



# **STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (DRAFT)**

**Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council**

<u>Contents</u>	Page
<b>1.0 Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2.0 What is the Statement of Community Involvement?</b>	<b>4</b>
Our Vision of Participation	4
<b>3.0 Community Planning Context</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4.0 Community Involvement in the Preparation of the Local Development Plan</b>	<b>6</b>
Purpose	6
Who can get involved?	6
Empowering dis-advantaged and under-represented Groups	7
How and when will the Community be involved?	7
<b><i>Stage 1 Initial Plan Preparation</i></b>	<b>8</b>
(a) Developing an Evidence Base	8
(b) Publication of the Preferred Options Paper	9
<b><i>Stage 2 Preparation and Adoption of Plan Strategy</i></b>	<b>11</b>
(a) Plan Strategy – Preparation and Publication of Consultation Draft	12
(b) Plan Strategy – Public Inspection of Representations	12
(c) Plan Strategy – Independent Examination	12
(d) Plan Strategy – Adoption	13
<b><i>Stage 3 Preparation and Adoption of Local Policies Plan</i></b>	<b>13</b>
(a) Local Policies Plan – Preparation of Consultation Draft	14
(b) Local Policies Plan – Publication of Consultation Draft	14
(c) Local Policies Plan – Public Inspection of Representations	15
(d) Local Policies Plan – Independent Examination	16
(e) Local Policies Plan – Adoption	17
<b><i>Stage 4 Review of the Local Development Plan</i></b>	<b>16</b>
<b>5.0 Community Involvement in the Development Management Process</b>	<b>19</b>
The Council's Development Management Function	19
Pre-application Discussions	19
Pre-application Community Consultation	19
Advertising	20
Neighbour Notification	20
EIA Development	20
Obtaining Further Information	21
Commenting on a Planning Application	21
Planning Committee Stage	22
After the Decision Notice has issued	23
Planning Appeals	23
<b>6.0 Community Involvement in the Enforcement Process</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>7.0 Community Involvement in the Preparation of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>8.0 Community Involvement in Conservation Area Designation</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>9.0 Community Involvement in the Designation of a Simplified Planning Zone</b>	<b>25</b>

	Page
<b>10.0 Review of the Council's SCI</b>	<b>26</b>
Appendix A Glossary of Terms	27
Appendix B Consultation Bodies in Development Plan Process	30
Appendix C Consultation on Development Management Process	31
Appendix D List of Local Newspapers used for Advertisement	33

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 On 1 April 2015, councils were given new responsibilities and a broader range of powers under the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 including becoming the main decision maker on the vast majority of planning applications and assuming powers to take action against breaches of planning control and for producing a Local Development Plan (LDP). This change brings real opportunity 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 intend to involve the community in the production of the Local Development Plan, in the determination of planning applications, in planning enforcement, and in other planning matters.

### Our Vision of Participation

- 2.3 The Council's Corporate Plan defines our vision, mission, values and corporate priorities. 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 is therefore aimed 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 It is intended 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 plan 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 well-being 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)
  - 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 be taken to contribute to our outcomes.

3.3 The community plan will provide a strategic framework for the Borough helping to provide strategic context and local linkages for future policy, regeneration and spatial planning. Fundamental to the process is ensuring that local voices are heard and so it is crucial that our process 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 a process;
- Reaching Out – making engagement accessible to all and appropriate to people 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.

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

##### **Purpose**

4.1 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 implement the strategic objectives of the Regional Development Strategy 2035; take account of the Council's Community Plan; and guide development decisions within the Borough up to 2030.

4.2 The LDP will comprise two separate documents. The first document will be a Plan Strategy which will set out the Council's vision and 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 district and operational planning policies produced by the Department of the Environment.

4.3 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.

4.4 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?**

4.5 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 Local Development Plan 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)*

- 4.6 This list is not exhaustive, and is not intended to restrict any individual, group or organisation from participating in the plan-making process.
- 4.7 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.

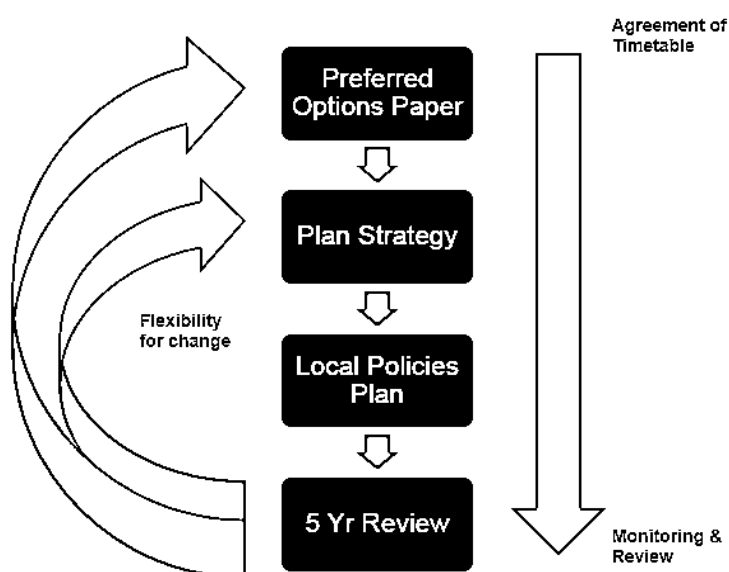
### **Empowering Disadvantaged and Under-Represented Groups**

- 4.8 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.*
- 4.9 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 Local Development Plan 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 also be sought within the specified period for comment along with the draft Plan Strategy and draft Local Policies Plan.
- 4.10 To ensure that all documents associated with the preparation of the Local Development Plan are accessible to everyone they will be made available in different formats upon request, including electronic, Braille, large text print and audio. Plain English is to be used for all publications. A telephone, fax number a text phone number and e-mail address will be stated on each document for people with hearing or speech impairments. If for any reason, a request for a document in a particular alternative format cannot be met, other possible solutions will be explored.

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

- 4.11 The local development plan process involves a number of different stages, as shown in Figure 1 overleaf, each presenting opportunities 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 Local Development Plan Process. The commitments will fulfil and in some cases exceed the statutory requirements on public consultation. Once published, the Local Development Plan Timetable, will outline an indicative timeframe for each of the stages, including production of the Plan Strategy and the Local Policies Plan and will be available to view at the Council's Planning Office and published on the Council's website at [www.armaghbanbridgescraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgescraigavon.org).

**Figure 1: Local Development Plan Process**



- 4.12 The current list of newspapers available to the Council for advertisement of the Local Development Plan Process are contained in Appendix D. This list is subject to regular review by the Council.
- 4.13 The Council's methods of engagement of the local community in the Local Development Plan process are set out stage-by-stage below.

### **STAGE 1: INITIAL PLAN PREPARATION**

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

- 4.14 Surveying and information gathering will be an on-going function of the Council, however, it will be particularly important at this early stage of plan preparation. Information obtained at this stage will be analysed and used to establish the social, economic and environmental characteristics of the plan area, which will enable the Council to identify the issues which need to be addressed along with options for addressing them. The preparatory studies will be undertaken using a topic based approach around each of the key issues. The initial findings from the evidence base will help inform the preparation of a Preferred Options Paper (POP) and the preparatory studies will be published alongside the POP in order to assist in public debate. The POP will also be accompanied by Scoping Reports for the Sustainability Appraisal, including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA).

#### **During this stage the Council will:**

- Set up a Project Management Team comprising Senior Council Officers from the Council, the Principal Planning Officer and representatives from the key statutory/government departments. The purpose of the team is to ensure key consultees co-operate in the plan making process. The Project Management team will be consulted on and act as the screening and scoping group for the



Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), and Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA);

- Engage with Key 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 Local Development Plan 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 opportunity to identify any particular issues or needs which they feel the plan should address. Where requested this can be done 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;
- Consult with statutory consultation bodies on the Scoping Report of the Sustainability Appraisal incorporating SEA, the Department may be requested to undertake trans-boundary consultation with the Republic of Ireland.
- Issue a Public Notice to confirm:
  - (i) the commencement of work on the councils new Local Development Plan;
  - (ii) publication of our timetable; and
  - (iii) how to view or obtain copies of our timetable.

The public notice will be placed on the Council's website at [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org) and appear in local newspapers (Appendix D) for 2 consecutive weeks.

- The Council will consult with neighbouring district councils, if there are matters which require survey work or information from those neighbouring districts in order to ascertain effects on the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council area.

#### **Part b) - Publication of the Preferred Options Paper**

- 4.15 The Council's Preferred Options Paper (POP) 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 Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon 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.
- 4.16 The POP is also subject to the initial stages of Sustainability Appraisal (SA), including SEA, and Equality Impact Assessment. The SA is a continual process which runs parallel with the preparation of the POP and the Local Development Plan. A SA interim report, (consisting of SA Scoping Report and assessment of alternatives) will accompany the POP.

During this stage the Council will:

- Issue a public notice in the local newspapers (in Appendix D) for two consecutive weeks and on the council's website [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org) detailing:
  - (i) Publication of the POP inviting comment within a specified period (not less than a period of 8 weeks or no more than a period of 12 weeks);
  - (ii) Community meetings/exhibitions and pop-in information sessions;
  - (iii) Publication of the initial stages of Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating SEA, and Equality Impact Assessment and invite comments.
- Publish the Preferred Options Paper on the Council's website at [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org) and where requested provide hard copies at a specified price;
- Publish Topic Papers on the Council's website at [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org) and where requested provide hard copies at a specified price;
- Issue a press release highlighting the POP and the public consultation, allowing stakeholders to make representation;
- Hold a launch/exhibition to announce the publication of the POP;
- Hold public engagement events and exhibitions with drop-in sessions at locations throughout the Borough, where Planning Officers will be available to answer questions;
- Write to key consultees and the Council's Elected Members providing them with a copy of the POP and inviting them to attend the launch/exhibition, provide comments within a specified period (not less than a period of 8 weeks or more than a period of 12 weeks); inform them of the public meetings, exhibition and drop-in information sessions;
- Contact local community groups and under-represented (Section 75) groups advising of the POP and inviting them to comment within a specified period (not less than a period of 8 weeks or more than a period of 12 weeks); attend the public meetings, exhibition and drop-in information sessions; and offering the opportunity of a meeting with planning officer to record their views;
- 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;
- Provide the opportunity to 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.

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

- 4.17 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 and a spatial strategy that indicates in broad terms the locations where different types of development will be promoted within the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. It will be a public consultation document and form a key part of the public participation process.

### **Part a) - Preparation and Publication of Consultation Draft Plan Strategy**

#### During this stage the Council will:

- Issue a public notice in the local newspapers (Appendix D) for two consecutive weeks, Belfast Gazette and on the Council's website at [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org) detailing:
  - (i) Publication of draft Plan Strategy and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Report and Equality Impact Assessment and how to view or obtain copies;
  - (ii) The dates and locations of public exhibitions;
  - (iii) The 8 week consultation period and closing date for receipt of representations to the draft Plan Strategy and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Report and Equality Impact Assessment;
- Make the draft Plan Strategy and any supporting documentation including the Sustainability Appraisal Report and Equality Impact Assessment available on the Council's website [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org) and on disc at the Council's Planning Office and provide hard copies upon request at a specified price;
- Hold a launch/exhibition to announce the publication of the draft Plan Strategy and issue press releases, highlighting the key elements of the draft Strategy;
- Hold public exhibitions and engagement events at locations throughout the Borough where Planning Officers will be available to answer any questions;
- Contact key consultees and elected members informing them of; the publication of the draft Plan Strategy, providing them with a copy, the dates of the public exhibitions; the 8 week consultation period and the closing date for representations;
- Contact all who submitted a representation to the POP informing them of the publication of the draft Plan Strategy and accompanying documents; advising how they can view or obtain copies; the dates of the public exhibitions; the 8 week consultation period and closing date for representations;
- Representations received will be reported to the Council's Elected Members, before being forwarded to the Department of the Environment to determine whether and if appropriate, an Independent Examination is to be held.

## **Part b) - Public Inspection of Representations to the Draft Plan Strategy**

- 4.18 All 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 representations that have been received (counter representations). These will also be considered at the Independent Examination.

### During this stage the Council will:

- Make copies of representations available for inspection in the Council's Planning Office and on the Council's website at [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org). Hard copies of representations can also be provided upon request at a specified price.
  - Write to key consultees and the Council's Elected Members informing them that representations are available for inspection and the places and times at which they can be inspected;
  - Issue a public notice in the local newspapers for two consecutive weeks, Belfast Gazette, and on the Council's website at [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org):
    - (i) of the availability of representations for inspection; and
    - (ii) the 8 week consultation period including closing date for counter representations.
  - Make copies of counter representations available for inspection in the Council's Planning Office and on the Council's website; and
  - Report counter representations to Council's Elected Members, before forwarding them to the Department of Environment.
- 4.19 Once the consultation period has closed for counter representations the Council will fully consider all representations. Representations along with the draft Plan Strategy and associated documents will be then forwarded to the Department.

## **Part c) - Independent Examination (Draft Plan Strategy)**

- 4.20 The purpose of the Independent Examination is to determine the soundness of the draft Plan Strategy, taking into account representations and counter representations. Where it is directed that an Independent Examination is required it will determine whether the draft Plan Strategy satisfies relevant statutory requirements and whether it is sound. At the Independent Examination Planning Officers will be available to answer any questions and provide comment on representations.

### During this stage the Council will:

- Issue a public notice at least 4 weeks prior to the Independent Examination in the local newspapers (in Appendix D) for two consecutive weeks, Belfast Gazette, and on the Council's website:
  - (i) of the date, time and place at which the examination will be held; and
  - (ii) whether the Planning Appeals Commission or a person appointed by the Department of the Environment will carry out the independent examination.

- (iii) that representations and counter representations are available for inspection;
- Continue to make the draft Plan Strategy, and any accompanying documentation available on the website;
- Notify consultation bodies of the full details, as above, of the Independent Examination, at least 4 weeks before the Examination is to be held; whether the PAC or another appointed person will be carrying out the Independent Examination; and to provide comment on the representations and counter representations for consideration at the Independent Examination.
- Notify all persons who submitted representations and counter representations to the draft Plan Strategy of the full details of the IE, as above, and indicating that representations and counter representations are available for inspection;

#### **Part d) - Adoption of the Plan Strategy**

- 4.21 Following the IE, the Department 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 will be expected to give reasons for their decisions.

##### During this stage the Council will:

- Issue a public notice in the local newspapers for two consecutive weeks, in the Belfast Gazette and on the council's website at [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org) confirming:
  - (i) the adoption of the Plan Strategy; and
  - (ii) where to get copies of the Plan Strategy and any accompanying documents, the Department of Environment's Direction and the Independent Examiner's Report;
- Make the Plan Strategy and any accompanying documents, the Department of Environment's Direction and Independent Examiner's Report and Adoption Statement available on the Council's website at [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org) at the Council's Planning Office, with hard copies available on request for a specified price;
- Write to key consultees and those who submitted representations and counter representations advising them of the adopted Plan Strategy, and where to obtain copies together with the Department of Environment's Direction and the Independent Examiner's Report. Also advising them of the commencement of work on the Local Policies Plan.

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

- 4.22 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 set out the Council's detailed policies and proposals (zonings and designations) regarding the future development of the area. 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**

- 4.23 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:

- Invite consultation bodies to participate by providing information on key issues that the Local Policies Plan should address;
- Invite community groups to identify local issues and policies which are likely to have a significant impact on the individuals they represent;
- Invite under-represented groups (Section 75) to identify local issues and policies which are likely to have a significant impact on the individuals they represent;
- Hold public engagement events / exhibitions at locations across the Borough where Planning Officers will be available to answer any questions;
- Issue a public notice in the local newspapers (Appendix D) and Belfast Gazette, for two consecutive weeks, and on the Council's website, [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org) to:
  - (i) advise that work has commenced on our Local Policies Plan;
  - (ii) confirm the dates and locations of public engagement events / exhibitions; and
  - (iii) invite the general public to make representations, identifying issues that the local development plan should address.

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

#### During this stage the Council will:

- Issue a public notice in the local newspapers (Appendix D) and Belfast Gazette, for two consecutive weeks, and on the Council's website, [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org) confirming:
  - (i) publication of the draft Local Policies Plan and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Report and Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and how to view or obtain copies;
  - (ii) the dates and locations of public exhibitions;
  - (iii) the 8 week consultation period and closing date for receipt of representations. Representations received after the end of the period of public consultation cannot be accepted.

- Make the draft Local Policies Plan and any supporting documentation including the Sustainability Appraisal Report and Equality Impact Assessment, available at the Council's Planning Office, and the Council's website at [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org). Hard copies will be available upon request at a specified price;
- Contact consultation bodies and the Council's Elected Members to inform them of the publication of the draft Local Policies Plan, providing them with a copy; the dates of the public exhibitions; the 8 week consultation period and the closing date for receipt of representations;
- Hold a launch event/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;
- Hold public exhibitions in various locations throughout the Borough, at which Planning Officers will be available to answer any questions;
- Write to all who submitted a representation 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; the dates of the public exhibitions; the 8 week consultation period and closing date for receipt of representations;
- Report representations to the Council's Elected Members, before being forwarded to the Department to determine whether and if appropriate, an Independent Examination is to be held.

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

- 4.24 All 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 representations and counter-representations will be considered at the Independent Examination.

#### During this stage the Council will:

- Make copies of representations available for inspection in the Council's Planning Office, and on the Council's website at [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org). Hard copies will be available upon request at a specified price;
- Issue a public notice in the local newspapers (listed in Appendix D) and Belfast Gazette for two consecutive weeks, and on the Council's website, confirming:
  - (i) the availability of all representations for inspection, with details of places and times at which they can be inspected; and



- (ii) an 8 week consultation period on these, including the closing date for counter representations.
- Notify in writing all persons who submitted representations, of the above matters in i) and ii);
- Write to key consultees and the Council's Elected Members informing them that representations are available for inspection, with details of the places and times at which they can be inspected;
- Make copies of the counter-representations available for inspection in the Council's Planning Office, as well as on the Council's website; and
- Report counter-representations to the Council's Elected Members before forwarding all representations, counter-representations, draft Local Policies Plan and associated documents to the Department.

4.25 Once the consultation period has closed for counter representations the Council will fully consider all representations. Representations along with the draft Local Policies Plan and associated documents will be then forwarded to the Department.

#### **Part d) - Draft Local Policies Independent Examination**

4.26 The purpose of the Independent Examination is to determine whether the draft Local Policies Plan satisfies relevant statutory requirements and whether it is 'sound', taking into account all representations and counter-representations received. The Council's Planning Officers will be available to answer any questions from the Independent Examiners and provide comment on the representations and counter representations.

#### During this stage the Council will:

- continue to make the draft Local Policies Plan, and all associated documentation available to view in the Council's Planning Office, any other locations deemed appropriate, and on the Council's website at [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org);
- Issue a public notice at least 4 weeks prior to the Independent Examination in the local newspapers (Appendix D) for two consecutive weeks, Belfast Gazette, and on the Council's website at [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org):
  - (i) of the date, time and place at which the examination will be held;
  - (ii) whether the Planning Appeals Commission or a person appointed by the Department of the Environment will carry out the independent examination; and
  - (iii) that representations and counter representations are available for inspection;
- Notify consultation bodies of the full details, as above, of the Independent Examination, at least 4 weeks before the Examination is to be held; whether the PAC or another appointed person will be carrying out the Independent Examination; and to provide comment on the representations and counter representations for consideration at the Independent Examination.



- Notify all persons who submitted representations and counter representations to the draft Local Policies Plan of the full details of the Independent Examination, as above, as well as where representations and counter representations are available for inspection;

#### **Part e) - Adoption of Local Policies Plan**

4.27 Following the Independent Examination, the Department of the Environment 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 will be expected to give reasons for their decisions.

#### During this stage the Council will:

- Issue a public notice in the local newspapers (Appendix D) and in the Belfast Gazette, for two consecutive weeks, and on the council's website at [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org) confirming:
  - (i) the adoption of the Local Policies Plan; and
  - (ii) where to get copies of the Local Policies Plan and any accompanying documents, the Department of Environment's Direction and the Independent Examiner's Report;
- Make the Local Policies Plan and any accompanying documents, the Department of Environment's Direction and Independent Examiner's Report and Adoption Statement available on the Council's website at [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org) at the Council's Planning Office, with hard copies available on request for a specified price;
- Write to all consultation bodies and those who submitted representations and counter representations advising them of the adopted Local Policies Plan, and where to obtain copies together with the Department of Environment's Direction and the Independent Examiner's Report.

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

4.28 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 the Local Development Plan are being achieved and whether changes are required. The Council will carry out a review of its Local Development Plan (LDP) every 5 years and no later than 5 years from the date of adoption of the Local Policies Plan.

4.29 When the review 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;

- make a copy of the report on the findings of the review available to view in the Council's Planning Office and any other locations within the council area considered appropriate;
- publish the review report on the Council's website at [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org);
- give notice in local newspapers (Appendix D) that the report on the findings of the review is available for inspection at specified locations and times, as well as on the Council's website.

## **5.0 Community Involvement in the Development Management Process**

### **The Council's Development Management Function**

- 5.1 The Council as the local planning authority for the area is now responsible for making decisions on all planning and Listed Building applications in the district. The Council also deals with applications for works in conservation areas, works to protected trees and advertising consent. Development Management is the process through which such applications are considered. An important part of the process is to provide information and advice to applicants and to seek and take into account the views of the general public and statutory consultees on all planning applications. The statutory requirements for consultation on planning applications are set out in legislation. These requirements vary according to the type of proposal but include notification to specified bodies and general publicity.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 This section of our Statement of Community Involvement looks at:
- how the public can become involved at the various stages of the application process; and
  - how the level of community involvement will depend on the scale of the application.

### **Pre-Application Stage**

#### **Pre-Application Discussions (PADs)**

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

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

- 5.5 The Council strives to inform and involve the wider community in helping to create better quality developments and place making. Applicants submitting major applications to the council or as the case may be the Department must undertake community consultation before submitting their application.

We will require the following actions to be undertaken before the application is submitted :-

- to notify the Council, at least 12 weeks in advance, that an application for a major planning application is to be submitted;
  - hold at least one public event where the community will be afforded the opportunity to make comment;
  - publish details of the proposal in the local press, outlining where further details can be obtained and the date, time and location of a public event; and
  - submit a pre-application community consultation report.
- 5.6 Pre-application consultation is likely to be more successful if the applicant makes significant efforts to open lines of communication with, and provide feedback to, local

communities and work with them to secure development proposals which are acceptable to everyone.

- 5.7 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 with planning officers. Where applicants fail to fully meet the pre-application community consultation requirements the Council will decline to determine the application.

### **Planning Application Stage**

- 5.8 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.
- 5.9 The Council undertakes statutory publicity in accordance with current legislation. Government may change the statutory publicity requirements and our future approach will reflect any changes that are made.

### Advertising

- 5.10 The Council will advertise all new applications on a weekly basis in the local newspapers listed in Appendix D.
- 5.11 The weekly advertising list is also available to view on the Council's website at [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org). Details of how representations should be made are included in the notice placed in the newspapers and on the website.

### Neighbour Notification

- 5.12 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'.
- 5.13 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 details as considered appropriate.
- 5.14 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

- 5.15 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a method for ensuring that the likely effects of new development on the environment are fully understood and taken into account before permission for the development is granted.

- 5.16 The Environmental Statement (ES) produced as part of an environmental impact assessment, brings together in a single document or series of documents information about a proposed development and its effects on the environment.
- 5.17 In most cases it will fall to the Council to determine if the application is an EIA application. An EIA application it 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 (listed in 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 representation to be made.

#### Obtaining Further Information

- 5.18 The weekly lists of planning applications received within the council area are also available on the Northern Ireland Planning Portal ([www.planningni.gov.uk](http://www.planningni.gov.uk)). Planning applications including supporting documents and corresponding plans can be viewed online as well at the Council offices 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).
- 5.19 The Council will make the application, plans and any associated environmental statement 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 decision of the PAC in respect of the application; and
  - brief details of any revocation or modification relating to any permission or consent, including date of issue.
- 5.20 The Council will make the application **file available for inspection**, by appointment. The amount of information on the file, will of course, be dependent on the stages the application has completed.

#### Commenting on a Planning Application

- 5.21 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.
- 5.22 When a decision is made on a planning application only certain issues are taken into account, these are often referred to as 'material planning considerations'. Material considerations must be genuine planning considerations. 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.

5.23 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.

5.24 You can make comments in a variety of ways, as follows:

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

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

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

Please quote the planning application reference in all correspondence.

5.25 All written comments on an application will be acknowledged within five 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 contact the respondent again until after a decision is made unless the application is to be determined by the Planning & Regulatory Services Committee, is significantly altered or is withdrawn.

5.26 All comments are scanned and added to the web site 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.

5.27 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 have wide-spread effects on communities.

5.28 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 representative 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.

5.29 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 a new application may be invited.

#### Planning Committee Stage

5.30 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. However, if you are concerned, you may wish to contact your local Councillor who has the ability to request that an application is determined by the Planning Committee.

- 5.31 For those major applications that have been notified to the Department but have been returned to the Council for determination the Council will afford the applicant the opportunity of appearing before and being heard by the Council.
- 5.32 If an application goes before a planning committee, the Council will also offer people who have made representations the opportunity to speak and make direct representation to elected members. Anyone wishing to address the Committee must provide written notification to the Council's Committee Clerk by 12pm (noon) two working days before the meeting.

### **Post-application Stage**

#### After the Decision Notice has issued

- 5.33 A notification of decision letter is sent to the applicant/agent and all people who have responded to the consultation on the planning application, informing them of the decision and the reason for that decision. The decision is recorded on the Council's website and in the statutory Planning Register.
- 5.34 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 website within 3-5 working days.

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

- 5.35 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 four months from the date of notification of the Council's decision, or expiry of the prescribed period as the case may be.
- 5.36 All those people who responded on the original planning application that is the subject of appeal will be advised 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 cases where they believe there has been a breach of planning control. A breach of planning control occurs when development or other certain activities take place without the necessary planning permission or consent from the Council 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:** Planning Enforcement Section  
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council  
Marlborough House (Floor 4)  
Central Way  
Craigavon  
BT64 1 AD

**By telephone:** 0300 200 7830 / 0300 0300 900 (Main Council Line)

- 6.2 You can also call in to our Planning Office Reception, at the address above, 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.

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

- 7.1 The Council will 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 SPG to go through the public examination process. A finalised SPG will be published on the Council's website at [www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org](http://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.org).



## **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 of Environment (DOE), the Department for Regional Development (DRD), any water or sewerage undertaker, as well as any other bodies or persons deemed to have an interest or that could be affected. 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 listed in Appendix D.

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

- 9.1 Where the Council proposes to commence work on a Simplified Planning Zone (SPZ) we will undertake consultations with all neighbouring district councils, the affected landowners and occupiers, and the Department for Social Development (DSD) and will notify the Department of the Environment of its proposals, all as required by legislation.
- 9.2 Once a proposed scheme has been prepared, we will make copies available for inspection at our Planning Office and at any other locations deemed appropriate, give notice by way of an advertisement in the local press and on our website, and we will serve a notice on those we have consulted with. The full list of local newspapers available to the Council for advertisement are listed in Appendix D.
- 9.3 Following advertisement of the proposed details there will be an eight 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.
- 9.4 The Council may cause an Independent Examination to be held to consider the representations received. Where an independent 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 Independent Examination the Council will notify all those who have made representations.
- 9.5 After considering the report of the Independent Examiner, the Council will produce a statement detailing our decisions reached in light of the report and any recommendations made by the independent examiner, including our reasons. We will also explain our reasons with respect to every objection received.

- 9.6 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. We shall make clear what the modifications are and our 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 our proposals.
- 9.7 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 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 council area, 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 of the Environment unless otherwise specified.

**Development Management:** 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.

**Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA):** a process designed to ensure that a policy, project or scheme does not discriminate against any disadvantaged or vulnerable people

**Environmental Statement:** Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) ensures that the likely effects of new development on the environment are fully understood and taken into account by producing an Environmental Statement (ES).

**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 to test the soundness of local development plan document or Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

**Local Development Plan (LDP):** the plan for the long-term future development of the council area, drawn up by the Council in consultation with the community. The Local development plan 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:** 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 & 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 development plan, unless there are other material considerations that may indicate otherwise.

**Plan Strategy:** 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 with an applicant prior to the submission of a formal planning application, to discuss the principle of development and to clarify the format, type and level of detail required to enable the Council to determine such an application.

**Pre-Application Community Consultation (PACC):** if an application is for a major or regionally significant development, applicants must submit a pre-application community consultation report together with their planning application. The purpose of the report is to provide details of the consultation that has been undertaken with the local community on the development proposal.

**Preferred Options Paper (POP):** this sets out the key plan issues that the Local Development Plan (LDP) needs to address, possibilities and alternative proposals produced at an early stage in the production of the Local Development Plan 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 council area.

**Proposal of Application Notice (PAN):** in the case of major or regionally significant development, as prescribed within the Schedule to The Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, an applicant is required to submit a 'Proposal of Application Notice' at least 12 weeks prior to submitting a planning application for the proposal. The proposal of application notice 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:** an area of land that can be earmarked for specific development where the planning process is relaxed in order to encourage development.

**Soundness:** a development plan document will be sound if it meets certain tests at the Independent Examination stage. These tests require that a document is prepared according to the correct procedures, that it conforms to other policies, and that its proposals are coherent, consistent and effective.

**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 the community in the preparation, alteration and continuing review of all local development documents and accompanying guidance, the consideration of planning applications and in the making or altering of designated areas.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA):** a procedure that contributes to the integration of environmental considerations in the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.

**Supplementary Planning Document (SPD):** a document which provides supplementary information about the policies in the Local Development Plan documents. SPDs are not subject to independent examination. A SPD may be related to a topic or to a specific area.

**Sustainability Appraisal:** a tool for appraising policies to ensure they reflect sustainable development objectives (that is social, environmental and economic factors) and required in the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to be undertaken for all development plan documents.

## **Appendix B – Local Development Plan Consultation Bodies**

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 any 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)
  
- 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 & Down Council
  - Monaghan County Council (Republic of Ireland)
  
- iii. Water or Sewerage Undertaker**
  - Northern Ireland Water
  
- 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 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 statutory consultees and outlines the various circumstances where consultation must be carried out. These specific criteria/thresholds for consultation should be referred to. The 'Statutory Consultees' are listed in bold below, along with main contact bodies:

- 1. The Department of the Environment (DOE);**
  - Marine Environment Division
  - Environmental Policy Division
  - Regulatory and Natural Resources Policy Division
  - Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)
    - Historic Environment Division
    - Natural Environment Division
    - Resource Efficiency Division
    - Innovations Strategies Division
- 2. The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland;**
- 3. The Department for Regional Development;**
  - Transport NI
- 4. The Department for Regional Development or water undertaker as defined under Article 13 of the Water and Sewerage Services (NI) Order 2006;**
  - Northern Ireland Water (NIW)
- 5. Licensed Aerodromes;**
  - Belfast International Airport
  - George Best Belfast City Airport
- 6. The Department for Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD);**
  - Rivers Agency
- 7. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI); and**
- 8. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)**

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.

Due to 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). The Practice Note can be viewed on the Planning Portal at:  
[http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/advice/practice-notes/dev\\_man\\_practice\\_note\\_18\\_consultation\\_process\\_duty\\_to\\_respond.pdf](http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/advice/practice-notes/dev_man_practice_note_18_consultation_process_duty_to_respond.pdf)



## **Appendix D – List of Local Newspapers used for Advertisement**

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

- Armagh Observer
- Banbridge Chronicle
- Banbridge Leader
- Dromore Leader
- Lurgan Mail
- Lurgan & Portadown Examiner
- Portadown Times
- Rathfriland Outlook
- Ulster Gazette