

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

# Statement of Community Involvement

A guide to community engagement  
in the planning process

[armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk](http://armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk)



**Armagh City  
Banbridge  
& Craigavon**  
Borough Council

# Getting in Contact

You can access information on a planning matter or make contact with the Council's Planning Department in the following ways:

By website:

[www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk);  
or [www.planningni.gov.uk](http://www.planningni.gov.uk) (via the 'My Council' link)

By email: [planning@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk](mailto:planning@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk)

By post:

Planning Department, Armagh City,  
Banbridge and Craigavon Borough  
Council  
Marlborough House (Floor 4)  
Central Way  
Craigavon  
BT64 1 AD

By phone:

0300 200 7830 (NI General Planning Line)  
0300 0300 900 (Main Council Line)

A copy of this Statement of Community Involvement can be made available on request in electronic format, large text print, Braille and audio format. It may be possible to make it available in alternative languages.

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# 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** On 1 April 2015, Local Councils were given new responsibilities and a broader range of powers under the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. These included becoming the main decision maker on the vast majority of planning applications, assuming powers to take action against breaches of planning control and for producing a Local Development Plan (LDP). These changes bring real opportunities for all citizens within the Borough to become fully involved in shaping the areas in which they live and work.





## 2.0 What is the Statement of Community Involvement?

**2.1** The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) defines how we will engage with the community and key stakeholders in the delivery of our planning functions. It is set within the context of the Council's Corporate Plan 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 the Council area should look like and how land should be used and developed in the future;
- receiving and making decisions on the majority of planning applications; and
- investigating alleged breaches of planning control and determining what enforcement action should be taken.

**2.2** This SCI describes how and when we will 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. It also outlines how, when and what information will or can be made available, as appropriate.

### Our Vision of Participation

**2.3** The Council's Corporate Plan defines our vision, mission, values and corporate priorities and is available to view at the Council's offices and the Council's website at [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk). As a Council we aim to "Prosper the Place, Serve the People and

Strengthen our Position." People are at the centre, where local communities and stakeholders can be actively engaged on key issues in an inclusive manner.

**2.4** Accordingly the Council is committed to ensuring that communities are empowered and share a sense of effective participation in the decision making process to improve their quality of life and to ensure delivery of high quality services to our customers.

**2.5** This SCI is a shared vision of participation in decision making and it therefore aims to ensure that:

- everyone has an early and informed opportunity to express their views on the development of the area and have it considered before decisions are made;
- 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 dependants are enabled and empowered to participate.

**2.6** The Council intends to adopt a proactive and timely approach to community involvement through a process of providing clear information and encouraging participation during plan preparation and planning application submission, assessment and determination. 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.





## 3.0 Community Planning Context

- 3.1** Councils have a statutory responsibility to participate and lead in community planning. The Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014 and the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 link the community planning and development planning processes suggesting that the Local Development Plan should be ‘the spatial reflection of the Community Plan.’ It is the intention of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council to develop these two processes in tandem, with both working towards a shared long term vision for the Borough. The Local Government Act defines community planning as ‘...a process whereby councils, statutory bodies and communities work together to develop and implement a shared vision for promoting the wellbeing in an area.’ When considering wellbeing, community plans should include the social, economic and environmental factors which can impact on communities and citizens.
- 3.2** We will lead this process in our Borough, and along with our community planning partners every four years produce a Community Plan which will include:
- an agreed long term vision for the Borough;
  - a number of agreed key priority outcomes which partners will focus on to improve:
    - social well-being (including promoting equality and good relations);
    - economic well-being (including tackling poverty, social exclusion and deprivation); and
    - environmental well-being (including how we will contribute to achieving sustainable development);
  - a plan outlining a range of short, medium and long term actions which will contribute to our outcomes.
- 3.3** The Community Plan will provide a strategic framework for the Borough helping to provide the strategic context and local linkages for future policy, regeneration and spatial planning. Fundamental to the process is ensuring that local voices are heard so it is crucial that this includes a robust engagement framework.
- 3.4** It is anticipated that our engagement framework will be based on the principles of community involvement, which include:
- Developing a Culture of Engagement – people are encouraged to get involved in decisions which affect them;
  - Early Involvement – involving communities at as early a stage as possible;
  - Fit for Purpose – using appropriate methods which are realistic in terms of the available resources;
  - Continuing Involvement – ongoing formal and informal involvement throughout the process;
  - Reaching Out – making engagement accessible to all and appropriate to peoples’ needs and experiences; and
  - Clarity – producing materials in a clear format, a timely manner and as far as possible using plain English which avoids jargon.
- 3.5** Every effort will be made to establish linkages between the community planning and local development planning processes, especially in relation to community engagement.

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# 4.0 Community Involvement in the Preparation of the Local Development Plan

## Purpose

- 4.1** The purpose of the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Local Development Plan, comprising the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan, is to inform the general public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested bodies of the policy framework and land use proposals that will guide development decisions within the Borough up to 2030.
- 4.2** The Local Development Plan (LDP) will be prepared within the context of the Council's Corporate Plan and will take account of the Council's Community Plan. It must also take account of the regional policy context set by the Northern Ireland Executive and Central Government Departments. This includes amongst others the Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS), the Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland (SDS) and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).
- 4.3** The LDP will comprise two separate documents. The first document will be a Plan Strategy which will set out the Council's vision, strategic objectives and strategic policies for the future development of the area with a spatial strategy that indicates in broad strategic terms the locations where different types of development will be promoted. This will be followed by a Local Policies Plan which will include the site specific proposals, policy designations and land-use zonings that will be required to deliver our vision, objectives, spatial strategy and strategic policies of the Plan Strategy. Once adopted, the LDP will replace the current development plans for the Borough and the operational planning policies that were produced by the Department of Environment (DOE). Planning functions carried out by the Department of Environment (DOE) are to be transferred to the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) following re-organisation of Government Departments in 2016. See Appendix B for further details.
- 4.4** Prior to the preparation of these two plan documents, we will identify key planning issues and define a range

of options for addressing these issues which will inform the publication of a Preferred Options Paper.

- 4.5** To ensure that the policies and proposals in the LDP are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable, we will undertake an ongoing Sustainability Appraisal which will run parallel to the preparation of the Preferred Options Paper, Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan.

## Who can get involved?

- 4.6** The Council has a statutory obligation to consult with Government Departments, neighbouring councils, the Housing Executive, Civil Aviation Authority and gas, water and electricity providers, as listed in Appendix B. In addition to this the Council aims to involve the community at an early stage in the planning process and anyone who wishes to get involved in the preparation of the LDP is encouraged to do so at the opportunities provided. In particular the views of the following groups of people will be sought:
- *People living or working within the Borough;*
  - *Community Groups / Forums / Umbrella Organisations;*
  - *Voluntary Groups;*
  - *Environmental Groups;*
  - *Residents Groups;*
  - *Business Interests;*
  - *Developers / Landowners / Investors; and*
  - *Elected Representatives (MPs / MLAs)*
- 4.7** This list is not exhaustive, and is not intended to restrict any individual, group or organisation from participating in the plan-making process.
- 4.8** Elected Members and other representatives, forums, community and residents' groups provide a voice for the local community. Other voluntary and interest groups can bring a special knowledge and can ensure that important concerns are addressed.

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### Empowering Disadvantaged and Under-represented Groups

**4.9** Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires a public authority, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, 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 dependants and persons without.

**4.10** In addition, without prejudice to the above obligations, public authorities are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or race. The above Section 75 Groups are important participants within the planning process and include people who traditionally have been under represented or disadvantaged. These groups will be targeted through the consultation process on the LDP in order to obtain their views and contribute to the consideration of equality issues under Section 75. Their views on any equality screening documents or Draft Equality Impact Assessments will be sought within a specified period for comment as well as on the Draft Plan Strategy and Draft Local Policies Plan.

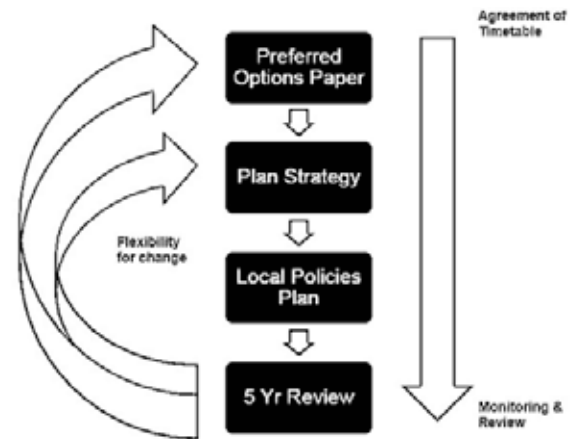
**4.11** To ensure that all documents associated with the preparation of the LDP are accessible to everyone they will be made available in different formats upon request, including electronic, Braille, large text print and audio for people with visual, hearing and speech impairments. Plain English is to be used for all publications. A telephone number and e-mail address will be provided on each document, along with any other relevant contact and accessibility information. If for any reason, a request for a document in a particular format cannot be met, other possible alternatives will be explored.

### How and when will the Community be involved?

**4.12** The Local Development Plan (LDP) process involves a number of different stages, as shown in **Figure 1**. Each of these stages presents an opportunity for community involvement. These stages are detailed in the next section along with details of how the community and key stakeholders can get involved throughout the LDP process. Once published, the LDP Timetable, will outline an indicative timeframe for each of the stages, including production of the Plan Strategy and the Local Policies Plan. The Timetable

will be available to view at the Council's Planning Office and any other specified locations, as well as published on the Council's website.

**Figure 1:**  
Local Development Plan Process



**4.13** The current list of newspapers available to the Council for advertisement of the LDP process are contained in Appendix D. This list is subject to regular review by the Council.

**4.14** The Council's methods of engagement with the local community in the LDP process are set out stage-by-stage below.

### STAGE 1: INITIAL PLAN PREPARATION

#### Part a) - Developing an Evidence Base

**4.15** This stage includes the preparation of the Timetable and the publication of the Preferred Options Paper (POP). The LDP Timetable will set out the Council's programme for the production of the Plan Strategy (PS) and Local Policies Plan (LPP) including key milestones and timelines for plan production through to adoption. Prior to the publication of the Timetable, the Council will have undertaken a wide range of preparatory studies in order to inform the POP. These preparatory studies will be published alongside the POP in order to assist the public debate. The POP will also be accompanied by Scoping Reports for the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) including the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA).

During this stage the Council will:

- Set up a Project Management Team comprising senior officers from the Council and the Principal Planning Officer and will invite representatives

from key Statutory/Government Departments to participate. The purpose of the Team is to ensure key consultees engage in the plan-making process. The Project Management Team will be consulted and act as the screening and scoping group for the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Plan;

- Engage with consultees who will receive written invitation requesting them to participate in the plan making process by providing information on the key strategic issues that the LDP should address;
- Engage with under-represented (Section 75) groups who will be invited to identify whether there are any types of planning policies which are likely to have a significant impact on the groups they represent. They will also be provided with the opportunity to identify any particular issues or needs which they feel the LDP should address. Where requested this can be facilitated through a face to face meeting with a planning official. Any comments received will be taken into account when screening and scoping the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA);
- The Scoping Report of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will be sent to the Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA); and
- Issue a Public Notice to confirm:
  - (i) the commencement of work on the Council's new Local Development Plan (LDP);
  - (ii) the publication of the LDP Timetable;
  - (iii) how to view or obtain copies of the LDP Timetable, providing website and office locations/times.

The public notice will be placed on the Council's website and appear in local newspapers (Appendix D) for 2 consecutive weeks.

**Part b) – Preparation and Publication of the Preferred Options Paper**

**4.16** The first formal stage in the preparation of the LDP is the preparation of the Preferred Options Paper (POP). This will set out the key plan issues and the preferred options available to address them. The POP is a consultation paper to promote debate on issues of strategic significance which are likely to influence the shape of future development within the Borough. The intention is to stimulate a wide-ranging, yet focused, debate and encourage feedback from a wide

variety of interests. Any representations or views received as a consequence of its publication will be considered whilst formulating the Draft Plan Strategy.

**4.17** The POP is also subject to the initial stages of a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), including a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). The SA is a continual process which runs parallel with the preparation of the POP and the overall LDP. A SA Interim Report (consisting of a SA Scoping Report and assessment of alternatives) will accompany the POP.

During this stage the Council will:

- Publish the POP on the Council's website, make available for inspection at the Council's Planning Office and make hard copies available on request at a specified price;
- Publish Topic Papers on the Council's website and make hard copies available on request at a specified price;
- Issue a public notice in the local newspapers (Appendix D) for 2 consecutive weeks and on the Council's website confirming:
  - (i) the publication of the POP and accompanying documents including the Screening and Scoping Papers for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA);
  - (ii) a period of public consultation, inviting comments within a specified time (of no less than 8 weeks and no longer than 12 weeks); and
  - (iii) details of public engagement events / exhibitions / drop-in information sessions to be held during the consultation period;
- Issue a press release highlighting the POP and the public consultation process, inviting stakeholders to make representation;
- Hold a launch/exhibition to announce the publication of the POP;
- Notify consultees and the Council's Elected Members of the publication of the POP (providing them with a copy); invite them to attend the launch / exhibition; advise them to provide comments within a specified period (not less than a period of 8 weeks or more than a period of 12 weeks); and to inform them of the dates/times and locations of

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the public engagement events / exhibitions / drop-in information sessions;

- Contact local community groups and under-represented (Section 75) groups to advise of the publication of the POP; invite them to attend the launch / exhibition; advise them to provide comments within a specified period (not less than a period of 8 weeks or more than a period of 12 weeks); invite them to attend the public engagement events / exhibitions / drop-in information sessions, providing details; and offer the opportunity of a meeting with a Planning Officer to record their views;
- Hold public engagement events / exhibitions / drop-in information sessions at various locations throughout the Borough, where Planning Officers will be available to answer questions;
- Present a Public Consultation Report to the Council's Elected Members following the specified consultation period. This will contain a summary of representations and Planning Officer comments. Where Elected Members take a different view to that recommended in the Report, this will be recorded with the rationale for that view. This will be taken into account whilst formulating the Draft Plan Strategy; and
- Provide the opportunity for the Project Management Team to comment on emerging policy for inclusion in the Draft Plan Strategy which will be an integral part of testing emerging policy through the Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

### STAGE 2: PREPARATION AND ADOPTION OF THE PLAN STRATEGY

**4.18** This stage of the LDP process consists of the preparation and publication of the Draft Plan Strategy, which will set out the Council's strategic objectives and strategic policies to facilitate and manage development along with a spatial strategy that indicates in broad terms the locations where different types of development will be promoted within the Borough. It will be a public consultation document and form a key part of the public participation process.

#### Part a) - Publication of Draft Plan Strategy

During this stage the Council will:

- Make the Draft Plan Strategy and associated documentation including the Sustainability

Appraisal (SA) Report and Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) available on the Council's website, at the Council's Planning Office and on disc, with hard copies available on request at a specified price;

- Issue a public notice in the local newspapers (Appendix D) for 2 consecutive weeks, as well as in The Belfast Gazette and on the Council's website confirming:
  - (i) the publication of the Draft Plan Strategy and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report, including the Environmental Report and Equality Report, and how to view or obtain copies;
  - (ii) the dates/times and locations of the public engagement events / exhibitions / drop-in information sessions;
  - (iii) an 8 week consultation period and the closing date for receipt of representations; and
  - (iv) that representations received after the end of the period of public consultation cannot be accepted as valid;
- Issue a press release announcing the publication of the Draft Plan Strategy and highlighting its key elements;
- Hold a launch / exhibition to announce the publication of the Draft Plan Strategy;
- Notify consultees and the Council's Elected Members of the publication of the Draft Plan Strategy (providing them with a copy), informing them of the dates / times and locations of the public engagement events / exhibitions / drop-in sessions, the 8 week consultation period and the closing date for the receipt of representations;
- Notify all persons who submitted a representation to the POP informing them of the publication of the Draft Plan Strategy and accompanying documents and how they can view or obtain copies; outlining the dates/times and locations of the public engagement events / exhibitions / drop-in sessions, the 8 week consultation period and the closing date for the receipt of representations; and
- Hold public engagement events / exhibitions / drop-in information sessions at various locations throughout the Borough where Planning Officers

will be available to answer any questions;

- Provide a summary of representations received to the Council's Elected Members by way of a Public Consultation Report.

#### **Part b) – Public Inspection of Representations and Counter representations to the Draft Plan Strategy**

**4.19** All valid representations to the Draft Plan Strategy will be made available for public inspection as part of the public consultation process. Interested parties may also comment on site specific policy representations that have been received (counter representations). Both valid representations and valid counter representations will be considered at the Independent Examination.

During this stage the Council will:

- Make copies of representations, received during the consultation period, available for inspection on the Council's website, at the Council's Planning Office and provide hard copies on request at a specified price;
- Notify consultees and the Council's Elected Members that representations are available for inspection, with details of the location(s) and times at which the can be inspected;
- Issue a public notice in the local newspapers (Appendix D) for 2 consecutive weeks, as well as in The Belfast Gazette and on the Council's website advising:
  - (i) of the availability of representations for inspection, with details of website and office location(s) and times;
  - (ii) of an 8 week consultation period including the closing date for representations; and
  - (iii) that representations received after the end of the period of comment cannot be accepted as valid;
- Notify all persons who submitted a representation of the above matters in (i), (ii) and (iii);
- Make copies of counter representations, received during the consultation period, available for inspection on the Council's website, at the Council's Planning Office and provide hard copies on request at a specified price; and

- Provide a summary of counter representations received to the Council's Elected Members by way of a Public Consultation Report.

#### **Part c) - Submission of Draft Plan Strategy (and associated documentation) prior to the Independent Examination**

**4.20** Once the consultation period has closed for counter representations, the Council will fully consider all valid representations received. When the Council considers that all legislative requirements in the production of the Draft Plan Strategy have been met and that it is ready for the Examination, it will forward it to the Department (DfI) along with associated documentation and supporting evidence, for consideration.

During this stage the Council will:

- Continue to make the Draft Plan Strategy and associated documentation available on the Council's website, at the Council's Planning Office and on disc and to provide hard copies on request at a specified price;
- Notify consultees that the Draft Plan Strategy and associated documentation have been submitted to the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and that this information is available on the Council's website, at the Council's Planning Office and on disc;
- Notify all persons who submitted representation or counter representation to the Draft Plan Strategy that it and associated documentation has been submitted to the Department (DfI) and are available for inspection on the Council's website, at the Council's Planning Office, on disc and that hard copies can be provided upon request at a specified price;
- Issue a public notice in the local newspapers (Appendix D) for 2 consecutive weeks, as well as in The Belfast Gazette and on the Council's website confirming:
  - (i) that the Draft Plan Strategy and associated documentation have been submitted to the Department (DfI); and
  - (ii) that the Draft Plan Strategy and associated documentation are available on the Council's website and at the Council's Planning Office;

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- Publish the public notice (as detailed above) on the Council's website.

### Part d) - Independent Examination of Draft Plan Strategy

**4.21** The Department (DfI) 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. The purpose of the Examination is to determine the soundness of the Draft Plan Strategy, taking into account all representations and counter representations. The tests of soundness examine the process and procedures by which the draft document was produced, that it has taken account of relevant Central Government plans, policies and guidance, as well as the coherence, consistency and effectiveness of its proposals. Those parties who made representations will have a right to attend and be heard at the Examination. The Examination will be carried out by the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) or a person appointed by the Department (DfI). The Council's Planning Officers and any consultees or consultants acting on the Council's behalf will be available at the Examination to answer questions and to provide comment on representations.

#### During this stage the Council will:

- Continue to make the Draft Plan Strategy and associated documentation available on the Council's website, at the Council's Planning Office and on disc, with hard copies available on request at a specified price;
- Issue a public notice at least 4 weeks prior to the Independent Examination in the local newspapers (Appendix D) for 2 consecutive weeks, as well as in The Belfast Gazette and on the Council's website advising:
  - (i) of the dates, times and location(s) at which the Examination will be held;
  - (ii) whether the PAC or a person appointed by the Department (DfI) will carry out the Independent Examination; and
  - (iii) that representations and counter representations are available for inspection, with details of website and office location(s) and times;
- Notify consultees of the full details of the Independent Examination, as above, at least 4

weeks before the Examination is to be held; and request comments on the representations and counter representations for consideration at the Examination; and

- Notify all persons who submitted representations and counter representations to the Draft Plan Strategy of the full details of the Independent Examination, as above, at least 4 weeks before the Examination is to be held, as well as where and when representations and counter representations are available for inspection.

### Part e) - Adoption of the Plan Strategy

**4.22** Following the Independent Examination and upon receipt of the Independent Examiner's Report, the Department (DfI) will issue a Direction to the Council, requiring it to adopt the Draft Plan Strategy as originally prepared or with modifications. The Council may also be directed to withdraw the Draft Plan Strategy. In either scenario, the Department (DfI) will be expected to give reason for its decision.

#### During this stage the Council will:

- Adopt the Plan Strategy by resolution of the Council, within such time as may be prescribed in the Direction from the Department (DfI);
- Publish the Plan Strategy, by making it and associated documentation, the Independent Examiner's Report, the Department's Direction and the Council's Adoption Statement available on the Council's website, at the Council's Planning Office and on disc, with hard copies available on request at a specified price;
- Issue a public notice in the local newspapers (Appendix D) for 2 consecutive weeks, as well as in The Belfast Gazette and on the Council's website confirming:
  - (i) the adoption of the Plan Strategy; and
  - (ii) how to view or obtain copies of the Plan Strategy and associated documentation, the Independent Examiner's Report, the Department's Direction and the Council's Adoption Statement;
- Notify consultees and those who submitted representations and counter representations of the adopted Plan Strategy; how to view or obtain copies together with associated documentation, the Independent Examiner's Report, the



Department's Direction and the Council's Adoption Statement; and of the commencement of work on the Local Policies Plan.

### STAGE 3: PREPARATION AND ADOPTION OF LOCAL POLICIES PLAN

**4.23** The Local Policies Plan is the second document comprising the Local Development Plan. The Draft Local Policies Plan will be consistent with the adopted Plan Strategy and will set out the Council's detailed policies and proposals (zonings and designations) regarding the future development of the Borough. The Draft Local Policies Plan will be a public consultation document and form a key part of the public participation process. The Plan Strategy must be adopted before the Draft Local Policies Plan is published for consultation.

#### Part a) - Preparation of the Draft Local Policies Plan

**4.24** Preparation of the Draft Local Policies Plan will first involve the gathering of information to help determine if bespoke local policies are required and to help inform the preferred locations for development in accordance with the Plan Strategy.

During this stage the Council will:

- Within a specified period for comment, invite consultees to provide information on key issues that the Local Policies Plan (LPP) should address;
- Within a specified period for comment, invite community groups to identify local issues that the LPP should address as well as policies which are likely to have a significant impact on the individuals they represent;
- Within a specified period for comment, invite under-represented (Section 75) groups to identify local issues that the LPP should address as well as policies which are likely to have a significant impact on the individuals they represent;
- Issue a public notice in the local newspapers (Appendix D) for 2 consecutive weeks and on the Council's website to:
  - (i) advise that work has commenced on the Local Policies Plan;
  - (ii) confirm the dates / times and locations of the public engagement events / exhibitions / drop-in information sessions; and

(iii) invite the general public to make comments and identify issues that the LPP should address, within a specified time.

- Hold public engagement events / exhibitions / drop-in sessions at locations across the Borough where Planning Officers will be available to answer any questions;

#### Part b) - Publication of Draft Local Policies Plan

During this stage the Council will:

- Make the Draft Local Policies Plan and associated documentation available on the Council's website, at the Council's Planning Office and on disc, with hard copies available on request at a specified price;
- Issue a public notice in the local newspapers (Appendix D) for 2 consecutive weeks, as well as in The Belfast Gazette and on the Council's website confirming:
  - (i) the publication of the Draft Local Policies Plan and associated documents and how to view or obtain copies;
  - (ii) the dates / times and locations of the public engagement events / exhibitions / drop-in information sessions;
  - (iii) an 8 week consultation period and the closing date for receipt of representations; and
  - (iv) that representations received after the end of the period of public consultation cannot be accepted as valid;
- Hold a launch / exhibition to announce the publication of the Draft Local Policies Plan;
- Issue a press release announcing the publication of the Draft Local Policies Plan and highlighting its key elements;
- Notify consultees and the Council's Elected Members of the publication of the Draft Local Policies Plan (providing them with a copy), informing them of the dates / times and locations of the public engagement events / exhibitions / drop-in sessions, the 8 week consultation period and the closing date for the receipt of representations;
- Notify all persons who submitted a representation

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and counter-representation to the Draft Plan Strategy informing them of the publication of the Draft Local Policies Plan and accompanying documents; advising how they can view or obtain copies; outlining the dates / times and locations of the public engagement events / exhibitions / drop-in information sessions; and advising of the 8 week consultation period and the closing date for receipt of representations; and

- Hold public engagement events / exhibitions / drop-in information sessions at various locations throughout the Borough, at which Planning Officers will be available to answer any questions;
- Provide a summary of representations received to the Council's Elected Members by way of a Public Consultation Report.

### Part c) - Public Inspection of Representations and Counter Representations to Draft Local Policies Plan

**4.25** All valid representations 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 (draft zoning) is known as a site specific representation. Interested parties may comment on site specific representations that have been received (known as counter representations). Both valid representations and valid counter representations will be considered at the Independent Examination.

During this stage the Council will:

- Make copies of representations, received during the consultation period, available for inspection on the Council's website, at the Council's Planning Office and provide hard copies on request at a specified price;
- Issue a public notice in the local newspapers (Appendix D) for 2 consecutive weeks, as well as in The Belfast Gazette and on the Council's website, confirming:
  - (i) the availability of all representations for inspection, with details of website and office location(s) and times;
  - (ii) an 8 week consultation period on these, including the closing date for receipt of counter representations; and

(iii) that representations received after the end of the period for comment cannot be accepted as valid;

- Notify all persons who submitted a representation of the above matters in (i), (ii) and (iii);
- Notify consultees and the Council's Elected Members informing them that representations are available for inspection, with details of the location(s) and times at which they can be inspected;
- Make copies of counter representations, received during the consultation period, available for inspection on the Council's website, at the Council's Planning Office and provide hard copies on request at a specified price;
- Provide a summary of counter representations received to the Council's Elected Members by way of a Public Consultation Report.

### Part d) - Submission of Draft Local Policies Plan (and associated documentation) prior to the Independent Examination

**4.26** Once the consultation period has closed for counter representations, the Council will fully consider all valid representations received. When the Council considers that all legislative requirements in the production of the Draft Local Policies Plan have been met and that it is ready for the Examination, it will forward it to the Department (DfI) along with associated documentation and supporting evidence, for consideration.

During this stage the Council will:

- Continue to make the Draft Local Policies Plan and associated documentation available on the Council's website, at the Council's Planning Office and on disc and to provide hard copies on request at a specified price;
- Issue a public notice at least 4 weeks prior to the Independent Examination in the local newspapers (Appendix D) for 2 consecutive weeks, as well as in The Belfast Gazette and on the Council's website advising:
  - (i) that the Draft Local Policies Plan and associated documentation have been submitted to the Department (DfI); and
  - (ii) that the Draft Local Policies Plan and

associated documentation are available on the Council's website and at the Council's Planning Office;

- Publish the public notice (as above) on the Council's website;
- Notify consultees that the Draft Local Policies Plan and associated documentation has been submitted to the Department (DfI) and are available on the Council's website, at the Council's Planning Office and on disc; and
- Notify all persons who submitted representations and counter representations to the Draft Local Policies Plan that it and associated documentation has been submitted to the Department (DfI) and are available for inspection on the Council's website, at the Council's Planning Office, on disc and that hard copies can be provided upon request at a specified price.

#### **Part e) - Independent Examination of Draft Local Policies Plan**

**4.27** The Department (DfI) 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. As with the Plan Strategy document, 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 a person appointed by the Department (DfI). The Council's Planning Officers and any consultees or consultants acting on the Council's behalf will be available at the Examination to answer questions and to provide comment on representations.

During this stage the Council will:

- Continue to make the Draft Local Policies Plan and associated documentation available on the Council's website, at the Council's Planning Office and on disc, with hard copies available on request at a specified price;
- Issue a public notice at least 4 weeks prior to the Independent Examination in the local newspapers (Appendix D) for 2 consecutive weeks, as well as in The Belfast Gazette and on the Council's website advising:
  - (i) of the dates, times and location(s) at which the

Examination will be held;

- (ii) whether the PAC or a person appointed by the Department (DfI) will carry out the Independent Examination; and
  - (iii) that representations and counter representations are available for inspection, with details of website and office location(s) and times;
- Notify consultees of the full details of the Independent Examination, as above, at least 4 weeks before the Examination is to be held; and request comments on the representations and counter representations for consideration at the Examination; and
  - Notify all persons who submitted a representation or counter representation to the Draft Local Policies Plan of the full details of the Independent Examination, as above, at least 4 weeks before the Examination is to be held as well as where and when representations and counter representations are available for inspection.

#### **Part f) -Adoption of the Local Policies Plan**

**4.28** Following the Independent Examination and upon receipt of the Independent Examiner's Report, the Department (DfI) will issue a Direction to the Council, requiring it to adopt the Draft Local Policies Plan as originally prepared or with modifications. The Council may also be directed to withdraw the Draft Local Policies Plan. In either scenario, the Department (DfI) will be expected to give reasons for its decisions.

During this stage the Council will:

- Adopt the Local Policies Plan by resolution of the Council, within such time as may be prescribed in the Direction from the Department (DfI);
- Publish the Local Policies Plan, making it and associated documentation, the Independent Examiner's Report, the Department's Direction and the Council's Adoption Statement available on the Council's website, at the Council's Planning Office and on disc, with hard copies available on request at a specified price;
- Issue a public notice in the local newspapers (Appendix D) for 2 consecutive weeks, as well as in The Belfast Gazette and on the Council's website confirming:

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Department's Direction and the Council's Adoption Statement; and

- Notify consultees and those who submitted representations and counter representations of the adopted Local Policies Plan; how to view or obtain copies together with associated documentation, the Independent Examiner's Report, the Department's Direction and the Council's Adoption Statement.

### STAGE 4: REVIEW OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**4.29** Following the adoption of the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan, the Council will monitor and review the Local Development Plan to help establish how the objectives in it are being achieved and whether any changes are required. The Council will carry out a review of the LDP every 5 years and no later than 5 years from the date of the adoption of the Local Policies Plan. An annual monitor of housing and economic land availability and any other issues relevant to the implementation of the LDP will inform the overall review process. The Council is required to issue an annual monitor report to the Department (DfI).

**4.30** When the overall review of the LDP is complete, the Council will:

- report the findings of the review to the Council's Elected Members;
- forward a copy of the report on the findings of the review to the Department for Infrastructure (DfI);
- make a copy of the report on the findings of the review available to view in the Council's Planning Office;
- publish the review report on the Council's website; and
- give notice in local newspapers (Appendix D) that the report on the findings of the review is available on the Council's website and at the Council's Planning Office.

# 5.0 Community Involvement in the Development Management Process

## The Council's Development Management Function

- 5.1** The Council as the local planning authority is now responsible for making decisions on the majority of planning applications in the Borough, through the process of Development Management (DM). There is a general provision which allows for any planning application to be called in for determination by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), however this will be by exception and the Council will be required to notify applicants when this has occurred.
- 5.2** The Council also deals with applications for Listed Building Consent, Conservation Area Consent, works to protected trees and for Advertising Consent. 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 statutory consultees on all planning applications. The statutory requirements for consultation on planning applications are set out in Schedule 3 of The Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 (GPDO). These requirements vary according to the type of proposal but include notification to specified bodies and general publicity.
- 5.3** All planning applications are now categorised on receipt as local, major or regionally significant, with the Council responsible for determining the bulk of local and major applications. The thresholds / criteria for what constitutes major and regionally significant applications are set out in The Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. All other development proposals are classified as local.
- 5.4** Regionally significant developments are those which are considered to be of significance to the whole or a substantial part of Northern Ireland or have significant effects outside of Northern Ireland. Such proposals also include developments that involve a substantial departure from the Local Development Plan. Regionally significant applications are processed by the Department (DfI) and applicants should communicate with the Department on such proposals. 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 in turn advise that the application be made to the Council (as a major application).
- 5.5** 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. Common examples of major development proposals would include:
- a housing development involving the construction of 50 units or more, or where the area of the site is 2 hectares or more;
  - a retail development involving 1,000 square metres or more 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 station) where its capacity is or exceeds 5 megawatts.
- 5.6** Local applications involve development proposals which are not considered to be regionally significant or major. The vast majority of planning applications we receive are likely to constitute local developments. These include most commercial and housing proposals as well as minor schemes and householder developments.
- 5.7** The Council receives a wide variety of planning applications and therefore needs to involve the community to differing degrees, according to the scale and complexity of the application.
- 5.8** This section of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) looks at:
- how the public can become involved at the various

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- stages of the planning application process;
- how the level of community involvement will depend on the scale of the application.

### Pre-Application Stage

#### Pre-Application Discussions (PADS)

**5.9** Pre-application discussions (PADs) are encouraged for a range of types of applications, both major and local. They are considered to be fundamental to 'front loading' the new development management system. This process offers an applicant the opportunity to engage with the Council to have meaningful discussions prior to the submission of a formal application. It will help all parties, both to prepare an application to a high standard and to establish an agreed course and timetable for determining a development proposal. During this process there will not be an opportunity for public engagement. This will take place if the Council receives a valid planning application.

**5.10** The objective of a PAD is to identify any policy constraints and other material issues that need to be addressed. Advice and information (as appropriate) will normally be provided without prejudice to a prospective applicant on the content, preparation and presentation of an application likely to satisfy current and relevant planning policies. For major applications it will also enable the applicant to discuss with the Council details of how the community should be involved in the decision-making process.

#### Pre-Application Community Consultation (PACC)

**5.11** The Council strives to inform and involve the wider community in helping to create better quality developments and in place-making. Applicants submitting major applications to the Council or, as the case may be, to the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) must undertake community consultation before submitting their application. This Pre-application Community Consultation (PACC) is a statutory requirement, as set out in Section 27 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. It is the responsibility of the applicant to undertake this consultation in line with these requirements.

**5.12** The Council requires each applicant to undertake the following actions before a major application is submitted:-

- to notify the Council, through the submission of a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) at least

12 weeks in advance, that the application is to be submitted;

- hold at least one public event where the community will be afforded the opportunity to make comment on the proposal;
- publish details of the proposal in the local press (in at least one local newspaper listed in Appendix D), outlining where further details can be obtained and the date, time and location of the public event(s), giving at least 7 days notice; and
- submit a Pre-application Community Consultation (PACC) Report with the application (as referred to below).

**5.13** The Council will respond within 21 days of receiving a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) to confirm whether the proposed pre-application community consultation is satisfactory, or if additional notification and consultation is required. The PAN must also be sent to Local Councillors (Elected Members) for the District Electoral Area in which the proposed development is situated, along with evidence of publicity of the public event.

**5.14** The purpose of the PACC Report is to confirm that pre-application consultation has taken place in line with statutory minimum requirements and with any further requirements set by the Council in response to the Proposal of Application Notice (PAN). The report should set out what steps were taken to comply with these requirements. It should include evidence of the publicity of the public events and specify who has been consulted and what methods have been used. It should also refer to, or include examples of, the material that was made available at the public events, as well as include the responses from those consulted. The report should also set out to what extent the proposals may have changed as a result of the pre-application consultation, following the applicant's consideration of the comments/ responses received. The PACC Report will be made available to view on the public register (at the Council's Planning Office) and online (as detailed in Para. 5.27), along with a copy of the application and accompanying plans and drawings, in accordance with Section 242 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011.

**5.15** Pre-application consultation is likely to be more successful if the applicant makes significant efforts to open lines of communication with local communities, provide them with feedback and work with them to secure development proposals which are acceptable to everyone.

**5.16** As previously stated, the Council would recommend

all applicants considering submitting development proposals that fall within the definition of major development to seek a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) with the Council's Planning Department. Where applicants fail to fully meet the PACC requirements the Council will decline to determine the application.

### Planning Application Stage

- 5.17 When a planning application is submitted for determination the Council will involve the community in the decision making process. If you feel you will be affected by development proposals you will have an opportunity to consider what is proposed and how it will affect you. You will also have the opportunity to make your views known before a final decision is made on the application.
- 5.18 The Council undertakes statutory publicity in accordance with current legislation. Central Government (Department of Infrastructure, DfI) may change the statutory publicity requirements and in this case the SCI will be updated to reflect this.

### Advertising

- 5.19 The Council will advertise all new applications on a weekly basis in the local newspapers listed in (Appendix D).
- 5.20 The weekly advertising list is also available to view on the Council's website. Details of how representations should be made are included in the notice placed in the local newspapers and on the Council's website.

### Neighbour Notification

- 5.21 Current legislation states that any affected occupier of land neighbouring the land to which the application relates shall be notified by serving a notice on them. Under our Neighbour Notification Scheme, the Council will ensure that planning applications are brought to the individual attention of the occupiers of buildings on neighbouring land which are within 90 metres of the boundary of the application site. Neighbouring land is defined as 'land which directly adjoins the application site or which would adjoin it but for an entry or road less than 20 metres in width'.
- 5.22 The Case Officer when carrying out a site inspection will also check the accuracy of the neighbour notification details supplied on the application form and may add or amend details as considered appropriate.

- 5.23 The period for responding following receipt of a neighbour notification letter is 14 days, though any late representations received before a decision is made will still be considered.

### EIA Development

- 5.24 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is the process by which information about the likely environmental effects of a project is collected, assessed and taken into account before reaching a decision about whether a proposed development should be approved. Its purpose is to improve the quality of decision making by identifying potential environmental issues early in the application process. It aims to predict the impact of development, find the means to reduce adverse impacts and tailor projects to suit the local environment.
- 5.25 The Environmental Statement (ES) produced as part of an EIA brings together in a single document or series of documents information about a proposed development and its likely effects on the environment, for consideration as part of a planning application by the Council or Department (DfI).
- 5.26 In most cases it will fall to the Council to determine if the application is an EIA application. An EIA application cannot be processed until the ES is received. When a developer submits an ES in support of a planning application, the Council will publish a notice of its receipt in (a) local newspaper(s) (Appendix D) and indicate where it may be purchased and the address of the Council Office where it may be inspected. The Council will also allow 4 weeks from the date the notice is first published for representations to be made.

### Obtaining Further Information

- 5.27 The weekly lists of planning applications received within the Borough are available on the Northern Ireland Planning Portal ([www.planningni.gov.uk](http://www.planningni.gov.uk)) in addition to the Council's website. Planning applications including supporting documents and corresponding plans can be viewed online on the Planning Portal (as above) as well as at the Council's Planning Office during normal office hours. Planning Officers are available to give advice on current or proposed applications. You are advised to make an appointment if you wish to speak to a particular officer.
- 5.28 The Council will make the application, plans and any

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associated Environmental Statement (ES) available on a public register in accordance with Section 242 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011. Each register will contain the following information:

- a copy (which may be photographic) of each application together with copies of plans and drawings submitted in relation thereto;
- 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 appeal decision by 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 date of issue.

**5.29** The Council will make the application file available for inspection, by appointment. The amount of information available on the file will be dependent on the stage of the application.

### Commenting on a Planning Application

**5.30** Individuals, groups and organisations can comment on a planning application even if they have not been neighbour notified by the Council. All comments will be carefully considered. Care should be taken when making comments to the Council to ensure that no personal data is included.

**5.31** When a decision is made on a planning application, only certain issues are taken into account and given weight, which are often referred to as 'material considerations'. These must be genuine planning considerations, which relate to the purpose of planning legislation (which is to regulate the development and use of land in the public interest) and which fairly and reasonably relate to the application concerned. Material considerations will depend on the nature of the application under consideration, the planning policy context and the surrounding circumstances. All the fundamental factors involved in land-use planning constitute a material consideration, along with relevant matters such as planning history, natural justice, public opinion, consultation responses, resources and economic factors, the power to impose conditions and planning gain. In terms of considering neighbouring impact, 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.

**5.32** Generally greater weight is attached to issues which are supported by evidence rather than solely by assertion. If an identified problem can be dealt with by means of a suitable condition the Council is required to consider this as an alternative to refusing an application.

**5.33** You can make comments on a planning application in the following ways:

Online at: [www.planningni.gov.uk](http://www.planningni.gov.uk)

By email: [planning@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk](mailto:planning@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk)

By post: Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon  
Borough Council  
Planning Department - Development  
Management Section  
Marlborough House (Floor 4)  
Central Way  
Craigavon  
BT64 1 AD

*Please quote the planning application reference in all correspondence.*

**5.34** All written comments on an application will be acknowledged within 5 working days. The acknowledgement letter 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 formally contact the respondent again until after a decision is made unless the application is either to be determined by the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee, is significantly altered (prompting re-notification of neighbours/interested parties of the amendments) or is withdrawn.

**5.35** All comments are scanned and added to the Council's website once email addresses and hand written signatures have been removed, but typed names and addresses remain visible. It should be noted that defamatory comments cannot be taken into account. You should ensure that your comments relate to relevant planning matters.

**5.36** The Council may, if it considers it appropriate to do so, stage public exhibitions, issue press releases or arrange public meetings to provide information about major developments or proposals which are



particularly significant or may have wide-spread effects on communities.

- 5.37** The Council will consult with a range of Statutory Consultees, referred to in Appendix C, to assist in the determination of an application. If a representation raises issues that are relevant to the responsibilities of the consultee (e.g. road safety) the representation 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.
- 5.38** The Council may negotiate changes to applications where these are expedient. Re-consultation (for 14 days) will take place on minor changes 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 and instead a new application may be invited.

#### Planning Committee Stage

- 5.39** Planning applications are usually determined by officers using delegated powers. 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 subject to regular review. The Scheme of Delegation is available to view on the Council's website. However, if you have concerns with an application, you may wish to contact a Local Councillor (Elected Member) who can request that the application is removed from the Delegated List and referred to the Planning Committee, for determination, provided a sound planning reason is given.
- 5.40** For those major applications that have been notified to the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) but have been returned to the Council for determination, the Council's Planning Committee will afford the applicant the opportunity of appearing before and being heard by the Committee.
- 5.41** If an application goes before the Planning Committee, the Council will also offer people who have made representations the opportunity to speak and make direct representation to the Committee. Anyone wishing to address the Committee must provide written notification to the Council's Committee Clerk by 12 noon two (2) working days before the meeting.

#### Post-application Stage

##### After the Decision Notice has issued

- 5.42** A notification of decision letter is sent to the applicant or nominated agent and all third parties who have made a representation during the processing of the planning application informing them of the final decision. The decision is recorded on the statutory Planning Register. A copy of the decision notice and related information, including the Planning Officer's Report, will be available to view on the Public Access Website via the Northern Ireland Planning Portal at [www.planningni.gov.uk](http://www.planningni.gov.uk).
- 5.43** If it is a case that has been considered by the Planning Committee, the decision of the Committee can be found either by contacting the Development Management Team the day after the Committee Meeting, or by viewing the minutes of the meeting which will be published on the Council's Website.

##### Planning Appeals against a Planning Refusal / Granted Conditions / Enforcement Notice

- 5.44** Only applicants and those upon whom Enforcement Notices have been served have the right of appeal. There are no third party rights of appeal. Where an applicant is unhappy with the Council's decision on an application or a condition attached to a permission, he/she may appeal to the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC). 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. Where such an appeal is lodged, the application is deemed to have been refused. Appeals must be lodged with the PAC within 4 months from the date of notification of the Council's decision, or expiry of the prescribed period as the case may be.
- 5.45** All those people who commented on the original planning application that is the subject of appeal will be advised by the PAC that an appeal has been received and provided with an opportunity to make their views known. Copies of letters already submitted will be forwarded to the PAC. For hearings and public inquiries, the interested parties have the opportunity to make their views known verbally to the PAC.

## 6.0 Community Involvement in the Enforcement Process

**6.1** The Council encourages the community to report instances 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 or the Department. This may also include failure to carry out development in accordance with the approved plans or conditions. Suspected breaches of planning control can be reported in the following ways:

By email: [planning@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk](mailto:planning@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk)

By post: Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon  
Borough Council  
Planning Enforcement Section  
Marlborough House (Floor 4)  
Central Way  
Craigavon  
BT64 1 AD

By phone: 0300 200 7830 (NI General Planning Line)  
0300 0300 900 (Main Council Line)

**6.2** You can also call in to our Planning Office Reception, at the address provided, to make a complaint or speak to a member of staff on any related matters.

**6.3** All planning enforcement related complaints are treated confidentially. If the complaint results in a planning application being submitted, then the application will be publicised and adjoining neighbours will be notified in the normal manner.

**6.4** Complainants are informed of the outcome of an enforcement complaint, in writing, when the case is concluded. Many complaints relate to works that do not require planning permission, such as minor extensions or alterations to a dwelling allowable under Permitted Development legislation.

**6.5** Our priorities for enforcement action are contained in the Council's Enforcement Strategy, which is subject to regular review. The Enforcement Strategy is available to view on the Council's website.

## 7.0 Community Involvement in the Preparation of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

- 7.1** The Council may also prepare non-statutory planning guidance to support its Local Development Plan. Supplementary planning guidance (SPG) includes for example design guides and advice notes. Consultation on SPG will be carried out in a proportionate manner where the Council feels it would be beneficial to seek the views of stakeholders and the general public. Comments received on a draft consultation will be presented to the Planning & Regulatory Services Committee for consideration, prior to the SPG being finalised and published on the Council's website. It is not necessary for the SPG to go through the public examination process. The finalised SPG will be published on the Council's website.



## 8.0 Community Involvement in Conservation Area Designation

- 8.1** 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 before making decisions on Conservation Areas. This is to encourage greater ownership of the concept and greater co-operation and commitment to achieving the aims of the designation.
- 8.2** The Council will involve the community in the designation, variation or cancellation of a Conservation Area. As part of such work, we will formally consult with the Historic Buildings Council, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and the Department for Communities (DfC), any water or sewerage undertaker, as well as any other bodies or persons deemed to have an interest or that could be affected.
- 8.3** We will advertise details of proposals in the local press and hold public engagement events to present and discuss them. For any new designations, the Council will publish a public notice in the local press (relevant to the area) and hold a public launch/exhibition. The cancellation of a Conservation Area, or part thereof, will similarly be confirmed by public notice in the local press and all properties within the affected area will be notified in writing. The full list of local newspapers available to the Council for advertisement are detailed in Appendix D.



## 9.0 Community Involvement in the Designation of a Simplified Planning Zone

- 9.1** 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.
- 9.2** Where the Council proposes to commence work on a Simplified Planning Zone (SPZ) it will undertake consultations with all neighbouring District Councils, all affected landowners and occupiers, and the Department for Communities (DfC) as well as notify the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) of its proposals, all as required by legislation.
- 9.3** Once a proposed scheme has been prepared, the Council will make copies available for inspection at its Planning Office and at any other locations deemed appropriate, give notice by way of an advertisement in the local press and on the Council's website, as well as serve a notice on those it has consulted with. The full list of local newspapers available to the Council for advertisement are detailed in Appendix D.
- 9.4** Following advertisement of the proposed details there will be an 8 week period when written representations can be made to the Council. If the Council subsequently decides not to proceed with a proposed scheme it will publish a further advertisement to that effect and will notify all those who have made representations.
- 9.5** The Council 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 person appointed by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). Where an Examination is proposed, 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, the Council will notify all those who have made representations.
- 9.6** After considering the report of the Independent Examiner, the Council will produce a statement detailing the decision it has reached in light of the report and any recommendations made by the Independent Examiner, including reasons. The Council will also explain its reasons with respect to every objection received.
- 9.7** Notice of intention to adopt a SPZ scheme will be advertised in the local press and all those who make a representation with respect to the proposals shall be served notice, as well as any other persons deemed appropriate. Any material modifications made to the scheme after considering representations shall be made available for inspection by interested parties. The Council shall make clear what the modifications are and the reasons behind them. Details of the modified proposals will be advertised in the local press and notice shall be served on those affected by the proposals as well as those who had made previous representations. All representations will be considered before finalising any proposals.
- 9.8** The processes of advertisement and notification will be repeated at final adoption stage, following which the relevant scheme details will be made available for public inspection in the Council's Planning Office and any other suitable locations close to the SPZ site.



## 10.0 Review of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement

- 10.1** This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) will be reviewed as necessary to ensure that it remains current and fit for purpose. Any significant changes in legislation, procedure or best practice guidance may necessitate such a review. A report of the review will be presented to Elected Members recommending whether any changes are required. A copy of the report will be made available on the Council's website to view along with future amended versions of the SCI.

# Appendix A

## Glossary of Terms

**Advertisement:** advertisement for two consecutive weeks in at least one local newspaper circulating in the Borough, unless otherwise specified.

**Conservation Area:** a Conservation Area is an area previously designated by the Department, or since designated by the Council or Department under Section 104 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, to be of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance.

**Council:** means Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council unless otherwise specified.

**Department:** means the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) unless otherwise specified.

**Development Management (DM):** the process of receiving, assessing and deciding planning applications and providing related information and advice to customers, the general public and other stakeholders.

**Disabled Person:** as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995, someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial (more than minor) and long-term (usually over one year) adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

**Elected Members:** a person elected to the office of Alderman or Councillor in the Council.

**Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):** a procedure to be followed for certain types of proposed developments to ensure that decisions are made in full knowledge of any likely significant effects on the environment. It aims to predict the impact of development, find the means to reduce adverse impacts, tailor projects to suit the local environment and to present the findings and development options to decision-makers.

**Environmental Statement (ES):** a report that sets out an applicant's summary of the likely environmental effects of a proposed development for consideration as part of a planning application, by the Council or Department, under EIA requirements.

**Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA):** a process designed to ensure that a policy, procedure, project or scheme is fair to all and does not discriminate or disadvantage any

people or group. It seeks to identify and address any adverse or negative impact.

**Evidence Base:** the information and data gathered by the Council to justify the soundness of the policy approach set out in the Local Development Plan Documents, including the physical, economic, and social characteristics of the plan area.

**Identified Occupier:** means the occupier of premises within a 90 metre radius of the boundary of a planning application site.

**Independent Examination:** the examination conducted by the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) or a person appointed by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to test the soundness of the Local Development Plan Documents and Statement of Community Involvement.

**Local Development Plan (LDP):** the plan for the long-term future development of the Borough, drawn up by the Council in consultation with the community. The LDP applies regional/strategic policies at local council level and informs the general public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested bodies of the policy framework and land use proposals that will guide development decisions relating to a specific issue or area.

**Local Policies Plan (LPP):** the second part of the Local Development Plan, which provides detailed policies and proposals for the development of specific geographical or subject areas.

**Neighbouring Land:** land which directly adjoins a planning application site boundary or which would adjoin it but for an entry or a road less than 20 metres in width.

**Permitted Development (PD):** certain relatively minor works and forms of development that can be carried out without the need to obtain planning permission, as currently specified in the Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

**Person appointed:** a person appointed by the Department under Section 10(4) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to carry out an Independent Examination.

**Planning and Regulatory Services Committee:** a committee composed of Elected Members (Aldermen and Councillors) which is responsible for making decisions on non-delegated planning applications and other planning



matters affecting the Council area.

**Planning Appeals Commission (PAC):** the body which provides (a) Commissioner(s) to carry out an independent assessment of the soundness of a Development Plan Document or Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), unless the Department appoints a different independent examiner. The Commission also hears and decides a range of appeals including on refused applications, planning conditions, non-determined applications, applications for Listed Building Consent, Advertisement Consent and enforcement-related cases.

**Plan-led System:** the principle that the decisions upon planning applications should be made in accordance with the adopted Local Development Plan, unless there are other material considerations that may indicate otherwise.

**Plan Strategy (PS):** this is the first part of the Local Development Plan and provides a vision, strategic objectives and a framework for growth for the plan area.

**Pre-Application Discussion (PAD):** a process of engagement between an applicant and the Council, or Department (DfI), prior to the submission of a formal planning application to discuss potential issues to be addressed and processes to be undertaken, as well as to clarify the format, type and level of detail required to enable the determination of the application as efficiently as possible. Feedback is normally provided without prejudice to the normal application and consultation process.

**Pre-Application Community Consultation (PACC):** a requirement under Section 27 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 for applicants of major and regionally significant developments to engage with the local community in advance of a formal planning application (at least 12 weeks prior), with the view to achieving a development proposal that is acceptable to all. The term 'community' is used in the widest sense and should include Section 75 Groups (as referred later) and all those with an interest in development in the area. The application must be accompanied by a PACC Report which should provide details of the consultation exercise that has been undertaken, demonstrate how it meets statutory and other requirements set by Council, as well as how the scheme has been amended to address comments/responses where appropriate. PACC requirements must be met before an application can be determined.

**Preferred Options Paper (POP):** this sets out the key issues that the Local Development Plan needs to address, a series of options for dealing with them, with supporting evidence and justification for the preferred options. The POP is an early consultation paper in the Plan process to promote debate on issues of strategic significance which are likely to influence the shape of future development within the Borough.

**Proposal of Application Notice (PAN):** applicants of major and regionally significant developments, as prescribed within the Schedule in the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, are required to submit a PAN to confirm at least 12 weeks in advance that an application is to be submitted for the proposal. The PAN should set out how an applicant proposes to engage and seek the views of the community on the proposed development.

**Scheme of Delegation:** a scheme where decision-making on local applications is delegated to an appointed officer rather than through the Council's Planning Committee, thereby enabling speedier decisions and improved efficiency. Section 31 (1) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires the Council to produce such a scheme.

**Section 75 Groups:** nine key groups listed in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 that traditionally have been under-represented or disadvantaged. Section 75 requires all Government Departments, Agencies and Councils to consider these groups when creating a policy.

**Simplified Planning Zone (SPZ):** an area of land that can be earmarked for specific development where the planning process is relaxed in order to encourage development.

**Soundness:** A set of key tests that underpin the Local Development Plan process, which require the Plan Documents to be tested at the Independent Examination, in terms of the coherence, consistency and effectiveness of proposals, their conformity with relevant policies and the process by which they were produced. A document will be sound if found to meet these tests.

**Stakeholders:** individuals or organisations who stand to gain or lose from the impact of a planning policy, proposal or decision. The term is used mostly to refer to bodies that will affect the delivery of a planning document's policies and proposals.

**Statement of Community Involvement (SCI):** a statement setting out the Council's policy and processes for involving and informing the community in the preparation and continuing review of the Local Development Plan and accompanying guidance, the consideration of planning applications, the making or altering of designated areas and in enforcement matters.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA):** a structured assessment-based process that aims to ensure the integration of environmental considerations in the preparation and adoption of plans, policy and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.

## STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

**Supplementary Planning Document (SPD):** a document which provides supplementary advice or information about policies in the Local Development Plan or other designations. SPDs, which include Supplementary Guidance (SPGs), are not subject to Independent Examination. A SPD/SPG Document may be related to a topic or to a specific area.

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA):** a tool for appraising policies to ensure that they reflect sustainable development objectives through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations. Required by the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to be undertaken for all the Local Development Plan Documents, it is carried out in tandem with the SEA process (referred above).

# Appendix B

## Consultation Bodies in the Local Development Plan Process

The statutory consultation bodies in the Local Development Plan process, as defined in the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, are as follows:

**i. Northern Ireland Government Departments (subject to future re-organisation)**

Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM)  
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL)  
Department of Education (DE)  
Department for Employment and Learning (DEL)  
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI)  
Department of the Environment (DOE)  
Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP)  
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS)  
Department of Justice (DOJ)  
Department for Regional Development (DRD)  
Department for Social Development (DSD)

The number of Northern Ireland Government Departments is to reduce from twelve (12) to nine (9) in 2016. The functions and services delivered by the current Departments are to be restructured and transferred within the 9 new Departments, as listed below:

The Executive Office (TEO)  
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)  
Department for Communities (DfC)  
Department for the Economy (DfE)  
Department of Education (DE)  
Department of Finance (DF)  
Department of Health (DOH)

Department for Infrastructure (DfI)  
Department of Justice (DOJ)

**ii. Local Planning Authorities whose area adjoins Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council area**

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council  
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council  
Mid Ulster District Council  
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council  
Monaghan County Council (Republic of Ireland)

**iii. Water or Sewerage Undertaker**

Northern Ireland Water (NIW)

**iv. Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)**

**v. Civil Aviation Authority**

**vi. Any person to whom the electronic communication codes applies by virtue of a direction given under Section 106(3) of the Communication Act 2003**

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

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

# Appendix C

## Consultation on the Development Management 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 (Northern Ireland) 2015 defines the current statutory consultees and outlines the various circumstances where consultation must be carried out. These specific criteria/thresholds for consultation should be referred to. The current 'Statutory Consultees' are listed below:

1. The Department of the Environment (DOE);
2. The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI);
3. The Department for Regional Development (DRD);
4. The Department for Regional Development (DRD) or water undertaker as defined under Article 13 of the Water and Sewerage Services (NI) Order 2006;
5. Licensed Aerodromes;
6. The Department for Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD);
7. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI); and
8. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)

The above list of Statutory Consultees is subject to change

due to the restructuring of Government Departments in 2016, from twelve (12) to nine (9), as listed below,

The Executive Office (TEO)  
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)  
Department for Communities (DfC)  
Department for the Economy (DfE)  
Department of Education (DE)  
Department of Finance (DF)  
Department of Health (DoH)  
Department for Infrastructure (DfI)  
Department of Justice (DOJ)

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 28 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.

## STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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.

Further information on the consultation process is contained in the Department's Development Management Practice Notice 18 (The Consultation Process and Duty to Respond), which is available to view in the Advice Section of the Northern Ireland Planning Portal ([www.planningni.gov.uk](http://www.planningni.gov.uk)).

# Appendix D

## List of Local Newspapers used for Advertisement

Local Newspapers which the Council currently advertises planning applications in (weekly):

- Banbridge Chronicle
- Banbridge Leader
- County Down Outlook
- Dromore Leader
- Lurgan Mail
- Portadown Times
- Ulster Gazette





**Armagh City  
Banbridge  
& Craigavon**  
Borough Council

Planning Department  
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council  
Marlborough Way (Floor 4)  
Central Way  
Craigavon  
BT64 1AD

Telephone: 0300 200 7830 (NI General Planning Line)  
0300 0300 900 (Main Council Line)  
Email: [planning@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk](mailto:planning@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk)