

Planning Statement of Community Involvement

October 2026

antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

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:

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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 Statement of Community Involvement 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 minoritylanguages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.

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1.0 What is the Statement of Community Involvement Purpose

1.1 The purpose of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is to define how we will engage with the community in the delivery of our planning functions. It is set within the context of the Council's Corporate Plan[1] and meets the requirements of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. The Council's planning powers include:

- Developing a Local Development Plan which will set out what our Borough should look like and how land should be used and developed in the future;
- Receiving and making decisions on the majority of planning applications affecting the Borough; and
- Investigating alleged breaches of planning control and determining what enforcement action should be taken.

1.2 The SCI describes how and when we intend to involve the community in the production of the Local Development Plan, in the determination of planning applications, in planning enforcement, and in other planning matters. This document is not a definitive statement of legislation and readers should refer to relevant legislation for further information. All planning legislation is available at www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk.

1.3 This SCI has been approved by resolution of the Council and has been agreed with the Department for Infrastructure in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Our Vision of Participation

1.4 The Council's Corporate Plan defines our values, which include a commitment to placing the customer at the heart of the everything we do and engaging with the public to understand their needs and exceed their expectations.

1.5 Accordingly, we are committed to ensuring that engagement with the community is genuine, meaningful, inclusive and fit for purpose. Ensuring - that the community is at the heart of all aspects of our work, we will deliver the highest quality services to customers, our decision making is accountable, consistent and transparent and will result in community empowerment. Through community involvement, we will strive for economic, social and environmental sustainability.

1.6 This shared vision of participation in decision making seeks to ensure that:

- Everyone has an early and informed opportunity to express their views on the development of our Borough and have these considered before decisions are made; and

[1] http://www.antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/CorporatePlan

- All groups in our community, regardless of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, sex, marital status, physical ability, sexual orientation, and those with and without dependents are enabled and empowered to participate.

1.7 It is intended to adopt a proactive and timely approach to the community engagement through a process of providing clear information and encouraging participation during the preparation of our Local Development Plan and in the submission, assessment and determination of planning applications. The process must therefore be informative, user friendly, as inclusive as possible, and conducted in an open and transparent way. Every effort will be made to engage the community, record views and provide feedback.

Principles of Community Involvement

1.8 The Council is committed to upholding the following principles of community involvement and will endeavour to reflect this in the methods of consultation described throughout this SCI.

- **Culture of Engagement**

  People should be aware of the opportunity to participate in the planning process and be encouraged to take part in the knowledge that the Council is truly interested in all opinions.

- **Early Involvement**

  We will adopt a proactive approach to ensure that the community is given the opportunity to engage in the planning process at an early stage to facilitate the greatest potential benefit.

- **Continuing Involvement**

  Opportunities for ongoing involvement will be provided as part of a continuous process - both formal and informal.

- **Open, Transparent, Inclusive and Fit for Purpose**

  Methods of engagement will be tailored to the experience and needs of the community, and to the type of Local Development Plan document or planning application being considered, but realistic in terms of available resources. We are also keen to consider creative and innovative new ways of engaging with the community.

- **Clarity**

  The planning process and the Timetable for producing or reviewing Local Development Plan documents will be clear to ensure that the community can avail yourself of the opportunity to participate in a timely and effective manner. We will consider views at any stage of the process and will endeavour to use plain English in our publications and avoid jargon whenever possible.

2.0 Community Involvement in the Preparation of our Local Development Plan

Purpose, Structure and Process

2.1 The purpose of a Local Development Plan (LDP) is to inform the public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested parties of the policy framework and land use proposals that will guide development decisions.

2.2 Our new LDP will be prepared within the context of the Council's Corporate Plan and will co-ordinate with the Council's Community Planning process to enable us to plan positively for the future of the Borough. The policies and proposals defined in our LDP will be a vital tool in facilitating the implementation of any related objectives contained in our Community Plan[2]. The LDP will work within this broader framework to provide a vision of what places should be like in the future. It will also ensure that lands are appropriately zoned and that our infrastructure is enhanced to develop the Borough for future generations.

2.3 The LDP must also take account of the regional policy context set by the Northern Ireland Executive and Central Government Departments. This includes the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035, the Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland, the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS), and any other policies or advice in guidance issued by the department for Infrastructure such as landscape character assessments and conservation area design guides.

2.4 The LDP will comprise two separate documents that will shape development within our Borough in the period to 2030. The first of these documents is the Plan Strategy which was adopted in July 2025. The Plan Strategy defines the strategic objectives for the future development and place shaping of the Borough. It includes a range of strategic policies to facilitate and manage development, with a spatial strategy that indicates in broad strategic terms the locations where different types of development will be promoted.

2.5 This document is followed by the Local Policies Pan (LPP) which will include the site-specific proposals, local policy designations and the reasoned proposals for uses of land that will be required to deliver our vision, objectives, spatial strategy and strategic policies that define the Plan Strategy. Once fully adopted, the LDP will replace the Departmental Plans as they relate to the Borough.

2.6 The Council engaged with the local community to identify key planning issues and define a range of options for addressing these issues during the Preferred Options Paper – published 2017.

2.7 We will continue to undertake the process of the sustainability appraisal which has run parallel to the preparation of the Preferred Options Paper, Plan Strategy and will continue alongside the Local Policies Plan. This appraisal process aims to ensure that the policies and proposals in the LDP are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. Relevant reports have been published at each of the key stages of the plan making process.

[2] Our Community Plan is being prepared in accordance with the requirements of Part 10 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

Who can get involved?

2.8 We want to involve the whole community at every stage of the plan making process, and anyone who wishes to participate is encouraged to do so when the opportunities avail. In particular, and in addition to Elected Members, we will seek to engage with the following groups of people:

- People living or working within the Borough;
- Community Groups/Umbrella Organisations;
- Environmental Groups;
- Residents Groups;
- Voluntary Groups;
- Businesses;
- MPs/MLAs; and
- Developers/Landowners/Investors

This list is not intended to be exhaustive, and is not intended to restrict any individual, group, or organisation from participating in the plan making process.

2.9 Elected representatives, community groups and resident groups provide a voice for the local community. Other voluntary and interest groups also bring special knowledge and can help to ensure that important local planning-related opportunities and concerns are addressed.

2.10 We also recognize that the actions of the business community and in particular developers are fundamental to implementing the policies and proposals which will shape development within our Borough.

Empowering Disadvantaged and Under-Represented Groups

2.11 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 require us, in carrying out our functions, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:

- Persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- Men and Women Generally;
- Persons with a disability and persons without; and
- Persons with dependents and persons without.

2.12 The above "Section 75 groups" are important participants within the planning process and include people who traditionally have been underrepresented or disadvantaged. We will seek, as far as possible, to target these groups through the consultation process on the Local Development Plan in order to obtain their views and contribute to the consideration of equality issues under Section 75. Their views on equality

screening documents or draft Equality Impact Assessment will also be sought as well as any views they may have on the evolving development plan documents.

2.13 In addition, the Rural Needs Act places a duty on public authorities and local councils, to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing, or revising policies, strategies, plans and when designing and delivering public services. This will be considered through consultation with rural stakeholders and community and undertaking a Rural Needs Impact Assessment.

2.14 To ensure that all documents associated with the preparation of the LDP are accessible to everyone, they will be made available in different formats upon request, including large print, audio format, DAISY or Braille. A telephone number and a text phone number will be stated on each document for people with hearing or speech impairments. If for any reason, a request for documentation in a particular alternative format cannot be met, other possible solutions will be explored.

How and when will the Community be involved?

2.15 The formulation of a Local Development Plan involves a number of key stages, each presenting opportunities for community involvement. Each stage is identified in our Plan Timetable, and outlined in detail in this document, along with the actions that we will take to involve the community. These actions will fulfil, and in some cases exceed, the statutory requirements on public consultation, as specified in the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2.16 The following stages of the Local Development Plan have already been complete:

- Starting a New Plan and Developing an Evidence Base
- Preferred Options Paper for the Draft Plan Strategy
- Plan Strategy

2.17 The statutory consultation period for the various stages of the Local Development Plan is 8 weeks. Where appropriate, the Council will consider the need to do a period of pre-consultation to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to consider the documents published. It should be noted that as the period of consultation of 8 weeks is statutory, any submission received after the closing date will not be considered.

Local Development Section 14 Plan Revision

2.18 The Department for Infrastructure issued the Council with a Section 14 Direction in October 2025 instructing the Council to revise its adopted Plan Strategy in relation to the Abbey Centre. The Plan Strategy Draft Revision is subject to the same statutory processes as were required for the preparation of the PS.

What we will do:

a) The Council will prepare and publish a Preferred Options Paper (POP), taking into account the representations received through consultation bodies[3]. This will identify options available to address the Section 14 Direction and define our preferred options for the Plan Strategy Draft Revision. We will advertise and contact all key consultees, Elected Members, Section 75 groups and those listed in our Community Engagement Database to advise them of how to obtain a copy of the POP and invite them to comment within the specified 8-week public consultation period. Any representations or views received as a consequence of its publication will be considered while formulating our Plan Strategy Draft Revision.

b) An Assessment Scoping Report and SA Interim Report consisting of a Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating SEA), Habitats Regulations Assessment and Equality (Sec 75) and Rural Needs Impact Assessment, will be published alongside the POP.

c) Our Plan Strategy Draft Revision will be issued for an 8-week period for public consultation as a key part of the community involvement and public participation process. Representations received during the public consultation period will also be published for another 8-week period of consultation known as "Counter- Representations Public Consultation". Representations and counter-representations received after the end of the period of public consultation will not be considered.

d) A Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating SEA) Interim 2nd Addendum, Equality (Sec 75) and Rural Needs Impact Assessment 2nd Addendum and Habitats Regulations Assessment Report Addendum (if required), will be published alongside the Plan Strategy Draft Revision.

e) When the Council considers that the Plan Strategy Draft Revision and Assessments are in accordance with legislative requirements, they will forward it to the Department for Infrastructure along with associated documentation and supporting evidence. The Department for Infrastructure must then cause an Independent Examination unless it issues a Direction to withdraw the Plan Strategy Draft Revision or intervenes to direct the Council to modify it.

f) Following the Independent Examination, the Department for Infrastructure will issue a Direction to the Council, requiring us to either withdraw or adopt the Plan Strategy Draft Revision as originally prepared or with modifications. Upon adoption of the Plan Strategy Draft Revision the Council will publish a digital version to their website and make hardcopies available at their Civic Centres.

[3] Including Regulations 9 and 11 of The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Local Policies Plan

2.19 The Council will prepare the second part of our Local Development Plan, the Local Policies Plan Stage. This stage must be consistent with our adopted Plan Strategy and will contain the Council's detailed land use policies and proposals regarding the future development of the Borough; engagement on this Plan will be a key part of the public participation process.

Local Policies Plan – Preparation

What we will do:

a) The Council will issue a public announcement regarding the formal commencement of its Local Policies Plan

b) We will write to our key consultees and those who submitted representations and counter representations advising them of the commencement of work on our Local Policies Plan;

c) We will write to all those listed in our Community Engagement Database to advise them of the formal commencement of our Local Policies Plan. If you would like to register on this database for updates please email: planning@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

d) We will hold public engagement events and drop-in sessions at locations throughout the Borough, where our Planning Officers will be available to answer any relevant questions. A list of dates will be made available on our website as well as information on Local Policies Plan preparation; and

e) We will issue public notices to confirm:

I. The publication of our Timetable

II. How to view or obtain copies of our Timetable; and

III. The dates and locations of any public exhibitions and events.

The public notices will be placed on our website and appear in the Antrim Guardian, and Newtownabbey Times.

Local Policies Plan – Publication of Consultation Draft

2.20 Our draft Local Policies Plan will provide detailed zoning and designations for the Borough. Like the Plan Strategy it will also be issued for public consultation as a key part of the community involvement and public participation process. The draft Local Policies Plan will be subject to public consultation. Representations received during the public consultation period will also be published for a period of consultation known as "Counter- Representations Public Consultation".

What we will do:

Public consultation for representations

a) We will issue a press release highlighting the key elements of the draft Local Policies Plan and the period of public consultation.

b) We will hold public engagement events and exhibitions at locations throughout the Borough, where our Planning Officers will be available to answer any relevant questions. A list of dates will be made available on our website.

c) We will write to key consultees and Elected Members informing them of the publication of our draft Local Policies Plan and associated documentation, providing them with an electronic copy, the dates of the public exhibitions, confirmation of the 8-week period for public consultation, and the closing date for receipt of representations;

d) We will write to all who submitted representations and counter representations with regard to the Plan Strategy to inform of the publication of our draft Local Policies Plan and associated documents, details of how to view the documents or obtain copies, the dates of public exhibitions, and confirmation of the 8-week period for public consultation, and the closing date for receipt of representations;

e) We will issue a public notice to confirm:

   a. Publication of our draft Local Policies Plan, and how to view or obtain copies;

   b. The dates and locations of public exhibitions;

   c. The 8-week period and closing date for receipt of representations to the draft Local Policies Plan; and

   d. That representations received after the end of the period of public consultation **cannot** be accepted.

This public notice will be placed on our website and appear in the Antrim Guardian, Newtownabbey Times, and Belfast Gazette.

f) We will make our draft Local Policies Plan and any supporting documentation available on our website and in our offices a Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey and Antrim Civic Centre, and provide hard copies upon request at a specified price and;

g) We will report on representations to the Elected Members.

Local Policies Plan – Public Inspection of Representations

2.21 All representations made to the draft Local Policies Plan will be made available for public inspection as part of the public consultation process. A representation that seeks to add, alter or delete a site identified for a particular use is known as a site-specific policy representation. Any person may make a counter-representation about a site-specific policy representation. Both representations and counter-representations will be considered at the Independent Examination.

What we will do:

Public consultation for counter-representations

a) We will make copies of all representations available for inspection on our website, and in our offices at Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey, and Antrim Civic Centre;

b) We will write to key consultees and Elected Members informing them that representations are available for inspection and the places and times at which they can be inspected; and

c) We will issue a public notice to confirm:

   a. The availability of representations for inspection; and

   b. The 8-week period for public consultation, and the closing date for receipt of counter-representations.

   c. That counter-representations received after the end of the period of public consultation **cannot** be accepted.

This public notice will be placed on our website and appear in the Antrim Guardian, Newtownabbey Times and Belfast Gazette.

Local Policies Plan – Public Inspection of Counter Representations

2.22 All counter representations will be made available for public inspection and will be considered at the Independent Examination.

What we will do:

a) We will make copies of all representations available for inspection on our website, and in our offices at Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey, and Antrim Civic Centre;

b) We will report counter representations to the Elected Members.

Local Policies Plan – Independent Examination

2.23 When the Council considers that the draft Local Policies Plan is in accordance with legislative requirements, we will forward it to the Department for Infrastructure along with associated documentation and supporting evidence. The Department for Infrastructure must then cause an Independent Examination unless it issues a Direction to withdraw the draft Local Policies Plan or intervenes to direct the Council to modify it.

2.24 The purpose of the Examination is to determine the soundness of the draft Local Policies Plan taking into account all representations and counter representations. The Examination will be carried out by the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) or other persons appointed by the Department for Infrastructure. Our Planning Officers and any consultees or consultants acting on the Council's behalf will be available at the Examination to answer any questions and provide comment on representations.

What we will do:

a) We will continue to ensure the draft Local Policies Plan, and all accompanying documentation is available on our website;

b) We will advertise dates, times and venues for the Independent Examination at least 4 weeks before it is to be held, and provide details of where representations and counter representations are available for inspection;

c) We will notify all persons who submitted representations and counter-representations of the arrangements for the Independent Examination indicating where representations and counter representations are available for inspection; and

d) We will request key consultees to provide comment on the representations for consideration at the Independent Examinations where considered relevant.

Local Policies Plan – Adoption

2.25 Following the Independent Examination, the Department for Infrastructure will issue a Direction to the Council, requiring us to adopt the draft Local Policies Plan as originally prepared or with modifications. We may also be directed to withdraw the draft Local Policies Plan. In either scenario, the Department will be expected to give reasons for its decisions.

What we will do:

a) We will issue a public notice to confirm:

   a. Adoption of the Local Policies Plan; and

   b. Where to get copies of the Local Policies Plan, the Department for Infrastructure's Direction, and the accompanying Independent Examiner's Report.

This public notice will be placed on our website and appear in the Antrim Guardian, Newtownabbey Times, and Belfast Gazette.

b) We will make the Local Policies Plan, the Department for Infrastructure's Direction and accompanying Independent Examiner's Report available on our website with hard copies available on request;

c) We will write to key consultees and those who submitted representations and counter representations advising them of the adoption of the Local Policies Plan, and where to obtain copies together with the Department for Infrastructure's Direction and the Independent Examiner's Report; and

d) We will notify all those on our community involvement database about the adopted Local Policies Plan.

Next Steps

2.26 Following the adoption of the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan, we will identify our work priorities for the next five years in a new Timetable. We may also issue a new Statement of Community Involvement if it is considered appropriate. In addition, we will engage in monitoring and review which are essential in establishing how the objectives contained in the Local Development Plan are being achieved, and whether any changes are required.

3.0 Community Involvement in Other Forward Planning Matters

Supplementary Planning Guidance

3.1 We may also prepare non-statutory policy and planning guidance, particularly to support our Local Development Plan. Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) includes, for example, design guides and advice notes. Consultation on SPG will take place in a proportionate manner where we believe it will be beneficial to give additional regard to the opinions of stakeholders and the local community. The Council's Planning Committee will be consulted on the development of the guidance, including any comments received. It is not a statutory requirement for SPG to be considered through the public examination process.

Conservation Area Designation

3.2 A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance. We consider that consultation with, and the involvement of, local people is important when undertaking work associated with conservation areas, or any proposals for new conservation areas. This will help encourage ownership of the concept and greater co-operation and commitment to achieving the aims of the designation.

3.3 We will involve the community in the designation, variation or cancellation of a conservation area. This will entail formal consultation with the Historic Buildings Council, advertising by way of a public notice in the local press and public meetings to discuss and present proposals. For any new designations, we will place a public notice in the local press and hold a public launch and exhibition. We will also seek to engage with the community on any significant works proposed by the Council affecting a conservation area, such as public realm schemes.

Designation of Simplified Planning Zones

3.4 Simplified planning zones (SPZs) relate to areas of land where planning control is relaxed in favour of specific types of development, often with the objective of encouraging regeneration and investment.

3.5 Where we propose to commence work on a simplified planning zone we will undertake consultations with neighbouring Councils, the landowner(s) and occupier(s), the Department for Communities and will notify the Department for Infrastructure.

3.6 Once details of a scheme have been prepared, we will make copies available for inspection in our offices at Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey and Antrim Civic Centre, give notice by way of an advertisement in the local press and on our website, and will serve a notice on those we have consulted.

3.7 Following advertisement of the proposed simplified planning zone(s) details, there will be an 8-week period when representations can be made to the Council. If we subsequently decide not to proceed with the proposed simplified planning zone, we will publish a further advertisement to that effect and will notify all those who have made representations.

3.8 We may cause an Independent Examination to be held to consider the representations received. The Examination will be carried out by the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) or other persons appointed by the Department for Infrastructure. Where an Examination is to be held, details, including the time and place of the Examination, will be published in the local press. Where it is decided not to hold an Examination, we will notify all those who have made representations.

3.9 Following any Independent Examination, we will produce a report and statement detailing our decision and outlining reasons for our decision. Notice of publication will be advertised in the local press and the report and statement will be available for public inspection in our offices at Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey and Antrim Civic Centre.

4.0 Community Involvement in Development Management

Purpose

4.1 The Council is responsible for making decisions on the majority of planning applications in the Borough. We also deal with listed building applications, consent for works in a Conservation Area, works to protected trees, and advertising consent.

4.2 All planning applications are now categorised on receipt as local, major or regionallysignificant, with the Council responsible for determining the bulk of local and major applications.

4.3 Regionally significant developments are those which are considered to have a critical contribution to make with regard to the economic and social success of Northern Ireland as a whole, or to a substantial part of the region. Such proposals also include developments which have significant effects beyond Northern Ireland or involve a substantial departure from a Local Development Plan. Regionally significant applications are processed by the Department for Infrastructure and applicants will be required to enter into consultations with the Department. In certain circumstances the Department may determine that the proposal is not of significance to the whole or a substantial part of Northern Ireland and advise that the application be made to the Council.

4.4 Major developments have important economic, social and environmental implications for the Council. Due to the potential of these proposals to deliver important benefits to the community, major applications are prioritised to avoid any undue delay. Commonexamples of major developmentproposalsinclude:

- A housing development involving the construction of over 50 units, or where the area of the site exceeds 2 hectares;
- A retail development involving 1,000 square metres of gross retail floor space outside town centres, or where the area of the site is or exceeds 1 hectare; and
- A wind farm or solar farm (or other types of electricity generating stations) where its capacity is or exceeds 5 megawatts.

4.5 Local development proposals are those applications which are not considered to be regionally significant or major. The vast majority of planning applications are likely to constitute local developments. These will include most commercial and housing proposals as well as minor schemes and householder developments. It is estimated that over 95% of all planning applications we receive will be categorised as local development.

4.6 Development Management is the process through which such applications are considered. An important part of the process is to provide information and advice to applicants, and to seek and take into account the views of the general public and those consulted on planning applications. The statutory requirements for consultation on planning applications are set out in legislation and vary according to the type of proposal but include notification to specified bodies and general publicity.

4.7 We receive a wide variety of planning applications and therefore the need for, and degree of community involvement will vary according to the scale and complexity of the application.

4.8 This section of the Statement of Community Involvement looks at:

- How the public can become involved at the various stages of the application process; and
- How the level of community involvement will depend on the scale of the application.

Pre-Application Stage

Pre-Application Discussions (PADs)

4.9 Pre-application discussions are encouraged for a range of applications, both major and local. The objective of pre-application discussions is to confirm whether the principle of development is likely to be acceptable and to clarify the format, type and level of detail required to enable the Council to determine an application. For major applications it will also enable the applicant to discuss how the local community should be involved in the decision-making process.

Pre-Application Community Consultation (PACC)

4.10 From 1 July 2015, applicants are required by law to inform and involve the wider community in discussion prior to the submission of major planning applications with the aim of promoting place making and creating better quality developments. Applicants submitting a major application to the Council[4] must undertake community consultation before submission.

4.11 We will require the following actions to be undertaken by prospective applicants before the application is submitted:

- Notify the Council, by means of a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN), at least 12 weeks in advance, that an application for a major planning application is to be submitted;
- Hold at least one public event where the community will be afforded the opportunity to make comment;
- Publish details of the proposal in the local press, outlining where further details about the scheme can be obtained and the date, time and location of the public event;
- Maintain a website to display details of the proposed development and facilitate comments from members of the public for a period of 28 days; and
- Submit a pre-application community consultation report to the Council to accompany the application.

4.12 Such pre-application consultation is likely to be more successful where the applicant makes significant efforts to open lines of communication with and provide feedback to local communities and work with them to secure development proposals which, as far as possible, are acceptable to everyone.

4.13 Where applicants fail to fully meet the pre-application community consultation requirements, the Council is likely to consider the application invalid.

4.14 We would strongly advise all applicants considering submitting major planning applications to seek a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) with Planning Officers.

APPLICATION STAGE

4.15 When a planning application is submitted to us for determination, you will have the opportunity to express your opinion with regard to how you may be affected by a proposal.

4.16 We will inform the public when planning applications are received through:

- Publicity/Advertising; and
- Neighbour Notification.

[4] Alternatively, the Department for Infrastructure in the case of regionally significant development proposals.

4.17 The Council undertakes statutory publicity in accordance with current planning legislation and on occasion may go beyond this. Where relevant, the Council will also engage with the community as required through the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017.

Publicity/Advertising

4.18 We advertise new applications on a weekly basis in the Antrim Guardian and or Newtownabbey Times[5] (dependent upon location). Where an application is subject to the EIA Regulations this is specifically highlighted.

4.19 The weekly list of all new applications received by the Council can also be viewed on Northern Ireland Public Register (planningsystemni.gov.uk).

4.20 The Notice placed in the local newspapers and on the website advises that any representations to be made should be received within 14 days of publication (30 days in the case of EIA development) to assist efficient processing of applications. However, we would advise that any late representations made on an application, provided they are received before a decision is made, be considered.

Neighbour Notification

4.21 The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 states that, upon receipt of a development proposal, the Council (or where relevant the Department for Infrastructure) shall serve notice of the application to any identified occupier on neighbouring lands.

4.22 In accordance with the statutory scheme, notification letters should be sent to the occupiers of neighbouring premises which fulfil **both** of the following criteria
- the property in question is within 90 metres **and** directly adjoins the boundary of the application site or would adjoin the boundary but for an entry or a road less than 20 metres wide. Where such a property is in multiple occupation, then notification should be sent to all the occupants of the property.

4.23 When carrying out site inspections, Planning Officers will also check the accuracy of the neighbour notification details supplied on the application form and may add further property addresses as considered appropriate.

4.24 Again, the notification letter advises that any representations you may wish to make should be received within 14 days of publication of the planning application in the press (4 weeks in the case of EIA development) to assist efficient processing of applications. However, we would advise that any late representations made on an application, provided they are received before a decision is made, will be considered

[5] In accordance with Section 41 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

4.25 In addition to the statutory requirement above, the Council has given its Planning Officers a discretionary power to notify additional properties, where it is considered appropriate. This may include, for example, where a property does not meet the requirement set out in paragraph 4.22 but the Planning Officer's professional opinion is that the property is likely to be one that needs to be made aware of the proposal. Specifically, where development proposals involve wind turbines of 100KW or greater or intensive livestock installations, the statutory neighbour notification will be extended to include (as far as possible) all occupied properties within 250 metres of the application site.

4.26 The Council's extended scheme of neighbour notification will be kept under review, and Planning Officers will maintain a record of any complaints lodged regarding the failure to be neighbour notified and provide a report on a yearly basis regarding the complaints received.

EIA Development

4.27 Under European law, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required for certain proposals and seeks to ensure that the likely effects of new development on the environment are fully understood and taken into account before permission is given for the development to proceed.

4.28 An Environmental Statement (ES), in the form of a single document or series of documents, is produced as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment, and brings together information about a proposed development and its likely effects on the environment.

4.29 In most cases we will determine if the application is EIA development. If it is decided that an application is EIA development, it cannot be processed until an ES is received. When an applicant submits an ES in support of a planning application, the Council will publish a notice of its receipt in the Antrim Guardian and/or the Newtownabbey Times (dependent upon location). The notice will advise where the ES may be purchased from the developer as long as stocks last and, details of any applicable charges, and the address of the Council Office where the ES may be inspected. In addition, where the Council is aware of any particular person who is or is likely to be affected by, or has an interest in, the application but it is unlikely to become aware of it by means of the press advertisement; it will send a notice to that person containing the above information. The Council will allow 4 weeks from the date the notice is first published for representations to be made.

Obtaining further information and getting involved in planning applications

4.30 Full details of all planning applications in the Borough (including supporting documents and corresponding plans) can be viewed online at the Northern Ireland Planning Portal https://plannigregister.planingsystemmi.gov.uk and the Council's website, under additional information. This can be accessed easily from our website at www.antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk.

4.31 You can also view details of planning applications at Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey, during normal office hours where Planning Officers are available to give advice on current or proposed applications. However, we will request that if you wish to inspect a file or speak to a specific officer that you contact the Planning Section. File viewing can also be arranged at Antrim Civic Centre by prior appointment.

Public Register

4.32 The following information is retained permanently for each planning application in order to comply with the legislative requirements to hold a Public Register:

- a copy of each application (which may be photocopied) together with copies of plans, drawings, and other associated documentation submitted;
- the decision notice, if any, in respect of the application, including details of any conditions subject to which permission or consent was granted;
- the reference number, the date and effect of any decision of the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) in respect of the application; and
- brief details of any revocation or modification relating to any permission or consent, including the date of issue.

File Inspection

4.33 Planning application files are available for inspection by appointment only. The amount of information on the file will be dependent on the nature of the application, and the stage the application has reached in the planning process. Appointments to view planning application files can be arranged by contacting the Planning Section.

Submitting Comments

4.34 Anyone (individuals, groups, organisations, etc.) can comment on a planning application even if they have not been neighbour notified by us. All comments will be carefully considered by Planning Officers. Care should be taken when making comments to the Council to ensure that no personal data is included. Any personal information contained within the representations received will be redacted.

4.35 Comments can be made in a variety of ways. These are as follows:

By email: planning@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

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

Online: Northern Ireland Public Register (planningsystemni.gov.uk)

Please note that in order to ensure that representations are associated with the correct application, the Council would request that the application reference is quoted in all correspondence.

4.36 Only certain issues, referred to as 'material planning considerations', are taken into account when deciding a planning application. Material considerations must be genuine planning considerations, and the basic question is not whether owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties would experience financial or other loss from a particular development, but whether the proposal would unacceptably affect amenities and the existing use of land and buildings that ought to be protected in the public interest. Examples of material considerations include:

- Potential impact of a proposal upon the environment;
- The design of a proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings;
- Access and provision of infrastructure;
- Loss of sunlight and/or daylight;
- Loss of privacy;
- Noise, disturbance and smells;
- Road safety; and
- Proposed landscaping.

4.37 Generally, greater weight is attached to issues which are supported by evidence rather than by assertion alone. You must ensure that your comments relate to relevant planning matters. Any personal information contained within representations received will be redacted, as will any comments or information we consider as being derogatory or offensive in nature. Comments or information considered as being derogatory or offensive in nature; concerning neighbour disputes or that are made for moral reasons are not relevant planning matters and cannot therefore be taken into account. Where responses are solely based on such matters and raise no material planning matters they may be returned.

4.38 At present the majority of representations made with regard to a planning application are scanned and added to the Planning Portal website once email addresses, personal telephone numbers and handwritten signatures have been removed (it should be noted that typed names and addresses remain visible).

4.39 Representations will normally be acknowledged within five working days of receipt. The letter of acknowledgement will set out who is dealing with the application and who to contact if there are any questions. All comments will be summarised and fully considered within the Planning Officer's report. The Council will not normally contact the respondent again until after a decision is made unless the application is significantly altered or is withdrawn. If you submit your representation anonymously, you will not receive communications or updates in relation to the application.

4.40 The Council will consult with a range of Statutory Consultees (see Appendix 2) to assist in the determination of an application. If a representation raises issues that are relevant to the responsibilities of the consultee (e.g. flood risk) it will be copied to the appropriate consultee for consideration and comment. The Council will carefully take any comments made into account before a decision is made.

4.41 The Council may negotiate changes to applications where these are expedient. Re-consultation (for 14 days) will take place on changes, but only if the Council considers that they raise new issues that could lead to further comment. If any change is considered to be substantive, the Council may decline to treat it as an amendment to the original proposal and a new application may be invited.

4.42 You should also note that where an identified problem with a planning application can be dealt with by means of a suitable planning condition, the Council is required to consider this as an alternative to refusing the application. Planning conditions will only be attached to a decision notice where they are necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the specific development to which they relate, enforceable, precise, and reasonable.

Community Involvement at the Planning Committee Stage

4.43 Most planning applications will be decided by Planning Officers under the Council's Scheme of Delegation. These will generally comprise local applications that are not controversial or that do not raise wider issues. All major applications which are of wider importance to the Borough as well as contentious or sensitive proposals will be considered and decided by the Council's Planning Committee.

4.44 The circumstances under which an application can, or cannot, be determined using delegated powers are set out in the Council's Scheme of Delegation, which is available on our website.

4.45 You may also wish to contact your local Councillor, who can request that a particular application be 'called in', which means that it will be presented to the Planning Committee for determination. The time period for such a request is set out in the Council's Scheme of Delegation, which is available on our website or upon request.

Speaking at the Planning Committee

4.46 When an application goes before the Planning Committee for determination, anyone who has made a representation and the applicant and their agent will have the opportunity to speak and make direct representation to the Planning Committee Members.

4.47 The procedures for public speaking at Planning Committee meetings are set out in the Council publication "How to Get Involved in Planning Committee Meetings" which is available on our website or upon request. It is designed to help you decide if you are eligible to speak and if so how to go about it.

4.48 Late requests to speak at the Planning Committee meeting **will not** be allowed. Please note also that Planning Committee meetings are audio recorded, and the recording is available on the Council's website.

4.49 Registering a request to speak at the Planning Committee can be made in the following ways:

By email: planning@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

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

4.50 The Planning Committee meeting is normally held on the third Monday of every month in the Council Chamber at Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey. The meeting will commence at 6:00 pm sharp (unless otherwise stated). The full schedule of dates of forthcoming meetings is available on our website.

Pre-determination hearings

4.51 There are also certain major applications that will raise particularly complex planning issues or attract a significant level of objection. In such cases the Planning Committee may decide to hold a Pre-determination hearing prior to making its decision at the scheduled Planning Committee meeting.

4.52 A Pre-determination hearing will provide the opportunity for the applicant and their agent, as well as those who may have made representations, to present their case to the Committee and for Members to ask questions and clarify matters. Key consultees may also be invited to report their expert views to the Committee and again to take questions. As each case is likely to be different the specific arrangements and location for a Pre-determination hearing will be tailored to the particular circumstances of the case. Where the Committee agrees to a Pre-determination hearing, the applicant will be advised, and the detailed arrangements will be advertised in the Antrim Guardian and or the Newtownabbey Times. (dependent upon location)

4.53 For any major application that has been notified to the Department for Infrastructure but is subsequently returned to the Council for determination, the Council is required to afford the applicant the opportunity of appearing before, and being heard by, the Planning Committee at a Pre-determination hearing.

Post Application Stage

Community Involvement after a Planning Application has been determined

4.54 A notification of decision letter is sent to the applicant/agent and those people who have made a representation on the planning application. The decision is recorded in the statutory Planning Register. The reasoning behind the decision will be set out in the Planning Officer's report, which will be available on the Planning Portal or upon request. Where the Planning Committee makes a decision contrary to a Planning Officer's recommendation, the justification for this will be available to view in the Minutes of the Planning Committee.

Community Involvement in Planning Appeals

4.55 Only the applicant has the right of appeal to the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) as there are currently no third-partyrights of appeal in Northern Ireland. Where an applicant is unhappy with our decision to refuse an application, or with a particular condition attached to a grant of planning permission, they may appeal to the PAC within four months from the date of notification of the Council's decision.

4.56 An applicant may also appeal to the PAC where the Council has not determined an application within the relevant period prescribed by the Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015[6]. Where such an appeal is lodged (commonly referred to as a non-determination appeal), the application is deemed to have been refused.

4.57 Copies of all representations received by the Council on an application that is appealed will be forwarded to the PAC, while in the case of informal hearings and public inquiries, the interested parties will also have the opportunity to make their views orally to the PAC.

4.58 Further guidance on planning appeals and the rights of applicants and objectors can be found on the Planning Appeals Commission website (www.pacni.gov.uk).

5.0 Community Involvement in Planning Enforcement

5.1 The Council would encourage individuals and groups to report cases where they believe there has been a breach of planning control. A breach of planning control occurs when development or other certain activities take place without the necessary planning permission or consent from the Council. This may also include, but is not limited to, the failure to carry out development in accordance with a grant of planning permission or the conditions attached thereto, or the display of advertisements without the required consent.

[6] The relevant period prescribed is 16 weeks for an application for major development from the date received by the Council; 8 weeks for an application for local development; or in both cases any such extended period as may be agreed between the applicant and the Council in writing.

5.2 Suspected breaches of planning control can be reported in the following ways:

By email: planning@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

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

By phone: 0300 123 6677

Online: https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/enforcement

5.3 You may also wish to raise the matter with one of the Elected Members who can bring the matter to the attention of Planning Officers on your behalf.

5.4 All planning enforcement related complaints are treated confidentially.

5.5 Where planning enforcement cases are closed, a full explanation will be sent to those who have brought the matter to the attention of the Council. Complaints may relate to householder extensions, or alterations which often may not require planning permission under Permitted Development legislation.

5.6 The Council's priorities are set out in our Enforcement Strategy which is available on our website or upon request. The Strategy will be subject to regular review.

6.0 Review of the Statement of Community Involvement

6.1 To ensure this Statement of Community Involvement remains up to date and fit for purpose, it will be reviewed at the end of every electoral period or where deemed necessary and a report presented to the Planning Committee recommending any changes required. However, where there are major legislative changes, it may be necessary to review the SCI at an earlier date.

Appendix 1 – Local Development Plan Consultation

Statutory Consultation Bodies

I. **Northern Ireland Government Departments;**
- The Executive Office (TEO);
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs(DAERA);
- Department for Communities (DfC);
- Department of Education (DE);
- Department for the Economy (DfE);
- Department for Infrastructure(DfI);
- Department of Finance (DoF);
- Department of Health (DoH); and
- Department of Justice (DOJ).

II. **Local Planning Authorities adjoining Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council;**
- 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.

III. **Water or Sewerage Undertakers;**
- Northern Ireland Water.

IV. **Northern Ireland Housing Executive;**

V. **Civil Aviation Authority;**

VI. **Any person to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under Section 106(3) of the Communications Act 2003;**

VII. **Any person to whom a licence has been granted under Article 10(1) of the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992; and**

VIII. **Any person to whom a licence has been granted under Article 8 of the Gas (Northern Ireland) Order 1996.**

Appendix 2 – Development Management Consultation Process

Planning Officers frequently need to obtain specialist advice to enable them to consider the potential impacts of a development proposal before determining a planning application. This is referred to as the consultation process. Consultation with statutory and non-statutory bodies should be carried out only when necessary to inform a planning decision.

Statutory Consultation

Statutory consultees are those government bodies or other organisations with whom the Council must liaise dependent upon the nature of the application. **Schedule 3 of the Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (NI) 2015** defines the statutoryconsultees and outlines the various circumstances where consultation must be carried out.

Statutoryconsultees are defined as:

I. **The Department for Communities (DfC);**

II. **The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA);**

III. **The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland;**

IV. **The Department for Infrastructure (DfI);**

V. **The Department for Infrastructure or water undertaker as defined under Article 13 of the Water and Sewerage Services (NI) Order 2006;**

VI. **Licensed Aerodromes;**

VII. **The Department for the Economy (DfE); and**

VIII. **The Northern Ireland Housing Executive.**

Where the Council undertakes consultations on a planning application, the statutory consultee will be required to respond within 21 calendar days, or any other date as agreed in writing, after which the Council may determine the application whether or not a response has been received.

In the case of applications which are subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) the Council will not make a determination until 30 days have passed.

Non-Statutory Consultation

Not all information required to process an application will be from statutory consultees. There will be instances where non-statutory consultees may need to be consulted on a case by case basis. For example, this could include other Sections within the Council with responsibility for matters relating to environmental health or leisure facilities. Such consultees may also include other external organisations and bodies.

Non-statutory consultees are not bound by the 21 calendar days for a response; however, they will be encouraged to respond to consultations in a similar timeframe and manner to allow decisions to be made in a timely manner.

Due to the wide range of development proposals submitted to the Council, each application will be carefully considered, and consultations will be undertaken in line with statutory requirements. The need for consultation will vary between applications depending on the nature and scale of the proposal.

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