Heading: _____

➤ Strategic Policy (SP) Paragraph Number:

SP4 _____

➤ Detailed Management Policy (DM) Paragraph Number:

DM17 _____

iii) Page Number in Document: _____

iv) Proposal Map (if relevant state location): _____

4. Do you consider the draft Plan Strategy to be:

'Sound' (i.e. support)

'Unsound' (i.e. object)

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



[Empty rectangular box for drawing or notes]

(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

6. If you consider the draft Plan Strategy to be **'UN SOUND'** please identify which test(s) of soundness your representation relates to have

regard to the Department for Infrastructure's published Development Plan Practice Note 6 'Soundness' (Version 2).



Soundness Tests:

- P1** - Has the DPD¹ 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?
- 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 DPD had regard to other relevant plans, policies and strategies relating to the Council's district or to any adjoining Council's district?
- CE1** - Does 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 DPD's of neighbouring Councils?
- CE2** - Are the strategy, policies and allocations realistic and appropriate having considered the relevant alternatives and are founded on a robust evidence base?
- CE3** - Are there clear mechanisms for implementation and monitoring?
- CE4** - Is it reasonably flexible to enable it to deal with changing circumstances?

Details

7. Please give details of why you consider the draft Plan Strategy to be '**UNSOUND**' having regard to the test(s) you have identified above. Please be as concise as possible.

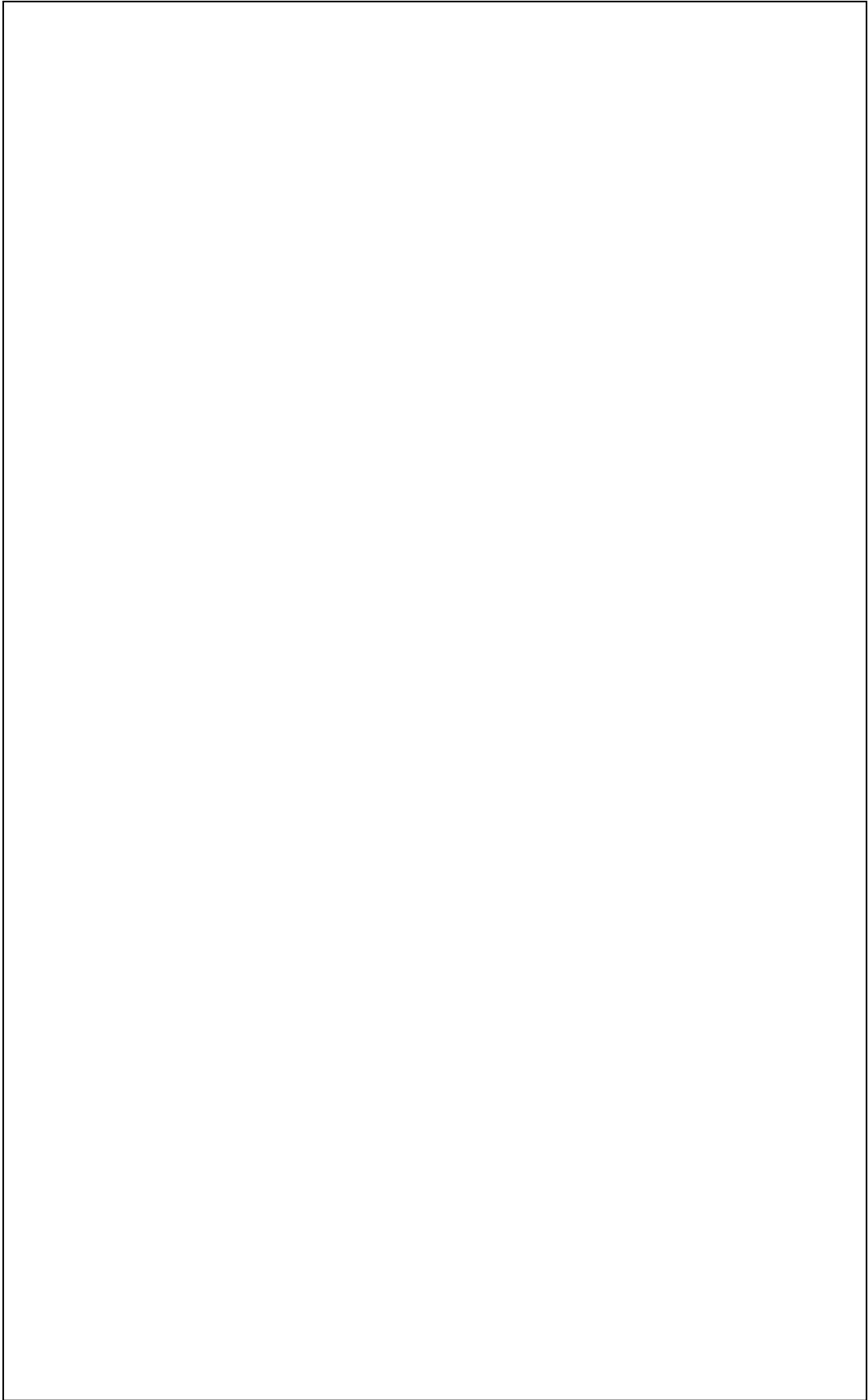
¹ Development Plan Document (DPD) – Comprises of the draft Plan Strategy



Please Note: Your representation should be submitted in full and cover succinctly all the information, evidence, and any supporting information necessary to support/justify your submission. **This representation will be considered during the IE and here will be no further opportunity to submit information unless the Commissioner requests it.**

Refer to enclosed report





(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

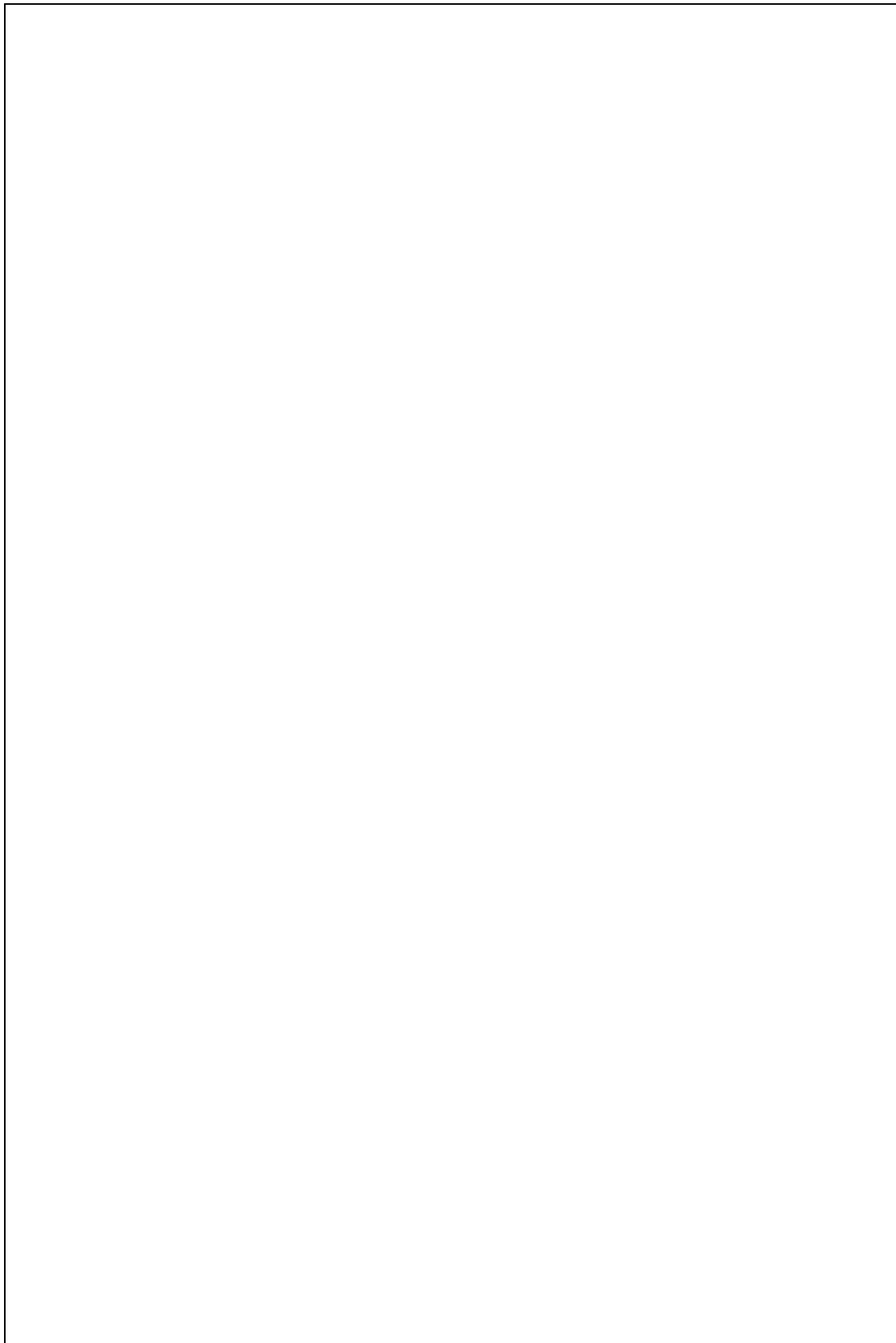


Modifications

8. If you consider the draft Plan Strategy to be '**UN SOUND**', please provide details of what, if any, modifications do you think should be made to the section, policy or proposal which your representation relates to? What specific modifications do you think should be made in order to address your representation? Please briefly state how your proposed alternative would meet the requirements of the Sustainability Appraisal and other published assessments.

Refer to enclosed report





(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)



9. If you are seeking a change to the draft Plan Strategy, please indicate how you would like your representation to be dealt with at Independent Examination:

Please Note: Unless you specifically request an oral hearing, the Commission will proceed on the basis that you are content to your representations considered in written form only. The Commissioner will give every representation the same careful consideration regardless of whether the person who made it is heard orally or not.

Please select only one item;

- Written Representation
- Oral Hearing

Signature:

Catriona Blair on behalf of Turley

Date:

20 September 2019

Thank you for your response.



Representations to Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council Draft Plan Strategy

On behalf of NIFHA

September 2019

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Contact

Angela Wiggam

Angela.wiggam@turley.co.uk

Client

Northern Ireland Federation of Housing

Our reference

NIFB3146

10 September 2019

Executive Summary

1. This representation is submitted on behalf of the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing (NIFHA) who welcomes the opportunity to submit comments on the draft plan strategy issued by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (ANBC).
2. We appreciate that this draft Plan Strategy is the first, Local Development Plan prepared by ANBC and offer these comments as a 'critical friend' who is keen to see the smooth progression of the draft Plan Strategy from a consultation document to an adopted Plan Strategy.
3. We support the ambition and drive of ANBC in terms of its vision for the Council area however, having reviewed and considered the Local Development Plan, we consider the Plan to be unsound. The legal compliance tests have not been met, and the following policies contained within the Draft Plan Strategy are unsound.
4. The table below summarises the changes sought.

Schedule of Key Comments

| Policy | Comment | Cross ref. |
|--------|---|------------|
| SP4 | Housing Growth & Allocation Change required: A robust evidence base should be prepared which takes account of quantitative and qualitative data to support the policy with consideration given as to whether the objectives of the housing policies can be met within the proposed allocation of 9,750 residential units | Section 3 |
| DM 17 | Affordable Housing Change required: The policy should be redrafted (in parts) and supported by robust evidence to underpin proposed thresholds. Further evidence should be prepared to demonstrate the coherence of the overall strategy and how HOU2 emanates from it | Section 4 |

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Turley submits this representation on behalf of NIFHA Housing Association, and welcomes the opportunity to return comments on the Antrim & Newtownabbey Draft Plan Strategy.
- 1.2 In line with Council's procedures, each representation is set out on a separate page within each of the Chapter headings with the policy clearly identified.
- 1.3 The structure of the submission is as follows:
 - **Chapter 2:** Provides an assessment of how the draft Plan Strategy addresses the legislative compliance tests;
 - **Chapter 3:** Details our representations Section 7 - Homes; Strategic Policy 4;
 - **Chapter 4:** Details our representations to DM 17 – Affordable Housing; and
 - **Chapter 5:** Sets out our conclusions.

2. Legislative Compliance

The draft Plan Strategy is unsound as Procedural Tests P1 and P4 have not been met:

- The draft Plan Strategy has not been prepared in accordance with Council's timetable (P1)
- There is insufficient supporting information to support proposed policies (P4)

2.1 In preparing their Draft Plan Strategy (dPS), Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (ANBC) is required to adhere to the provisions of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 ('Act') and the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 ('Regulations').

2.2 This section identifies weaknesses in the compliance of the draft Plan Strategy (dPS) with the Act and the Regulations.

Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

2.3 Under Part 2 (8) of the Act the Plan Strategy must set out:

- the council's objectives in relation to the development and use of land in its district;
- its strategic policies for the implementation of those objectives; and
- such other matters as may be prescribed.

2.4 The Act also stipulates that the Plan Strategy should be prepared in accordance with the Council's Timetable, as approved by the Department and in accordance with Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

2.5 The latest version of the Local Development Plan (LPD) timetable available on Council's website, dated July 2018 cites the publication of the dPS in Q4 2018/2019. We acknowledge that this was an estimate, however in practice the dPS was published in Q2 2019/2020; 4 months after the agreed date set out in the timetable. In line with the direction set out in the Act, we would respectfully suggest that consideration should be given to modifying the timetable.

The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

2.6 Regulation 15 identifies a schedule of the information that should be made available alongside the publication of the dPS. This includes:

"Such documents as in the opinion of the council are relevant to the preparation of the local development plan."

2.7 Our reading of this Regulation is that supporting evidence used to inform or support a draft policy should be provided alongside the draft plan strategy. We have identified several instances where there is a gap in the information base and accordingly contend that the Plan has failed to address procedural test 4.

3. Strategic Policy 4: Homes

Strategic Policy 4: Homes is unsound as the policy fails the tests of CE1, CE2 and CE4

The proposed level of housing is unrealistic as it has not been informed by robust evidence (CE2) , and it is unclear how the Affordable Homes policy can achieve its operational goals as a result of a lack of robust evidence (CE1). Moreover, in its current form the policy has no mechanisms by which it is able to adapt to changing and unforeseen circumstances (CE4)

We respectfully suggest that a robust evidence base is prepared to support the policy with consideration given as to whether the objectives of the Housing policies can be met within the identified housing allocation of 9,750. All information should be publicly available for review and consideration

Full Response

Housing Growth & Allocation

- 3.1 Strategic Policy 4 identifies the requirement for 9,750 new homes of the period 2015 to 2030. We acknowledge that in formulating this figure, Council has sought to balance the pre-crash build rate of 748 units per annum against the Housing Growth Indicator (HGI) average build rate of 554. The figure of 9,750 units is based on an average of these two rates and projected forward i.e. $650 \text{ units} \times 15 \text{ years} = 9,750$.
- 3.2 At paragraph 7.7 (page 137), Council confirms that the level of new housing units for the period 2015 to 2030 is neither a target to be met or a cap which cannot be exceeded. While NIFHA welcomes this comment we have concerns that the approach adopted by Council is flawed as to fails to take account of other statistical data and assessments:
- *Build rates* - within the Council area residential build rates have been steadily rising over the last 3 years. Evidence Paper 6 – Housing, paragraph 9.13 indicates that the completion rate for 2019 is likely to be 600 units; a higher rate than the HGI when broken down over the plan period.
 - *The Plan Period* – currently we are 4 years into the Plan period. By the time the dPS is presented for Examination in Public and thereafter adopted, it is likely that other 18 months to 2 years will have past. With this in mind, consideration should be given to ‘rolling forward’ 5 years of allocation.
 - *Housing Market Analysis* – while Evidence Paper 6, paragraph 3.28 notes that the SPPS indicates that housing allocations in LDPs should be informed by (inter-alia) a Housing Market Analysis we cannot find any reference to the assessment. The Council area forms part of the greater Belfast area and travel to work zone, yet there has been no analysis of this socio economic trend and its impact on the local housing market.

3.3 Further consideration is required of these factors. The information collated under each topic needs to be considered and analysed when formulating the final housing requirement for the plan area.

Identification of Lands for Housing

3.4 Notwithstanding the comments above, we note at paragraph 7.14 Council's indication that it is *unlikely that new lands will be zoned for additional housing* beyond those currently identified. In forming this position we are unaware of any assessment undertaken to determine whether zoned sites and/or windfall sites are suitable, available or viable for residential development¹. Details contained within the appendices to Evidence Paper 6 (Housing) quantifies the *potential level* of available housing from windfall, but there is no assessment of constraints or site specific issues which may impact on the delivery of these sites. In the absence of an urban capacity analysis which rigorously assesses the potential of each site to make a meaningful contribution to housing within the borough Council area, we respectfully urge Council to maintain an open mind. The question as to whether new lands are required can only be fully answered having completed a robust urban capacity analysis of identified sites (zoned and windfall) and consideration given to infrastructure constraints.

3.5 Our principal concern centres on the impact a reduced or limited land supply will have on the Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP). Current estimates from the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) indicate that 1,272² units are required to the year 2030. Whilst the HNA details the level of social housing need, it is important to note that this may not be the true scale of need, as the data is dependent on applicants registering for a home. In areas where there is no to low levels of new housing stock being built, waiting lists can be low, with eligible households opting to seek accommodation within the private rented sector. Indeed, data contained within Evidence Paper 6 demonstrates that the private rented sector accounts for 15% of housing stock in comparison to 14% for social housing.

Affordable Homes

3.6 Strategic Policy 4.8 identifies Council's aspiration to introduce an affordable home policy under DM17 (further commentary about DM17 at Section 4). NIHFA fully supports the introduction of the policy which Council intends to deliver via two mechanisms:

- Introducing a threshold based approach to new planning applications i.e. development proposals over a set quantum would be required to address the policy considerations.
- Zoning land specifically for affordable housing.

3.7 In light of the approach outlined at paragraph 7.14, we have concerns regarding the effectiveness of the policy if there is little appetite to zone new lands. While some of

¹ Drawing on good practice guidance from the NPPF - Housing and economic land availability assessment, paragraphs 20 -26 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment#method--stage-4-assessment-review>

² Figures from Housing Needs Assessment based on September 2018 data

our members primary concern centres on social housing, if lands were to be zoned to address a social need, their preference is that this would be part of a wider mixed tenure development.

Recommendation

- 3.8 NIFHA respectfully seeks that Council gives consideration to collating further statistical data to inform their assessment of the overall number of homes required, which should include the preparation of a Housing Market Area assessment and a robust urban capacity analysis.

4. Policy DM 17: Homes in Settlements

Affordable Housing

Policy DM 17 is unsound as the policy fails the tests of CE1 and CE4

The policy is incoherent and NIFHA respectfully seeks that Council reviews its evidence base and wording used in the construction of the proposed policy in order to avoid any unintended consequences of the policy once operational

Full Response

- 4.1 Policy DM17, part 17.3 outlines Councils intention to introduce an affordable housing proposal. We note that the policy threshold applies to developments of 40 residential units or more with a minimum of 10% to be for affordable housing. The policy also requires that affordable homes be distributed throughout the development and should not be easily distinguishable i.e. tenure blind.
- 4.2 NIFHA acknowledges that the Housing Strategy presented within the draft Plan Strategy aligns with regional policy objectives as set out in the Regional Development Strategy (RDS), specifically the inclusion of policy mechanisms to provide for the needs of everyone and the provision of mixed tenure housing developments.
- 4.3 While NIFHA supports the inclusion of policy 17.3, we have concerns about two aspects of the policy.

Lack of Definition

- 4.4 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) defines affordable housing as relating to social rented and intermediate housing. These are defined as:

“Social rented housing is housing provided at an affordable rent by a registered housing association; that is, one which is registered and regulated by the Department for Social Development as a social housing provider. Social rented accommodation should be available to households in housing need and is offered in accordance with the common selection scheme, administered by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), which prioritises households who are living in unsuitable or insecure accommodation”

“Intermediate housing consists of shared ownership housing provided through a registered housing association (e.g. the Northern Ireland Co-ownership Housing Association) and helps households who can afford a small mortgage, but that are not able to afford to buy a property outright. The property is split between part ownership by the householder and part social renting from a registered housing association. The proportion of property ownership and renting can vary depending on householder circumstances and preference.”

- 4.5 Within the draft Plan Strategy the subtle, but important distinction between the two tenures is not set out. We would strongly urge Council to include a definition within

the policy amplification to avoid any confusion, and acknowledge that the definition may be subject to change.

- 4.6 At the time of preparing this representation, the Department for Communities (DfC) had launched a consultation paper on proposed changes to the definition of Affordable Housing. While the proposed change would have no direct impact upon social housing, it would provide an opportunity for the private sector to provide intermediate housing products alongside registered housing associations.
- 4.7 We would suggest that the policy should be reworded clearly identifying the two primary forms of housing tenure.

Threshold & Need Test

- 4.8 The current policy applies to any residential development over 40 units with the requirement being set at a minimum of 10%. Within the supporting papers, we can find no evidence or rationale to support the threshold requirement of 10% and indeed whether alternative thresholds were considered.
- 4.9 With respect to social housing, the policy as currently constructed applies irrespective of 'need'. NIHFA would be concerned that unless the policy is reworded to clearly reflect that new developments in areas of identified social housing need, must address this aspect first, that developers may try to deliver the full quota of affordable housing as intermediate housing. This would have a significant impact on the ability of registered housing associations to deliver social housing. It is also particularly important in larger developments which should have a mixed tenure approach i.e. private owner occupied properties, social housing and intermediate housing.
- 4.10 Within the policy amplification, we welcome the comments at paragraph 7.38 regarding the use of Section 76 to secure affordable housing and Council's intention to bring forward supplementary planning guidance to explain in greater detail how the provisions of the policy will be implemented. We consider this to be of critical importance, particularly in view of the proposed change by DfC to the definition of affordable housing. We would urge Council to consider setting up a working group to assist in drafting the guidance. Representatives on any group, we would suggest should include registered housing associations, NIFHA, the Northern Ireland Co Ownership Association, the Department for Communities, representatives of the Construction Employers Federation and Council.

Recommendation

- 4.11 NIHFA respectfully seeks that Council reviews its evidence base and wording used in the construction of the proposed policy in order to avoid any unintended consequences of the policy once operational.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 We support the ambition and drive of ANBC in terms of its vision for the Council area but having reviewed and considered the Local Development Plan as issued, we consider the Plan to be unsound. The legal compliance tests have not been met, and policies SP4 and DM17 should be supported with robust up to date evidence in order to address the tests of Soundness.
- 5.2 NIFHA thanks Council for this opportunity to respond and contribute to the draft Plan Strategy, and welcomes the chance to discuss our response with the Local Development Plan team.

Turley Office
Belfast

028 9072 3900

Turley
Planning