

Armagh City, Banbridge &
Craigavon Borough Council

Local Development Plan 2035

Draft Plan Strategy

TECHNICAL SUPPLEMENT 11

The Control of Outdoor Advertisements

September 2026



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Armagh City
Banbridge
& Craigavon
Borough Council

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1.0 Introduction

This Technical Supplement brings together the evidence base that has informed the preparation of the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) 2035 draft Plan Strategy (dPS). It is one of a suite of topic based Technical Supplements that should be read alongside the dPS to understand the rationale and justification for the 'The Control of Outdoor Advertisements' policy proposed within it.

The document provides an overview of outdoor advertisements in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough as well as the key issues that are relevant. It also sets out the legislative and policy framework that the Council has taken account of.

The document builds on the original Preparatory Papers that formed part of the evidence base for the Council's Preferred Options Paper (POP). Preparatory Paper No. 4 'Town Centres' (which explored signage from an economic and retail design perspective) and No. 8 'Environmental Assets' (which assessed the protection of heritage assets from advertising pressures)¹, were two of 14 topic-based Papers that were prepared and presented to the Council's Planning Committee during the period July 2014 to April 2017. The POP, published in March 2018, provided an overview of the key Issues of strategic significance affecting the Borough and the Preferred Options to address them.

This Technical Supplement sets out the background to and rationale for the policy approach to 'The Control of Outdoor Advertisements' contained in the Draft Plan Strategy, having had regard to representations received at POP stage, as well as through engagement with stakeholders both within and external to the Council during the LDP process.

The information and data presented in this Technical Supplement has been derived from a number of different sources including from the Council's own evidence gathering and from responses from and engagement with statutory consultees.

It is important to note that this Technical Supplement has been collated at a specific point in time and therefore it may be necessary for the Council to review and update its evidence base / approach as new or updated information / guidance is published, so to ensure that the LDP is founded on the principles of soundness. The Council will continue to work with consultees, other relevant stakeholders and neighbouring councils, during the LDP process and beyond, to ensure that its approach to the control of outdoor advertisements remains effective and appropriate and that meets the needs of the advertisement industry and the Borough into the future.

The Technical Supplement is set out in the following sections:

- **Sections 2 & 3** provide a summary of the Legislative, Regional and Local Policy Context that is relevant to the topic of outdoor advertisements in the LDP;
- **Section 4** provides an overview of the Borough that is relevant to the topic of outdoor advertisements;
- **Section 5** summarises the approach to the control of outdoor advertisements in the Preferred Options Paper (POP). It outlines the relevant Key Issues and Preferred Approaches as detailed in the POP, alongside a summary of the POP Commitments and of the POP responses that were received, with a focus on those offering suggestions in respect of policy development.

- **Section 6** provides an overview of the stakeholder engagement that has been carried out in preparation of the dPS policy. It also summarises the approach of neighbouring councils to the control of outdoor advertisements.
- **Section 7** summarises how the dPS policy for the control of outdoor advertisements has been developed. It explains where amendments have been made to the current planning policies to take account of regional direction in the SPPS, POP feedback, consultation and engagement, where it has been considered necessary and appropriate to do so.
- **Section 8** sets out how the dPS policy for the control of outdoor advertisements has been prepared in accordance with the tests for soundness set out in the Department for Infrastructure's (DfI) Development Plan Practice Note 6: Soundness (Version 2, May 2017).

Introduction to Control of Outdoor Advertisements

Advertising is a familiar feature of our environment that can contribute to a vibrant and competitive economy. All advertisements affect the character and appearance of the building or place where they are displayed. Given the potential impact of outdoor advertising on amenity, both positive and negative, there is a need to balance the requirements of the industry with the protection and, where possible, enhancement of the character and appearance of our city, towns and other settlements. There is a need to also ensure that advertisements will not prejudice public safety.

Current planning legislation enables planning authorities to restrict or regulate the display of advertisements in the interests of amenity or public safety, including road safety. Furthermore, roads legislation provides additional controls on advertisements in, or on, a public road. The consent of the planning authority is required for the display of advertisements. However, certain types of advertisement benefit from 'deemed consent' provided certain conditions are met.

The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, Section 250 (Interpretation), defines an advertisement as:

'Any word, letter, model, sign, placard, board, notice, awning, blind, device, or representation, whether illuminated or not, in the nature of, and employed wholly or partly for the purposes of, advertisement, announcement or direction, and (without prejudice to the preceding provisions of this definition) includes any hoarding or similar structure used, or designed or adapted for use, and anything else principally used, or designed or adapted principally for use, for the display of advertisements, and references to the display of advertisements shall be constructed accordingly.'

2.0 Legislative Context

The key pieces of legislation relevant to the control of outdoor advertisement are summarised below.

The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (hereafter referred to as the 2011 Act) is the principal planning legislation in Northern Ireland, which underpins the reformed two-tier planning system that commenced on 1 April 2015. It introduced the plan-led system, where the LDP is the primary consideration for decision making on all new development schemes and proposals will be required to accord with its provisions unless, exceptionally other material considerations indicate otherwise.

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

The Regulations set out the sequence in which the Council's new LDP is to be prepared and provides detail on the content and procedure of each stage in the plan preparation process including independent examination.

The Planning (Local Development Plan) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

The Planning (Local Development Plan) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 amend the transitional provisions in the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 to include development plans prepared and adopted by the Department under the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 within the definition of a departmental development plan under the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

The Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

In April 2015, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) introduced new regulations and a principal statutory framework for controlling the display of outdoor advertisements across Northern Ireland. This is operated as a separate system from standard planning permission under Section 130 of the 2011 Act. The Regulations ensure that the Council can only control advertisements in the interests of visual amenity and public safety. Depending on their size, position and illumination, advertisements will have 'deemed consent' under Schedule 3 or will require a formal application for Express Advertisement Consent.

Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

The Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 provides a statutory duty on public authorities to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services. The legislation came into effect for Councils in June 2017.

3.0 Policy Context

Regional Policy Context

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035

First published in 2001 and updated in 2012, RDS 2035 is the NI Executive's long term spatial strategy. It aims to deliver the spatial aspects of the Programme for Government, by providing an overarching strategic planning framework to facilitate and guide sustainable development. Local councils must take account of the RDS when preparing their LDPs (Planning Act (NI) 2011 Act, Section 5 (2); Soundness Consistency Test C1, SPPS 5.16).

Whilst the control of advertisements is not specifically mentioned in the RDS, the following Regional Guidance and Spatial Framework Guidance is relevant:

RG2: Deliver a balanced approach to transport infrastructure.

RG7: Support urban and rural renaissance.

RG11: Conserve, protect and, where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment.

SFG 15: Strengthen the Gateways for Regional competitiveness.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) - Planning for Sustainable Development (Edition 2, 2025)

First published in 2015 and updated in December 2025 with new regional policy on renewable and local carbon energy, the SPPS sets out the Department's strategic direction and regional policy framework for securing the orderly and consistent development of land in Northern Ireland under the two-tier planning system. The provisions of the SPPS, and Core Planning Principles, must be taken into account by Councils in the preparation of their Local Development Plans, and are also material to all decisions on individual planning applications and appeals.

The Core Planning Principles which are relevant to outdoor advertisements are:

- Supporting Good Design and Positive Place-making
- Improving Health and Well-being
- Preserving and Improving the Built and Natural Environment

The SPPS sets out the strategic direction for the new councils to bring forward detailed operational policies within future local development plans. The SPPS directs that in plan making councils should bring forward appropriate policies that must reflect the aim, objectives and policy approach of the SPPS, tailored to the local circumstances of the plan area, including listed buildings, conservations areas and areas of townscape character, must be compatible with other policies set out within the SPPS.

The SPPS notes that advertising is a familiar feature of our environment that can contribute to a vibrant and competitive economy. It recognises that all advertisements affect the character and appearance of the building or place where they are displayed. Given the potential impact of outdoor advertising on amenity, both positive and negative, there is a need to balance the requirements of the industry with the protection and, where possible enhancement of the

character and appearance of our cities, towns and villages. There is a corresponding need to ensure that advertisements will not prejudice public safety.

The SPPS recognises the priority on protecting people, the environment, and creating safer communities. It also acknowledges the role of planning in restricting or regulating the display of advertisements in the interests of amenity or public safety, including road safety. Furthermore, roads legislation provides additional controls on advertisements in, or on, a public road. The consent of the planning authority is required for the display of advertisements. However, certain types of advertisement benefit from 'deemed consent' provided certain conditions are met.

The regional strategic objectives for the control of outdoor advertisements are to:

- ensure that outdoor advertisements respect amenity and do not prejudice public safety, including road safety; and
- help everyone involved in the display of outdoor advertisements contribute positively to the appearance of a well-cared for and attractive environment in our cities, towns, villages and the countryside.

The SPPS specifies that where appropriate, councils should bring forward appropriate policies within Local Development Plans (LDPs) for the control of outdoor advertisements, tailored to local circumstances. It also notes that local policies may also be brought forward for the control of advertisements which affect Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Character, and must be compatible with other policies set out within the SPPS.

Planning Policy Statements (PPSs)

The existing suite of regional Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) provides the operational policies on particular aspects of land use planning and apply to the whole of Northern Ireland. These are currently retained under the transitional arrangements of the SPPS, until such times as the Council adopts its LDP Plan Strategy.

The following Planning Policy Statements currently provide the planning policy context for the assessment and determination of outdoor advertisement proposals. PPSs of relevance include:

Planning Policy Statement 17 (PPS 17) Control of Outdoor Advertisements

PPS 17 sets out the operational planning policy (AD1) and guidance for the display of outdoor advertisements.

The key objectives of PPS 17 include:

- Ensure that outdoor advertisements respect amenity and do not prejudice public safety, including road safety; and
- Help everyone involved in the display of outdoor advertisements to contribute positively to the appearance of a well-cared for and attractive environment in our cities, towns, villages and the countryside.

Policy AD 1 'Amenity and Public Safety' states that:

'Consent will be given for the display of an advertisement where:

- a) it respects amenity, when assessed in the context of the general characteristics of the locality; and
- b) it does not prejudice public safety.

The guidance set out in Annex A for different categories of outdoor advertisement will be taken into account in assessing proposals.'

It states that PPS17 should be read together with the following policies contained in PPS 6 'Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage':

- Policy BH 9: The Control of Advertisements on a Listed Building;
- Policy BH 13: The Control of Advertisements in a Conservation Area; and
- Policy ATC 3: The Control of Advertisements in Areas of Townscape Character.

The following Planning Policy Statements currently provides the planning policy context for the assessment and determination of outdoor advertisement proposals. PPSs of relevance include:

A number of other PPSs will normally apply to the control of outdoor advertisement proposals. These are:

Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS 3) - Access, Movement and Parking (Feb 2005):

PPS 3 sets out the planning policies for vehicular and pedestrian access, transport assessment, the protection of transport routes and parking. It works alongside PPS 17 to ensure public safety, particularly by managing the impact of signage and other roadside advertising distractions by preventing overly illuminated or high-impact displays from causing road safety concerns.

Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS 3) - Clarification of Policy AMP 3: Access to Protected Routes (Oct 2006):

This document provides clarification to Policy AMP 3: Access to Protected Routes of PPS 3 'Access, Movement and Parking', published in February 2005, and must be read in conjunction with the policies contained within this PPS.

Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS 6) - Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage (Mar 1999):

With Annexes B and C replaced and updated in DfC document 'Criteria for the Scheduling of Historic Monuments and the Listing of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, with associated procedures' (June 2019):

PPS 6 sets out the Department's operational planning policies for the protection and conservation of archaeological remains and features of the built heritage (i.e. historic environment). Of particular relevance to the control of advertisements is:

Policy BH 9 'The Control of Advertisements on a Listed Building' which states:

'The Department will normally only grant consent for advertisements or signs on a listed building where these are carefully designed and located to respect the architectural form and detailing of the building.'

Policy BH 13 'The Control of Advertisements in a Conservation Area' which states:

'The Department will not normally grant consent for the display of advertisements in or close to a conservation area which would adversely affect the character, appearance or setting of the area or which would be detrimental to public safety.'

Addendum to Planning Policy Statement 6 – Areas of Townscape Character (Aug 2005):

This is an addendum to PPS 6 'Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage' and must be read in conjunction with the policies contained within this PPS. The Addendum provides additional planning policies relating specifically to Areas of Townscape Character, for demolition of buildings, new development and the control of advertisements. It embodies the commitment to sustainable development and environmental stewardship. Of particular relevance to the control of advertisements is:

Policy ATC 3 The Control of Advertisements in an Area of Townscape Character which states that:

'The Department will only grant consent for the display of an advertisement in an Area of Townscape Character where:

- a) it maintains the overall character and appearance of the area; and
- b) it does not prejudice public safety.

The Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (PSRNI)

The PSRNI is a comprehensive planning framework tailored to the needs, protection and development of rural areas. This framework was published in 1993 and under the transitional arrangements of the Strategic Planning Policy (SPPS), remaining provisions have been retained as material considerations until formally adopted by Council within its Local Development Plan

The majority of these policies have been superseded by Planning Policy Statements such as PPS21, however, the PSRNI still maintains regional policies relating to the rural character, protection of countryside and environmental assets. Therefore, the Council must have regard to the remaining policies and objectives as a material consideration.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- **Living Places** - An urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland' (2014) - sets out the key principles behind good place making, which is often of particular importance for outdoor advertisements. The Guide seeks to inform and inspire all those involved in the process of managing (stewardship) and making (design) urban places, with a view to raising standards across Northern Ireland. It acknowledges that for Northern Ireland to continue its path to a brighter, more prosperous future for all, it is vital the planning, design and management of urban places is improved, identifying that stronger cities, towns, villages and neighbourhoods will be central to the fulfilment of this overall objective.
- **Building on Tradition** - A Sustainable Design Guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside (2012) - sets out the key principles for high-quality, sustainable design in rural areas, which is of importance for managing outdoor advertisements outside defined settlement limits. Implemented by the Council as a material consideration, this guide has been prepared to assist all of those involved with sustainable development in the Northern Ireland countryside to understand the requirements of Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 21 'Sustainable Development in the Countryside'. Consequently, this forms an important material

consideration in ensuring that outdoor advertisements are of high quality and do not detract from the rural character of the Borough.

- **Local Conservation Area Design Guides (Armagh, Loughgall, Richhill, Dromore, Lurgan)** - Sets out the design criteria for shopfronts, fascia and other advertisements within the Borough's heritage assets and historic cores. The guides ensure that development must preserve or enhance the historic character of the conservation area by establishing specific design- parameters for traditional materials, scale and layout. The guides are of particular importance as they ensure outdoor advertisements and digital screen displays remain subservient and sympathetic to prevent visual conflict with the conservation areas in question.

Other Relevant Strategies, Plans and Documents

Everyone's Involved - Sustainable Development Strategy 2010 (Northern Ireland Executive)

The Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland (2010) promotes sustainable communities and the protection of environmental resources, recognising the need to adapt to climate change and manage environmental risks. In this regard, the Strategy supports development which contributes to the long-term sustainability and resilience of communities.

Programme for Government 2024-2027 - Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most (The Northern Ireland Executive, 2024)

The Programme for Government (PfG) 2024–2027 was agreed by the Northern Ireland Executive on 27 February 2025. It outlines the Executive's priorities to improve the lives of people across Northern Ireland, focusing on three core areas: doing what matters most today, building new foundations, and shaping a better tomorrow. The PfG is designed to deliver tangible outcomes in public services, economic development, infrastructure, and social wellbeing.

The PfG sets out 9 priorities to help deliver better wellbeing, long-term sustainability and a thriving economy (in line with the Missions of People, Planet and Prosperity), underpinned by a cross-cutting commitment to Peace. The priorities relevant to outdoor advertisements are:

- **Growing a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy:** Commercial signage directly supports town centre retail and local business viability. Policy DES 5 provides a clear framework for commercial advertising while preventing visual clutter and protecting streetscape quality.
- **Safer Communities:** Regulating signage scale, location, and illumination- especially for digital screen advertisements- prevents driver distraction, keeps footpaths clear, and protects public road safety.

Within the PfG there are a wide range of actions aimed at addressing the above priorities and delivering the missions, including multi sector investment and reform, the delivery of a Sub-Regional Economic Action Plan, the development of Northern Ireland's Climate Action Plan, publication of the Third Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme and the delivery of actions identified within the Lough Neagh Report and Action Plan.

Local Policy Context

Existing Development Plans

The existing four statutory Development Plans (Area Plans) covering the Borough, which were produced by the former Department for Environment (DOE), provide the local policy framework against which development proposals are currently considered. These are:

- Armagh Area Plan (AAP) 2004, including Armagh Area Plan (AAP) 2004, Alteration No 1: Countryside Proposals
- Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan (BNMAP) 2015
- Craigavon Area Plan (CAP) 2010
- Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan (DSTAP) 2010

Due to the varying ages of the extant Development Plans, there are inconsistencies in approach with regards to a wide range of planning issues as well as the degree of emphasis in respect of the principles of sustainable development. However, the existing Plans are an important consideration in the LDP process, and as such have been taken into account in the development of the draft Plan Strategy. The policy approaches to the control of outdoor advertisements in the respective Plans are set out below.

In line with the SPPS's transitional arrangements (1.10-1.16), the existing policies within the extant Plans will have effect and will be material considerations until such times as the Council adopts the LDP Plan Strategy. The SPPS (1.12) states that where there is a conflict between the SPPS and any retained policy, it must be resolved in favour of the provisions of the SPPS.

Armagh Area Plan (AAP) 2004 including Alteration 1 (Countryside Proposals) **Adopted January 1995 and March 2001 respectively**

The Armagh Area Plan (AAP) 2004 and AAP Alteration 1 (Countryside Proposals) provide a planning framework for the growth and development of the Armagh area. Whilst the AAP does not specifically refer to outdoor advertisements or digital screen advertisements, it remains a material consideration as it establishes the statutory spatial designations for Armagh. The Armagh Area plan designates a Central Area Limit for Armagh along with a commercial area. The central area limit equates to the Town Centre Boundary, and the Commercial Area equates to the Primary Retail Core. The Council uses these boundaries to identify the appropriate policy context for advertisement proposals/assessments, ensuring that these proposals maximise its full development potential in an efficient, economic and orderly manner whilst maintaining a high standard of physical environment and safeguarding its landscape quality and natural resources.

Craigavon Area Plan (CAP) 2010, adopted August 2004

CAP provides a statutory planning framework which facilitates the future growth and development of Craigavon Borough whilst protecting and, where appropriate, enhancing the natural and man-made environment and ensuring that development is both sustainable and of a high quality. Whilst the CAP does not specifically refer to outdoor advertisements (including digital display screen advertisements), it remains a material consideration as it establishes the statutory spatial designations for Craigavon. The Council uses these boundaries to identify the appropriate policy context for advertisement proposals/assessments, ensuring that these proposals support economic development while safeguarding urban amenity and local character.

Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan (BNMAP) 2015, Adopted Oct 2013

BNMAP provides a planning framework for the former Banbridge and Newry and Mourne Districts that is in general conformity with the RDS 2035. This framework will facilitate sustainable growth and a high quality of development in the Banbridge and Newry and Mourne Districts throughout the Plan period whilst protecting and, where appropriate, enhancing the natural and man-made environment.

The Plan (Vol. 1, Strategic Plan Framework, Page 59) refers to Policy DGN 1 'Security Grilles and Shutters on non-industrial buildings which is relevant to outdoor advertisements due to the connection between shopfronts/commercial properties and advertisements. The BNMAP remains a material consideration as it establishes the statutory spatial designations for the area. The Council utilises these boundaries to identify the appropriate policy context for advertisement proposals/assessments to protect high standard of townscape character and built heritage assets of the area.

Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan 2010

DSTAP does not contain policies which relate to outdoor advertisements (including digital display screen advertisements); however, it remains a material consideration as it establishes spatial designations for this area.

Other Relevant Council Strategies, Plans and Documents

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Corporate Plan 2023-2027 – 'Our People, Our Place, Our Future'

The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's vision, values (3) and key priorities (5), which align with the Community Plan. Each of the priorities has three commitments outlining what the Council are going to do. The Corporate Plan recognises the LDP as the spatial outworking of the Corporate Plan and one way in which the Council's ambitions can be achieved.

The Council has 5 key Priorities in the Corporate Plan that it will focus on:

1. Environment and Place
2. Community Wellbeing
3. Economic Growth
4. Service Delivery
5. Staff, Leadership and Resources

The Vision of the Corporate Plan is to create "*a happy, healthy and connected community, a vibrant and sustainable economy and appealing places for living, working and learning*" aligning with the aspirations of the Community Plan.

The priority of the Corporate Plan is to improve economic, social and environmental well-being through place shaping in order to attract visitors, investors, and to encourage people to be active, with a focus on promoting health and wellbeing. The Council aims to improve participation in arts and culture and strengthen the Borough as a visitor destination as well as supporting the growth of our local economy, by securing investment in infrastructure and connectivity, and providing opportunities in skills development.

The priorities for the Council in the draft Corporate Plan that are relevant to outdoor advertisements are as follows:

Priority 1 'Environment and Place' Commitments:

- Actively respond to the climate crisis and support others to do likewise
- Seek investment to preserve the uniqueness of our heritage and places
- Shape our places to be attractive, accessible, healthy, safe, and clean.

Priority 3 'Economic Growth' Commitments:

- Maximise the potential of our MSW Growth Deal and Regional Economic Strategy
- Provide opportunities for growth, investment, and skills development in our local economy
- Seek investment in infrastructure and connectivity

The Corporate Plan acknowledges that the environment and economic growth play a critical role in shaping the borough. Outdoor advertisements support these priorities by balancing commercial display needs with the protection of visual amenity, heritage assets and streetscape quality whilst actively maximising local economic growth.

Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Community Plan 2017-2030 – 'Connected'

Councils across Northern Ireland 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 create a statutory link between the Community Plan and the LDP. It outlines that the LDP will provide 'the spatial expression of the Community Plan.'

The Council's Community Plan ('Connected'), which was launched on 4 May 2017, is an overarching strategy for the Borough. It provides a strategic framework for collaborative working, helping to integrate other local and regional strategies (including the Programme for Government) and the delivery of positive change for communities. The Community Plan has been taken into account throughout the preparation of the LDP, to provide the spatial reflection of the Community Plan.

Local councils must take account of the Community Plan when preparing their LDPs (Local Government Act (NI) 2014, Section 77 (2); Planning Act (NI) 2011, Section 8(5) (aa); Soundness Consistency Test C2; and SPPS 5.19).

Under 1 of the Plan's 9 long term outcomes, a 'Revitalised Place', it is acknowledged that the rural character across the Borough must be preserved and developed for everyone to enjoy. Our Borough has a rich offering of settlements including our city, towns, villages and rural areas. It is our aspiration that each urban and rural area, values and protects its distinct identity and assets so that the Borough's full potential as a vibrant place for living, working, visiting and investing can be achieved. A revitalised place is important as it contributes to a sense of community, improving quality of life, attracting visitors, businesses and creating economic opportunities. We recognise that place shaping improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the place, ensuring aspirations of the community are being realised and included in the process.

Craigavon Integrated Development Framework (CIDF) (DSD, 2010)

The Craigavon Integrated Development Framework was published in 2010. Its purpose is to guide how the town centres of Central Craigavon, Portadown and Lurgan will develop and thrive over the next 20 years. It also sets out a strategy for regeneration for the three centres. The CIDF focuses on achieving an integrated vision for the 3 centres as the complete package- where they will be three complementary and successful centres all with a unique offer, each having a distinct role and identity and each benefiting from a greatly enhanced environment and range of facilities. The CIDF aims to project this vision through scores of

individual actions, projects and development schemes that will strengthen each individual centre and contribute to the overall regeneration of Craigavon.

The CIDF offers guidance on a number of issues and advocates a planned approach to retail, leisure, business, housing, infrastructure and community development.

The CIDF made recommendations related to outdoor advertising for Lurgan which include:

- L9 (Public Realm Schemes)- Implement public realm improvements along William Street sites to enhance streetscape, through possible façade improvements such as outdoor advertising and commercial signage.
- L11 (Shopfront Enhancements)- Promote high-quality shopfronts and fascia restoration through sensitive outdoor advertisements such as traditional advertisements and signage that preserves the character of the surrounding area.

Mid South West Regional Economic Strategy (MSW RES, 2000)

The RES sets out the 'direction of travel' in relation to the vision and ambition for the region; it identifies the opportunities and challenges faced; and sets out the priority 'pillars' around which future investment and actions to realise ambitions should be framed. Furthermore, it provides an early, high-level indication of potential specific projects/ interventions that may sit under each of these 'pillars' - which will be the subject to ongoing development during the completion of the RES.

The RES will underpin the case for the Growth Deal funding for the Mid South West Region announced by the UK Government in October 2018 and referenced in the 'New Decade, New Approach' Deal published in January 2020 by identifying the projects/ interventions most suited to maximising the potential of the Growth Deal funding. Importantly, the ambition to 'supercharge' the growth of the MSW economy and ensure inclusive prosperity in MSW extends beyond the Growth Deal funding. Accordingly, a core assumption is that other resources/funding sources and policy changes will come into effect to underpin the full realisation of the RES.

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Recovery & Growth Framework

The ABC Recovery and Growth Framework was launched in February 2021 and focuses on how the Council can create the right social and economic conditions to help the Borough recover from the covid pandemic and drive sustainable long-term growth for the region.

The Framework sets out a series of aims which will meet the needs of companies within the Borough, such as boosting tourism and footfall in towns, and delivering support to business of all sizes, as well as longer-term interventions which will boost efficiency and competitiveness. The Framework emphasises the regional focus on driving economic investment for Northern Ireland around key sectors such as; agrifood, health and life sciences and advanced manufacturing, where the borough already excels and which, with support to improve skills, connectivity, and productivity, can become global exemplars.

It addresses the need for a specific focus on the case for investment in sustainable roads and rail infrastructure, for urban regeneration and rural development; for education and training to upskill the talent pool; for support of technological developments including Industry and investment in manufacturing research & development; and a commitment to driving regional competitiveness through the development of a start-up and innovative business ecosystem. These targeted actions are aimed at accelerating the borough's recovery and set it on a path of renewed inclusive growth and prosperity.

LDP Landscape Character Assessment

The SPPS states that the LDP process ‘will play an important role for councils in identifying key features and assets of the countryside and balancing the needs of rural areas and communities with the protection of the environment. This should include an environmental assets appraisal and landscape assessment which will provide the evidence base for the purposes of bringing forward an appropriate policy approach to development in the countryside (Para. 6.76)’. The SPPS emphasises that this evidence base should consider Landscape Character Assessments.

The Council's Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) in Technical Supplement 9 provides an updated understanding of the Borough's landscapes, building on the Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment (2000). The assessment identifies and evaluates the key characteristics, condition, value, vulnerability and sensitivity of landscape character areas located wholly or partly within the Borough and considers the extent to which they have been influenced by development pressures, land use change, renewable and low-carbon energy development, agricultural practices, recreation, infrastructure provision, and wider social and environmental trends.

The LCA provides an objective and evidence-based understanding of landscape character and its contribution to local distinctiveness, sense of place, cultural heritage, visual amenity and the well-being of residents and visitors.

The findings of the LCA have informed the policy approach to landscape at Draft Plan Strategy stage and will further inform landscape designations and any associated policy at Local Policies Plan Stage. In doing so, the LCA will help ensure that the LDP promotes sustainable development, protects and enhances important landscape assets and provides clear guidance for future decision-making so that landscape change is positively managed for current and future generations.

City / Town Centre Master Plans and Local Place Plans

Whilst Local Development Plans provide the statutory planning framework for land use proposals, City / Town Centre Masterplans are non-statutory documents which focus on regeneration initiatives and public realm improvements in our town centres.

City / Town Centre Masterplans set out a vision for a particular City / Town Centre and identify key proposals for realising that vision over a set period. Prior to the publication of the Council's Place Plans, Armagh had a City Centre Masterplan in place, Banbridge Town Centre Masterplan 2016 set out the regeneration objectives for Banbridge and Dromore Town Centre Master Plan defined a vision of how Dromore town centre could be transformed 2015-30. The masterplans informed the direction of the respective Place Plans and were taken into account during the Preferred Options Paper (POP) Stage of the LDP, including early policy development, but have since been superseded by Place Plans for the respective settlements.

The Craigavon, Lurgan and Portadown Place Plans are still in the development stage, with a draft document for public consultation anticipated in early 2027. Regeneration strategies for Craigavon, Portadown and Lurgan are contained within the Craigavon Integrated Development Framework (CIDF) until the publication of the respective Place Plans.

The Armagh Place Plan (March 2022)

The Armagh Place Plan, launched by The Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Community Planning Partnership, is the first community planning led Place Shaping Plan in Northern Ireland.

Place shaping improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the place, ensuring aspirations of the community are being realised.

Typologies, and associated actions, of particular relevance to outdoor advertisements include:

- **HIGH STREET-** The Armagh Place Plan identifies that Scotch St, Thomas St, Market St and Upper English Street make up the retail core of Armagh City, which provide a connection between the Cathedrals, the Mall and other key anchor points in the city. The Plan acknowledges that in a period of change, commercial street frontages must also evolve during this period of change.

Actions: The Armagh Place Plan identifies specific structural interventions to guide the adaption process, which the Council utilises to manage commercial displays:

- Pilot a process to adapt the High Street
 - Make Market Street and the High Streets people centred
 - Ensure good city stewardship through streetscape guidance and collaboration on cleansing and maintenance
 - Digitally enhance Armagh City Identity
- **GREY SPACES-** The Armagh Place Plan identifies grey spaces as leftover spaces, overlooked and underused in the city which include backlands and brownfield sites, which can be targeted for large commercial advertising.

Actions: The Armagh Place Plan identifies the following key actions that will assist in unlocking the potential of grey spaces within Armagh City:

- Delivery of placemaking projects to enliven dead spaces, such as alleyways and backlands
- 'Empty to Occupied'- Occupation of empty buildings within the city centre to stimulate the economy and activate the street frontages, ensuring any short-term commercial fascias and window graphics etc maintain a high design standard.
- 'Engage the Space'- Use of vacant or derelict spaces to start public conversations and ideas for the city.

The Banbridge Place Plan (March 2024)

The Banbridge Place Plan is designed around 5 outcomes; Bridging Banbridge, Green Banbridge, Healthy Banbridge, Creative Banbridge, and Growing Banbridge. The plan identifies 56 actions to bring about positive change in Banbridge. These actions include physical and non-physical interventions which have been captured under the following themes:

- Arts, Heritage and Leisure- actions include pursuing heritage funding opportunities to restore and repair historic built fabric and find sustainable uses in the Areas of Townscape Character and the creation of a community theatre space for Banbridge.
- Green Innovation- actions include the implementation of smart street furniture, smart car parks and connectivity in public places and research into initiatives such

as zero waste, rewilding, tree planting, carbon neutral, sustainable travel, employment support and social value procurement.

- Spaces, Places and Natural Environment- actions include the development of new bridges and footpaths, enhancement of public amenities and improved public access to civic building grounds and green space.
- Living Here- includes actions such as the provision of new mixed tenure housing, enhancement of cycling infrastructure and the maintenance and improvement of existing play spaces.
- High Street and Investing- includes actions such as the creation of a digital innovation hub, investment in the public realm and adaption / reuse of vacant properties.

Whilst the Banbridge Place Plan is a non-statutory document, it acknowledges that it has the potential to set a framework of tangible projects and proposals for future development, to enable different stakeholders to work together to their mutual benefit and for the betterment of Banbridge.

Dromore Place Plan (May 2025)

The Dromore Place Plan outlines a strategic vision for the place and sets out five outcomes which are aimed at enhancing the quality of life for the residents, preserving the unique character of the area whilst stimulating economic growth.

The Vision for Dromore is 'A place with ambition and passion interwoven with a historic fabric, ready and committed for a new future'. It envisages Dromore as a thriving and prosperous place to live, it recognises that Dromore has the appetite and energy to develop in a way that meets the needs of the place and its people.

The Plan details four big ideas, and six thematic clusters comprising of thirty-seven suggested actions. These serve as a roadmap for the community planning partners, stakeholders, businesses and local community groups, designed to help with the shaping, transformation and development of Dromore into the future.

The Ideas that are relevant to outdoor advertisements are as follows:

1. Tackling vacancy and regeneration - The Place Plan identifies that the key to future development within Dromore hinges around unlocking the regeneration of derelict buildings and prominent vacant sites. The Big Idea recognises that it is vital that such buildings and spaces are brought back into positive use, creating social, economic and sustainable development opportunities. Relevant Actions within the Dromore Place Plan include the provision of additional integrated and inclusive community meeting spaces to support collaborative development, identify opportunities to repurpose, adapt and activate vacant properties and identify opportunities to revitalise and regenerate the town centres, including shop façade improvements, environmental improvements and capacity building to regenerate businesses.

4.0 Borough Profile – The Control of Outdoor Advertisements

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough comprises a diverse spatial structure framed by 3 Main Settlements (Armagh City, Banbridge Town and Craigavon Urban Area), alongside 6 small towns, 30 villages and 65 small settlements. Each area presents its own opportunities and challenges in relation to outdoor advertising. These pressures range from high-demand commercial signage and digital displays within retail parks and town centres, to heritage areas which are sensitive to such proposals, as well as addressing road safety concerns alongside transport routes. Therefore, it is key that a balanced approach is applied that protects these concerns whilst encouraging high-quality advertisement proposals.

Historic Environment Profile

Introduction

The Borough contains a rich built heritage profile that contributes significantly to the character, history and economic vitality of the Borough. The Historic Environment Record of Northern Ireland (HERoNI). The information held in HERoNI is stored in a number of formats, including books, databases, drawings, written records, maps, photographs, and digital records. This wide-ranging body of material has been grouped into a number of individual records, each focusing on a particular aspect of heritage.

With regards to built heritage and archaeological designations the Borough contains:

- 15 State Care Monuments
- 185 Scheduled Monuments
- 1292 Unscheduled Monuments
- 1 Areas of Significant Archaeological Interest (Navan)
- 21 Areas of Archaeological Potential (AAP)
- 1266 Listed Buildings
- 32 Registered Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes (1 Grade A*, 14 Grade A and 17 Grade B listed).
- 5 Conservation Areas
- 16 Areas of Townscape / Village Character (ATC / AVC)
- 101 Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs)

Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Character

Listed Buildings

Section 80 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires the Department of Communities to compile a list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, important for their value and contribution to the character and quality of settlements and the countryside. The listing and review process operates on a continuous basis.

As of December 2025, there were a total of 1266 listed buildings / structures within the Borough. This figure includes a total of 33no Grade A listed buildings - see full detail in **Environmental Assets Technical Supplement Appendix G**. Notable examples of Grade A listed buildings within the Borough include Brownlow House in Lurgan, Armagh (C of I) Cathedral, Armagh Observatory and Richhill Castle. The term 'building' is defined broadly and

can include, for example, walls and bridges as well as structures falling in the more usual understanding of the term. Protection also extends to the interior of listed buildings and to most buildings/structures within the curtilage of the listed structure.

Conservation Areas

The Planning Act (NI) 2011 (Section 104) provides the Council with the power to designate an area of special architectural or historic interest as a Conservation Area. Within the Borough there are 5 designated Conservation Areas.

Boundary maps for each conservation area are included in the Environmental Assets Technical Supplement Appendix I and townscape design advice is contained in the relevant designation booklets which are available on the website of the Department for Infrastructure at the following link <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/conservation-area-guides-z-list>

Below is a list of existing conservation areas, including the date each was designated by the former Department of Environment (DOE). Each of the related Design Guides were published at designation stage.

Armagh Conservation Area - Designated in July 1981, the conservation area includes the Cathedral Precinct, the commercial core of the city centred on Scotch Street, Market Street and Upper English Street, and The Mall together with Gaol Square, St Mark's Churchyard and College Hill.

Loughgall Conservation Area - Designated in February 1993, the conservation area covers the Loughgall Village and immediate landscape features defining its rural setting.

Richhill Conservation Area - Designated in February 1993, the conservation area includes The Square, Richhill Castle Grounds, Main Street and the surrounding historical streets.

Dromore Conservation Area - Designated in August 1992, the conservation area includes The Market Square, Dromore Cathedral and The Mound and is shaped by its location along the River Lagan.

Lurgan Conservation Area – Designated in June 2004, the conservation area includes primarily the commercial spine of the town centre.

Areas of Townscape or Village Character

Areas of Townscape or Village Character are designated by the Council through the local development plan with accompanying local policies for the control of development within these areas. There are currently sixteen Areas of Townscape Character (ATC) within Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. See full detail in the Environmental Assets Technical Supplement Appendix J

Outdoor Advertisement Planning Application Context

Between 1 April 2021 and 30 June 2026, a total of 160 applications for advertisement consent were received by the Council. As of 30th June 2026,, 141 of the 160 applications received have been determined (88.1%), with 107 approved (75.89% of decided applications), 7 refused (4.96% of decided applications), 25 invalid and 2 withdrawn (16.88% of total applications). These statistics indicate that the majority of advertisement consent applications were approved with refusals representing a minor proportion of the overall total.

However, as of 30th June 2026, a total of 92 of the 141 advertisement applications received were related to digital, LED or illuminated proposals, representing a 57.5% of all advertisement applications received. Of these, 78 have been determined (84.78%), with 64 granted (82.1%), 6 refused (7.7%) and 8 invalid/withdrawn (8.7%). Although digital, LED, and illuminated proposals accounted for just over half of all advertisement proposals, they represented a much higher proportion of refusals. Of the 7 total refusals, 6 were related to digital, LED and illuminated advertisements which equates to 85.7% of all refusals.

The Planning Statistics indicate that while digital, LED and illuminated proposals are now an increasingly significant feature of advertisement applications, they are more likely to raise planning concerns in relation to amenity, and public safety some of which have resulted in refusal of advertisement consent.²

² Data was extracted from the Council's Mastergovt system using key words including 'Digital', 'LED', and 'Illuminated' to capture all electronic, dynamic and artificially lit advertisement proposals.

5.0 Preferred Options Paper (POP)

The Council published its Preferred Options Paper (POP) in March 2018. The main purpose of the POP was to promote focused debate on key issues of strategic significance likely to influence the direction of future development within the Borough, so to inform the next stage in the LDP process, the Plan Strategy. This input would then inform the next stage of the LDP - the Stage 2 Plan Strategy.

The POP outlined the vision and strategic objectives of the Plan, along with 38 Key Issues and the possible options available to address them, including the Council's Preferred Option. These issues were drawn from the evidence base; from engagement with Elected Members and Section 75 Groups; and from both formal and informal consultation with statutory consultees. A preliminary review of operational planning policy was also undertaken to inform the POP, with a commitment to carry out a more detailed review ahead of the Plan Strategy.

The POP did not cover every issue, policy and proposal intended to be included in the LDP. Instead, it concentrated on the most significant planning matters identified through evidence gathering, stakeholder consultation, workshops with Elected Members, and the Community Plan process. One Key Issue, SOC 3, dealt with design and place-making, including outdoor advertisements.

During the 9-week public consultation period, the Council received 201 responses to the POP from statutory consultees, members of the public and other stakeholders. These submissions provided a wide range of feedback on the POP itself, its supporting documents, and the consultation process.

Key Issues

Key Issue SOC 3: Supporting good design and positive place making;

Key Issue ENV 1: Protecting, conserving and enhancing built heritage and archaeological assets.

Preferred Options

The preferred approach to SOC 3A recommended supporting good design and positive place-making in both development and advertisement proposals through criteria-based policy, with provision for additional design criteria and supporting guidance for certain identified areas of acknowledged importance/value or types of development where appropriate.

The preferred option sought to bring forward general policy for design and placemaking across the Borough for all types of development and advertisement, but allowing for additional criteria and supporting guidance for particular areas of acknowledged importance or that warrant an additional level of control or care in design terms, where appropriate, taking account of regional direction in the SPPS. The policy wording would tie in with the legislative requirements for Design and Access Statements, and the Council's approach to urban housing (Key Issue SOC 1) with regards to the requirements for concept statements and master plans (as currently set out in PPS 7).

The preferred approach to ENV 1 is in line with existing policy with regards to protecting, conserving and enhancing built heritage and archaeological assets within the Borough; and review existing areas / designations and identify new areas / designations as appropriate. The preferred approach ENV 1A also allows for a comprehensive review of all existing built heritage and archaeological areas / designations and provides an opportunity to identify new areas / designations. This approach is in line with the RDS, SPPS, PPS 6 (including its

Addendum) and PPS 23. The preferred approach also recognises that the regeneration of built heritage and archaeological assets can promote economic growth and vitality particularly in sectors such as tourism and plays a vital role in supporting good design and positive placemaking (Key Issue SOC 3).

This option would ensure that all existing built heritage and archaeological assets designated within the existing Area Plans would be retained and afforded appropriate protection, conservation and enhancement through LDP policies and proposals. These include LDP designations such as ATC's, LLPA's and ASAI's. Other non LDP designations such as Conservation Areas, HPG&D and Listed Buildings would also be given appropriate protection, conservation and enhancement.

Summary of POP Commitments in respect of SOC 3A

The POP detailed the following commitments in respect of SOC 3A '*Supporting good design and positive place making*' included:

- Advertisement proposals are included in the option wording, in addition to development proposals, to reflect the significant impact that advertisement proposals can have on the appearance and character of buildings and places, both positive and negative.
- The LDP will bring forward its own 'control of outdoor advertisements' policies, in line with regional direction in the SPPS and current policy in PPS 17, but it would be remiss to not include it within the consideration of a strategic 'design and place-making' policy.
- Taking care to ensure that all proposals will not detract from the place where advertising is to be displayed or its surroundings.
- Acknowledging the importance of preventing clutter, to adequately control signs involving illumination and to protect built heritage features such as listed buildings as well as designated areas from the potential adverse effects of advertising.
- Using General Design criteria in the general policy to ensure a high standard of design and layout is achieved in all development and advertisement proposals across the Borough. This will provide a clear and consistent framework that covers a broad range of design issues, including compatibility with local character and context, treatment of heritage and environmental assets, landscaping and residential amenity.

Summary of POP Commitments in respect of ENV 1A

The POP detailed the following commitments in respect of ENV 1A '*Protecting, conserving and enhancing built heritage and archaeological assets*' included:

The POP identified that the preferred approach for built heritage and archaeology (protecting, conserving and enhancing built heritage and archaeological assets) ENV 1A would ensure that all existing built heritage and archaeological assets designated within the Area Plans would be retained and afforded appropriate protection, conservation and enhancement through the LDP policies and proposals. These include LDP designations such as ATC's, LLPA's and ASAI's. Other non LDP designations such as Conservation Areas, HPG&D and Listed Buildings would also be given appropriate protection, conservation and enhancement. The preferred approach ENV 1A also allows for a comprehensive review of all existing built heritage and archaeological areas / designations and provides an opportunity to identify new areas / designations. This approach is in line with the RDS, SPPS, PPS 6 (including its Addendum) and PPS 23. The preferred approach also recognises that the regeneration of built heritage and archaeological assets can promote economic growth and vitality particularly in sectors such as tourism and plays a vital role in supporting good design and positive placemaking (Key Issue SOC 3).

POP Representations

SOC 3 ‘Supporting good design and positive place making’

Of the total 201 responses received in respect of the POP, 37 made reference to Key Issue SOC 3. 84% of these responses were categorised as being generally supportive of the preferred approach, 8% were considered to be non-committal (or unclear), and 8% were categorised as unsupportive. Of the 37 responses making reference to SOC 3, only 14% made specific reference to Advertisements (with 80% being supportive and 20% non-committal).

Detail on responses –

- Regarding advertisements, one respondent highlighted the importance of recognising their impact on state care monuments, scheduled monuments, in addition to listed buildings.
- One respondent queried whether the advertising element needs to reflect the legislative requirement to protect special roads as deemed in Article 21 of the Roads (NI) Order 1993. They suggested consideration should be given to the nature of roads (speed, volume and geometrical factors) that may prejudice road safety in the placing of advertising. The noted distraction cannot be measured but suggested there may be formula which could be applied to determine when a location or certain road may be considered unsuitable for an advertisement - providing specific conditions in relation to signs and LED Advertising Screens as assistance to inform the LDP.

ENV 1 ‘Protecting, conserving and enhancing built heritage and archaeological assets’

Of the total 201 responses received in respect of the POP, 29 of which made reference to Key Issue ENV 1. There was significant support for the preferred approach, with 21no (72%) of the responses categorised as being generally supportive, 7no (24%) of the responses categorised as unsupportive and the remaining 1no (4%) considered to be non-committal or unclear.

Although 21nos (72%) of representations were in support of the preferred option many representations did raise issues including:

- the Council should gather maintain and review a ‘Local List’ of buildings;
- a more thorough assessment of the information was needed;
- there is a lack of protective designations in some areas;
- Conservation Areas should be considered as part of the LDP process;
- policies on ASAI’s should be site specific;
- local policies or proposals to safeguard Navan and it’s setting should be brought forward given it’s Royal Sites of Ireland bid for World Heritage status;
- policy protection for non-designated heritage assets is required as well as creation of a ‘Local Heritage List’;
- there should be design guidance for all Conservation Areas and ATCs;
- a precautionary approach should be applied in the most sensitive areas;
- protecting heritage assets maintains character and can attract tourism and promote a sense of place;
- there is potential to include a new ATC / AVC policy to limit the weight given to precedent as a material consideration in such areas and finally historic environment data sets from HED need to be updated.

Of the 7 representations (24%) which were unsupportive of the preferred option reference was made to the following:

- a more thorough assessment of the information was needed;
- community consultation was essential;
- a re-examination of stewardship of the historic environment with the community should be undertaken;
- consultation should be well advertised and accessible to all including the elderly and finally ideas expressed in POP are insufficiently specific to allow meaningful consultation.

One representation (4%) was non-committal. This representation suggested former industrial premises could be sympathetically restored to provide new office or workspace provision.

Consideration of Preferred Options

Having considered the representations received during consultation, including those from statutory consultees, the Council has sought to bring forward an approach that is broadly consistent with the POP preferred option. However, where the draft policy approach is not fully in accordance with the POP, this reflects the need to take account of all relevant and up to date regional policy direction, the most recent evidence base, consultee engagement and the requirement to ensure that the draft Plan Strategy is robust, effective and sound.

For further detail on the POP responses, and the Council's consideration, refer to the POP Public Consultation Report, available on the Councils website:

www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

6.0 Stakeholder Engagement

Internal stakeholders

Planning Officers in Development Management/Enforcement Sections

Consultation was carried out with officers within Development Management and Enforcement Sections in the Council's Planning Department as part of the policy review process to establish any difficulties they experienced in the application of existing planning policies and to provide an opportunity to critique the draft policies. Officers' views were taken into account when finalising the draft policies prior to being presented at Council Members Workshops.

Officers were supportive of the proposed Outdoor Advertisements policy, including the new assessment in relation to digital display advertising screens.

Other Council Departments

Engagement has taken place with a number of Council Departments during the LDP process to date, to ensure that proper account has been taken of the Council's Community Plan as well as other relevant Council strategies, plans, publications and initiatives.

A meeting took place with the Project Management Team. The PMT comprised officers across a range of Council Departments, including Community Plan, Tourism, Economic Development, Environmental Health and Environmental Services.

Elected Members

Section 8 (7a) of Part 2 (Local Development Plans) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires the Plan Strategy to be adopted by resolution of the Council. As such, Elected Members have been engaged throughout the LDP process, including during the preparation of the draft dPS policies.

Engagement with the Elected Members has been facilitated through a series of workshops held between 2019 and 2026, at which there was support for the draft policy wording.

External Stakeholders

Government Departments/Statutory Consultees

Section 8 (5) of Part 2 (Local Development Plans) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires the Plan Strategy to take account of the RDS, any policy or guidance issued by the Department and such other matters as the Department may prescribe or direct, and may have regard to such other information and considerations as appear to be relevant. This includes other relevant government strategies and plans. The Council has engaged with Government Departments/Agencies in the preparation of the draft Plan Strategy policy for The Control of Outdoor Advertisements (DES 5).

Pre-Strategy Informal Consultation with Statutory Consultees: An informal consultation process was also carried with Government Departments/Agencies on the draft Control of Outdoor Advertisements policy ('Batch 2') on 13 May 2025.

A number comments were received to this consultation, which helped inform the finalising of the draft policy approach and the wording of the operational policies. The comments were

overall largely supportive but raised a number of issues that lead to minor adjustments to policy and J&A wording.

Cross Boundary Context and Consideration of Neighbouring Council Approaches

In developing the draft planning policy for The Control of Outdoor Advertisements, consideration has also been given to the approaches of adjoining Councils.

The Borough adjoins the boundary of five neighbouring Council areas, 4 of which are in Northern Ireland and one of which is in the Republic of Ireland:

- Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (ANBC), due to a shared boundary within Lough Neagh;
- Newry Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC);
- Mid Ulster District Council (MUDC);
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC); and
- Monaghan County Council, in the Republic of Ireland.

The Preferred Options Papers (POPs), supporting evidence base, draft Plan Strategies (where published) and adopted Plan Strategies of adjoining Councils have been taken account of, in addition to regional guidance, in order to identify any cross-boundary issues / conflicts.

Table 1, below, outlines the position of neighbouring councils in relation to outdoor advertisements.

Table 1: Adjoining Councils Position – Outdoor Advertisements

Neighbouring Council	Position
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (ANBC)	On 3 July 2025 the Council adopted its LDP 2030 - Plan Strategy. DfI issued the Council with a Direction on 28 October 2025 instructing the Council to make changes to its adopted Plan Strategy in relation to the Abbey Centre. An Independent Examination was conducted by the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) in May and June 2022. Policy DM 29 ‘Advertisements’ states: DM 29.1 The Council will support proposals for consent to display advertisements on land or buildings to which it relates, provided the proposal: a) Does not detract from the visual amenity of the area in which it is sited; b) Respects the scale, proportion and architectural features of any building to which it is attached; c) Is sympathetic to its location in terms of the style of sign and finishes to be used; d) Avoids visual clutter, in particular the number of signs proposed should not materially alter the appearance of the building or detract from the amenity of the area; and e) Does not prejudice public safety. DM 29.2 An advertisement proposed to be attached to, or within the curtilage of, a Listed Building should be carefully designed and located, and special regard must be paid to the

	desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Advertisements in Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Character should not have an adverse effect on the specific character, appearance and setting of the area. DM 29.3 In considering proposals for advertisements, the Council will take account of the guidance set out in Annex A of PPS 17: Control of Outdoor Advertisements, until such times as it publishes its own guidance.
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council	Newry Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC) published its Local Development Plan 2035 draft Plan Strategy in June 2025. The consultation period was carried out over a twelve-week period, from Friday 27 June 2025 to Monday 22 September 2025 Policy AD1 ‘Outdoor Advertisements’ states: Consent will be given for the display of an advertisement where: a) It respects amenity, when assessed in the context of the general characteristics of the locality; and b) It does not prejudice public safety, including road safety. Guidance set out in the LDP Supplementary Planning Guidance for different categories of outdoor advertisement will be taken into account in assessing proposals. Where advertisements are proposed on a Listed Building or within a Conservation Area or Area of Townscape Character, they must comply with Policy HE8 and HE12 respectively. Policy HE8 ‘Advertisements on a Listed Building’ states: The Council will normally only grant consent for advertisements or signs on a listed building where these are carefully designed and located to respect the architectural form and detailing of the building. Proposals should also meet the requirements of Policy AD1 Outdoor Advertisements. Policy HE12 ‘Advertisements in a Conservation Area or Area of Townscape Character’ states: In a Conservation Area the Council will normally only grant consent for the display of advertisements in, or close to, a Conservation Area which would not adversely affect the overall character, appearance or setting of the area. In an Area of Townscape Character, the Council will normally only grant consent for the display of an advertisement where the overall character and appearance of the area will be maintained. All proposals should also meet the requirements of Policy AD1 Outdoor Advertisements.

Mid Ulster District Council	Mid Ulster District Council (MUDC) published its Local Development Plan 2030 Draft Plan Strategy on 22nd February 2019, following a re-consultation period that closed on 24th September 2020. The draft Plan Strategy was submitted to the Department for Infrastructure on 28th May 2021. ‘Policy GP1 - General Principles Planning Policy’ includes policy on advertisements as follows: Planning permission will be granted for sustainable development where the proposal accords with the Plan and there is no demonstrable harm in relation to the following: (d) Advertisement Proposals for advertisement, or which are likely to include advertisement, will be required to demonstrate they have no significant impact on amenity or public safety. ‘Policy HE 11 - Advertisement on a Listed Building or Structure’ states: Proposals which preserve the retention, reuse and repair of authentic historic fabric associated with an original advertisement, signage or shopfront will accord with the Plan. Proposals for the display of an advertisement or signage on any listed building or structure or within its setting will only accord with the Plan where: • It is sensitively designed and positioned to respect and enhance the special architectural form, style, features and detailing of the Listed Building or structure; • protects and conserves the character and appearance of the listed building or structure and its setting; and, • It does not prejudice public safety. ‘Policy HE 12 – Designated Conservation Areas and their Historic Settings’ states: Advertisement and Signage Consent for the display of advertisements in or close to a Conservation Area will only accord with the Plan where they preserve or enhance the overall historic character and appearance of the conservation area and its historic setting. ‘Policy HE 14 – Areas of Townscape / Village Character’ states: Advertisement and Signage Consent for the display of an advertisement in an ATC / AVC should only be granted where the overall character and appearance of the identified area will be maintained. Appendix 2 outlines ‘Guidance for Advertisements’.
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC)	On 26 September 2023 the Council adopted its LDP 2032 Plan Strategy.

	An Independent Examination was conducted by the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) during March to May 2022. DfI issued a Direction on 28 June 2023 directing the Council to adopt the dPS with the modifications specified in the Direction. Policy ‘AD1 Amenity and Public Safety’ states: Consent will be granted for the display of an advertisement where: a) it respects amenity, when assessed in the context of the general characteristics of the locality b) it does not prejudice public safety. Policy ‘HE7 Control of Advertisements on a Listed Building’ states: The Council will grant the consents necessary for advertisements or signs on a listed building only where these are carefully designed and located to respect the architectural form and detailing of the building, amenity of the locality and which are not detrimental to public safety. Policy ‘HE11 The Control of Advertisements in a Conservation Area or Area of Townscape Character/Area of Village Character’ states: In a Conservation Area the Council will only grant consent for the display of advertisements in or close to a Conservation Area where they would not adversely affect the overall character, appearance or setting of the area. In Areas of Townscape Character (ATC) or Areas of Village Character (AVC) consent for the display of an advertisement should only be granted where the overall character and appearance of the area will be maintained. All proposals must also meet the requirements of operational policy AD1 Amenity and Public Safety. Supplementary Planning Guidance, Part F: Guidance for Outdoor Advertisements sets out the different categories of outdoor advertisement considered by this policy.
Monaghan County Council (Republic of Ireland)	Monaghan County Council adopted its County Development Plan 2025 - 2031 on 26 May 2025. The Plan provides a comprehensive framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of the county over a six-year period, that aligns with national and regional planning policies, including the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region. It contains policies that relate to Shopfronts (SFP1) and advertisement structures and displays (ASDP1). The overall aim is well maintained shopfronts adding character to the

	streets and appropriate advertising in terms of the building, settlement or setting in which they are located to enhance visual amenity and protect public safety and traffic safety. Policy SFP1 states proposals for shopfronts shall comply with Section 15.4 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031 which lists the following: • <i>Fascia integration</i>: Be contained within the fascia and not above ground floor or across pillars or columns • <i>Illumination Limits</i>: Internal illumination shall be resisted with backlighting individual letters preferred over spotlighting or disguised minimal strip lighting. • <i>Design and Scale</i>: Signage scale, height and projection must compatible and sympathetic to host buildings and surrounding streetscape. • <i>Heritage</i>: Include lettering which is either hand painted on the fascia or consist of individually mounted solid letters mounted on the fascia, with materials and colours appropriate to the streetscape and encourage the use of Irish Language. Policy ASDP 1 states proposals for advertisement structures and displays shall comply with Section 15.5 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031 which lists the following areas of control: • <i>Location & Integration</i>: Be located on the same site to which the advertisement relates to or in close proximity to that site, respecting size, scale design and materials of the host building without causing visual clutter • <i>Heritage & Amenity</i>: Restrict displays impacting the general characteristics of the area including any special features of historic, archaeological, architectural, landscape, cultural or special interest • <i>Public & Road Safety</i>: Not be permitted at roundabouts, signalised junctions that obstruct driver sightlines, distract traffic or impede pedestrian footpaths and safety. • <i>Temporary Hoarding Controls</i>: Only be permitted on a temporary basis for advertising hoarding, where they are replacing an authorised sign of similar type, such as billboards, tri-vision and three-dimensional signs, or where they are utilised to screen a building site. <i>Local Identity</i>: Be resisted along the road network particularly on approaches to towns and villages.
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The Council has responded to neighbouring Council Preferred Option Papers and draft Plan Strategies, as they have been published, as well as to the Monaghan County Council Draft Plan 2025-2031 Consultation.

Although there are differences between our Council's policy approach to outdoor advertisements as set out in the Draft Plan Strategy, with that of neighbouring Councils, the Council considers that there are no significant conflicts with the draft Plan Strategy for Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

The Council will continue to engage with neighbouring Councils after publication of the Draft Plan Strategy and throughout the preparation of the LDP.

7.0 Draft Plan Strategy Policy Approach

Policy Evolution- Draft Policy DES 5

The Draft Plan Strategy brings forward operational policy DES 5 (The Control of Outdoor Advertisements), replacing and updating the regional policy framework previously set out under PPS 17 'Control of Outdoor Advertisements'. Draft Policy DES 5 has been designed to reflect technological shifts through these core changes.

Policy DES 5 consolidates existing provisions set out in PPS 17, PPS 6 and PPS 3, bringing policy considerations regarding outdoor advertisements in Areas of Townscape Character (ATCs) and Conservation Areas (CAs) under a single policy consideration.

The policy has been tailored to digital display screen advertisements, including LED displays and interactive digital street hubs. This reflects the technological shifts which have occurred since PPS 17 was published in 2006, ensuring modern proposals are managed in way without causing visual clutter or compromising public safety.

As analysed above, the Council's draft Outdoor Advertisement policy and relevant draft policy provisions within the suite of General Policies and Design and Placemaking Policies have evolved from a review of extant regional planning policies, other key policy and guidance documents, the POP, responses to the POP and a series of engagements with key stakeholders, including the following:

- Key statutory consultees.
- Elected Members of the Council.
- Officers from the Development Management section of the planning department; and
- Officers from other relevant departments of the Council.

In preparing the draft policy, the Council has taken account of a range of relevant matters, including the following:

- The RDS (in particular policies, RG2, RG7, RG11 and Spatial Framework Guidance SFG 15) and SPPS (in particular paragraphs 6.14, 6.20, 6.23, 6.52-6.60).
- PPS 17 'Control of Outdoor Advertisements'; PPS 6 'Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage' and the Addendum to PPS 6 'Areas of Townscape Character' and policies AD1 'Amenity and Public Safety' (PPS 17) and BH 9 'The Control of Advertisements on a Listed Building', BH 13 'The Control of Advertisements in a Conservation Area' and ATC 3 'The Control of Advertisements in an Area of Townscape Character' of PPS 6, along with extant development plans within Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough.
- Policy approach contained within PPS 17 and the SPPS has been continued withing the dPS, with an update on the consideration of the effect of digital display screen advertisements so they are not detrimental to amenity and public safety. The design guidance with Annex A of PPS 17 has been updated and included in Appendix 4 of the dPS.
- The Council's Community Plan (especially in terms of the Plan's long-term outcome: 'our distinctive, inclusive and vibrant urban and rural areas are at the heart of community and economic life' - see page 24 & 25), ongoing council initiatives and the neighbouring council context.

- The adopted /draft Plan Strategies of neighbouring councils – the draft policies are not considered to conflict with any of those.

In preparing the draft Plan Strategy (dPS), a range of general planning considerations, including design, integration and amenity, are now incorporated into the General Policies or Design and Place-making Policies of the draft Plan Strategy*. This approach consolidates and streamlines requirements that were previously repeated across multiple Planning Policy Statements and subject policy areas within the Strategic Planning Policy Statement. It improves the structure, clarity and usability of the Plan while maintaining the existing policy objectives and regional policy direction.

*Exceptions to the General Policies and Design and Place-making Policies are set out in the dPS.

The draft policies have been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), the findings of which are set out in the accompanying SA Environmental Report.

In conclusion, the draft policies are founded on a robust evidence base which includes baseline information contained in this Technical Supplement, the POP, responses to the POP and subsequent engagement with consultees.

8.0 Soundness

The LDP has been prepared in accordance with the tests of soundness set out in DfI's Development Plan Practice Note 6: *Soundness* (Version 2, May 2017). The draft Plan Strategy insofar as it relates to The Control of Outdoor Advertisements policy approach is considered to be sound, as it satisfies the relevant tests of soundness, as summarised in **Table 2** below.

The policy approach to outdoor advertisements is contained in Policy DES 5 (The Control of Outdoor Advertisements).

Table 2: Consideration of Soundness

Procedural Tests	
P2	Policy DES 5 has evolved from the POP and has taken account of POP representations (See Pages 22-25) and further consideration within the POP Consultation Report.
P3	Policy DES 5 has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal, including a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Further details are included in the Sustainability Appraisal Report.
Consistency Tests	
C1	Policy DES 5 has taken account of the RDS and in particular Regional Guidance RG2, RG7 and RG11, and Spatial Framework Guidance SFG15. See Pages 6-7.
C2	Policy DES 5 has taken account of the Council's Community Plan, particularly in terms of the long-term outcome of a 'Revitalised Place', which acknowledges that our distinctive, inclusive and vibrant urban and rural places are at the heart of community and economic life. See Page 13.
C3	Policy DES 5 has taken account of regional direction in the SPPS, in particular Paragraphs 6.14, 6.20, 6.23, 6.52-6.60, and current Planning Policy Statement 17 (PPS 17) 'Control of Outdoor Advertisements'. Regard has also been had to other Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) applicable to outdoor advertisement proposals, including PPS 6 'Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage', PPS 6 (Addendum) 'Areas of Townscape Character', PPS 3 'Access Movement and Parking' and PPS 3 Clarification relating to Protected Routes.
C4	Policy DES 5 has had regard to relevant plans, strategies, other publications, and initiatives relating to the Borough, including the existing development plans within Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. The policy approach has also had regard to the neighbouring council context, including in the Republic of Ireland.
Coherence and Effectiveness Tests	
CE1	Policy DES 5 has taken account of the emerging LDPs of our neighbouring Councils in Northern Ireland and our neighbouring council in the Republic of Ireland (Monaghan County Council) and it is not considered to be in conflict with these.
CE2	Policy DES 5 is founded on a robust evidence base which includes the information contained in this Technical Supplement, the POP and responses to it and subsequent consultation with consultees and key stakeholders. The policy approach is deemed to be realistic and appropriate to local circumstances.

CE3	There are no monitoring indicators in relation to outdoor advertisements. The need for monitoring can be reviewed at Plan Review stage.
CE4	Policy DES 5 will be reviewed at Plan Review stage. Local Policies Plan stage will also provide an opportunity to review existing and introduce new local policies, provided this is underpinned by robust evidence base and is consistent with the adopted Plan Strategy.

INTERESTED IN DEVELOPMENT

in the Armagh City,
Banbridge and
Craigavon Borough

Please contact

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