

Armagh City, Banbridge &
Craigavon Borough Council

Local Development Plan 2035

Draft Plan Strategy

TECHNICAL SUPPLEMENT 14

Telecommunications, Utilities and Infrastructure

September 2026



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Armagh City
Banbridge
& Craigavon
Borough Council

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1.0 Introduction

Purpose of this document

This Technical Supplement brings together the evidence base that has informed the preparation of the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon 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 planning policies proposed within it.

This Technical Supplement includes key updates relating to telecommunications, energy, water supply and sewerage treatment in the Borough, which have emerged since the publication of the Council's original evidence base Preparatory Paper. These papers provided the baseline information that formed part of the evidence base for the Council's Preferred Options Paper (POP). 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 also seeks to provide an update on the Council's progress in its approach towards and the development of associated planning policies, since the publication of the POP.

In order to reflect the broad range of matters that were taken into account in the development of the Council's approach towards public utilities (telecommunications, energy supply, water and sewerage treatment) and the formulation of associated dPS planning policies this Technical Supplement has been organised into the following sections:

- **Sections 2 & 3** provide a summary of the Legislative, Regional and Local Policy Context that is relevant to the LDP, with particular emphasis on this topic area;
- **Section 4** provides an overview of the telecommunications, energy, water supply and Sewerage Infrastructure profile of the Borough;
- **Section 5** outlines the relevant Key Issue and Preferred Approach as detailed in the POP, alongside a summary of POP Commitments and a brief summary of some 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 policy review, and the ongoing consultation and engagement that has been carried out in preparation of the dPS policies. Furthermore, it also details the approach of neighbouring councils to public utilities (telecommunications, energy, water supply and sewerage treatment), briefly outlining their position, followed by a brief consideration of any potential conflict.
- **Section 7** summarises how the dPS policies for telecommunications, utilities and other infrastructure have been developed. It provides a rationale where amendments have been made to the existing planning policies to take account of regional direction, POP feedback, consultation and engagement, where it has been considered necessary and appropriate to do so.
- **Section 8** sets out how the dPS policies for telecommunications, utilities and other infrastructure have 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).

The information and data presented in this Technical Supplement has been derived from a number of different sources however, where possible, the most recent datasets available have been utilised.

It is important to note that this evidence has been collated at specific point in time and therefore it may be necessary for the Council to review and update it as the plan is progressed. The Council will continue to work with key stakeholders to ensure that telecommunications, energy, water supply and sewerage treatment in the Borough are managed in an appropriate and sustainable manner throughout and beyond the plan period of 2035.

Public Utilities- Telecommunications, Energy, Water Supply and Sewerage Treatment

The provision of modern and reliable public utilities infrastructure- including Telecommunications, Energy Supply, Water and Sewerage Treatment infrastructure- is essential for supporting all aspects of contemporary life and is integral to the sustainable growth of our Borough. Not only is it critical to the quality of life of our citizens, but it is also necessary for creating and maintaining networks and connectivity to support development and encourage investment in our Borough.

The provision of utilities infrastructure is primarily the responsibility of a number of Government Departments and Statutory bodies such as NI Water however more recently; the private sector is playing a greater role in their provision.

The LDP has an important role in facilitating our utilities infrastructure so that it is efficient and resilient and also capable of accommodating current and future demand, but not to the detriment of our environment or amenity.

Telecommunications (broadband and mobile services)

Telecommunication enables the exchange of information and as such is an essential component of everyday life, whether working, living or visiting the Borough. Therefore, it is essential that the Borough maintains and improves upon its existing telecommunication infrastructure to allow all its citizens to stay connected on a local, regional and global scale.

Telecoms is a reserved matter under the remit of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the UK Government, with Westminster Parliament being responsible for setting the overall policy and regulatory framework. The Office of Communications (Ofcom), as the UK's independent regulatory authority, is responsible for implementing the framework, and for making regulatory decisions under its statutory duties.

Whilst the development of high-quality telecommunication infrastructure is essential for continued economic growth it is necessary that the impact on the environment is minimised and appropriately mitigated, where necessary.

Energy

Our power lines, overhead cables and their associated structures provide our Borough with essential power to allow the day to day running of our homes and businesses. The provision of resilient and efficient electricity provision is therefore essential for growth of our economy and is vital for attracting investment.

Gas Natural gas is an efficient, clean and reliable source of energy for which there is growing demand. The availability of this energy source assists in delivering a more diverse and secure energy supply for our Borough.

The Northern Ireland Energy Strategy (2021) established a renewable electricity consumption target of 70% by 2030 which was then increased to 80% by 2030 by the Climate Change (Northern Ireland) Act 2022. The key updates and policy approach in respect of renewable energy development is detailed in Technical Supplement 16 'Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development'.

Water Supply and Sewerage Treatment

The provision and ongoing maintenance of adequate and reliable water and sewerage infrastructure and treatment facilities is essential for our health and wellbeing, quality of life, protection of our environment and also our economy, by facilitating growth and new development.

In considering the Borough's allocations over the plan period (2015-2035) it will be important to consider the capacity of the existing sewage network. In this regard, the LDP will be informed through consultation with NI Water, in order to determine locations where new / upgraded Wastewater Treatment Works may be needed and ensure that there is adequate provision and / or capacity to facilitate sustainable growth.

2.0 Legislative Context

The key pieces of legislation relating to this subject area include the following:

Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999

DAERA NIEA's Water Management Unit (WMU) under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, has a duty to promote the conservation of the water resources of Northern Ireland and the cleanliness of the water in waterways and underground. In doing this, the NIEA must take into account the needs of industry and agriculture, the protection of fisheries, the protection of public health, the preservation of amenities, and the conservation of flora and fauna.

The WMU protects the aquatic environment within the Borough through a number of activities including:

- Monitoring water quality;
- Preparing water quality management plans;
- Controlling effluent discharges;
- Taking action to combat or minimise the effects of pollution;
- Supporting environmental research; and
- Co-ordinating the updating of river basin management plans with partners.

UK Climate Change Act 2008

The UK Government passed the Climate Change Act in 2008. This Act sets ambitious targets beyond those agreed by Europe in setting legally binding targets to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2050, from 1990 levels.

The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019

In 2019 the UK Government, in response to the climate change emergency, revised its commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 80% (from 1990 levels) by 2050, to a target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

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.

Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 introduced a statutory link between Community Plan and the Council's LDP, and requests that the preparation of the LDP must take account of the Community Plan.

Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015

This Order clarifies that there are certain permitted development rights where planning permission is not required. This covers development by statutory and other undertakers (Part

14), development by electronic communications code operators (Part 18) and development required under the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 (Part 21).

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

The Planning (Local Development Plan) 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 and independent examination.

The Water and Sewerage Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

The Water and Sewerage Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 received Royal Assent and came into operation on 23 March 2016. Section 4 of the Act extends the powers of NI Water to adopt sustainable drainage systems and to require the construction of SuDS, with Section 5 introducing restrictions on the right to connect new surface water sewers to the public network. Sections 4, 5 and 6 of the Act came into operation two months later, to facilitate the issue of information and guidance to stakeholders, in particular, developers.

The Digital Economy Act 2017

The UK's digital economy is growing fast, and digital technology is transforming every sector and all aspects of our lives. The Digital Economy Act includes a range of measures to ensure that the UK will remain ahead and be a world leader in the digital economy.

Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020

In December 2020, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) introduced new permitted development legislation that would make the upgrade and extension of mobile phone masts in Northern Ireland easier.

Under Part 18 of the Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020, 'Development by Electronic Communications Code Operators', masts can be made taller and wider than previous limits, without the need to apply for planning permission. This reform of permitted development rights will be essential in assisting the industry's mobile network operators rollout of world-class mobile networks across the province. It is anticipated that this new legislation will allow additional apparatus, including more and larger antennas to be deployed on existing infrastructure, making upgrades simpler and encouraging the sharing of masts between operators.

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (the Act) sets a target of an at least 100% reduction in net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 (i.e., net zero emissions) for Northern Ireland compared to baseline, along with interim targets including an at least 48% reduction in net emissions by 2030.

The Act also requires various NI Departments to produce and publish sectoral plans. This includes a requirement for the Department for the Economy to develop and publish sectoral plans for the energy sector setting out how the sector will contribute to the achievement of the 2030, 2040 and 2050 emissions reduction targets (as set out in sections 1, 3 and 4 of the Act). The Act also requires that the Sectoral plans for energy must include proposals and policies for energy production and the supply of private and public heating and cooling systems (as set out in section 14 of the Act). In relation to renewable electricity consumption the Act requires that The Department for the Economy must ensure that at least 80% of electricity consumption is from renewable sources by 2030 (as set out in Section 15 of the Act).

Water, Sustainable Drainage and Flood Management Bill

The main pieces of legislation governing water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland are the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and Water and Sewerage Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2016. The main piece of legislation used by the Department in relation to drainage schemes, the maintenance of watercourses and sea defences is The Drainage (Northern Ireland) Order 1973.

The Water, Sustainable Drainage and Flood Management Bill was introduced on Monday 23rd June 2025, following a 12-week public consultation 2022. The Bill seeks to provide NI Water with additional powers, rectify loopholes and strengthen existing powers in respect of water, flooding and drainage. It is in recognition of new climate change challenges relating to how water is managed, used and treated, and the potential risks to homes, businesses, safety and health due to extreme weather conditions. As such, the Bill provides improvements in processes for NI Water, and for new and improved ways to reduce and mitigate flood risk. Areas within the Water, Sustainable Drainage and Flood Management Bill include¹:

- Powers for NI Water to implement wider water shortage measures within the context of a temporary use ban.
- Provision of an enabling power for the Department to introduce arrangements to establish the use of sustainable drainage systems as the preferred drainage solution in new developments.
- Powers for the Department to provide grants in relation to measures to protect domestic buildings against flooding.
- Powers for the Department to make regulations with regards to flood risk management and regulations about the assessment of the environmental impact of drainage works.

Two sets of regulations may be replaced or revoked in future using powers in the Bill, if required: the Drainage (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 and the Water Environment (Floods Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 which the Department can no longer update, amend or revoke since the UK exited the EU. The Bill will also amend Schedule 11 to the Land Registration Act (Northern Ireland) 1970.

¹ Source: [water-sustainable-drainage-and-flood-management-bill-efm---as-introduced---fpv.pdf](#)

3.0 Policy Context

Regional Policy Context

The key pieces of regional policy relating to this subject area include the following:

Programme for Government (PfG) 2024-2027 ‘Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most’ (2025, Northern Ireland Executive)

The PfG ‘Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most’ outlines the NI Executives priorities for making a real difference to the lives of everyone living and working in Northern Ireland. It sets out the following three long term Missions, underpinned by a cross-cutting commitment to Peace, through which improved wellbeing, long term sustainability, and a thriving economy will be delivered.

People: Working to support everyone at all stages of their life to ensure they have the chance to succeed by improving life opportunities.

Planet: Harnessing the potential of a green growth economy while ensuring we provide an equitable transition to a sustainable and affordable society as we take responsibility for decarbonising our economy and society.

Prosperity: Improving our economic productivity while making sure that we have an economy that works for everyone, and our story continues to be an inspiration to others.

The nine cross-cutting priorities aimed at delivering the PfG missions are as follows:

- Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy
- Deliver More Affordable, Accessible, High-Quality Early Learning and Childcare
- Cut Health Waiting Times
- Ending Violence Against Women and Girls
- Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs
- Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing
- Safer Communities
- Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment
- Reform and Transformation of Public Services

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.

With specific regards to this topic, the PfG acknowledges that improvements to infrastructure, including water and wastewater, roads and transport infrastructure, will be vital for the priorities to be delivered and will encourage businesses to invest, enable house building, and support greater energy efficiency and affordability.

One of the key challenges identified in ‘growing a globally competitive and sustainable economy’ is decarbonisation. The PfG seeks to achieve self-sufficiency in Northern Ireland’s clean and affordable energy. It acknowledges that Northern Ireland has the natural resources including wind, biomethane, and geothermal to meet our own energy needs and become a net exporter of renewables, not only reducing carbon emissions, but also unlocking the economy. It highlights that the Green Growth Strategy will provide a framework for enabling

the transition to a greener, sustainable future based on a low carbon, nature positive environment reaping the advantages of good green jobs and the health and wellbeing benefits of an improved environment. The PfG also commits to publishing a Circular Economy Strategy which will have three key principles of designing out waste, keeping products in circulation at their highest value for as long as possible and regenerating natural systems.

The PfG commits to developing a Climate Action Plan, that will detail cross-cutting steps to reduce carbon emissions across many sectors including energy, transport, agriculture, land use, land use change and forestry, buildings, waste and fisheries.

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035 provides an overarching strategic planning framework to facilitate and guide the public and private sectors.

Telecommunications

In respect of telecommunications, the RDS seeks a balanced approach to telecommunication infrastructure that will give a competitive edge (RG3), acknowledging that due to the nature of the fast-moving market it is important to continually improve international and internal connectivity.

The RDS also recognises in its Spatial Framework Guidance (SFG) that rural areas can be disadvantaged by their remote location and it is essential that they have access to services and important information technologies (SFG14).

The key policy aims of the RDS 2035 regarding telecommunications are to:

- Invest in infrastructure to facilitate higher broadband speeds, whilst also considering the impact such infrastructure may have on the environment.
- Increase the use of broadband.
- Improve telecommunications services in rural areas to minimise rural / urban imbalance.
- Utilise existing connectivity with North America and mainland Europe in order to further aid foreign and direct investment.

Energy Supply

Regional Guidance 5 (RG5) - 'Deliver a sustainable and secure energy supply' promotes the contribution that renewable energy can make to the overall energy mix. It outlines the requirement for a significant increase in all types of renewable electricity installations and renewable heat installations to meet the region's energy needs, including a wide range of onshore and offshore renewable resources for electricity generation. It also encourages the provision of new gas infrastructure alongside gas storage which would contribute positively to the security and reliability of future supply. RG5 highlights the need to strengthen the grid, together with a necessity to integrate heat and electricity infrastructure alongside new road infrastructure development. RG5 also recognises that new generation or distribution infrastructure must be carefully planned and assessed to avoid adverse environmental effects, particularly on or near protected sites.

Water and Sewerage

Policy RG12 of the RDS 2035 promotes a more sustainable approach to provision of water and sewerage services and flood risk management. It advises that increased population,

changes in household formation and climate change are putting pressure on our water resources and drainage systems. Therefore, the planning for the provision of water and sewage infrastructure and treatment facilities is both a practical and environmental necessity for regional development. It suggests that land use planning should be informed by current water and sewerage infrastructure and future investment programmes. RG12 directs that future water demand should be managed to reduce water consumption, with consideration given to the inclusion in developments of measures such as grey water recycling and rainwater harvesting.

In addition to this Regional Guidance, the RDS also outlines the importance of public utilities within the Housing Evaluation Framework. The resource test states that when assessing land to be zoned for housing, consideration must be given to the water, sewerage and waste infrastructure of an area to ensure that it is adequate to support the provision of future housing.

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

The Strategic Planning Policy Statement, Edition 2 (SPPS) was published in December 2025 following the conclusion of a focused review of the former SPPS (2015) on the subject of renewable and low carbon energy. Whilst the revised SPPS sets out new policy provisions for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy all other policy provisions, including those relating to telecommunications, utilities and other infrastructure, within the former SPPS, are unchanged.

Telecommunications

The SPPS acknowledges that the provision of a modern telecommunications network is an essential and beneficial element of everyday living and is vital for sustainable economic growth. As such the aim of the SPPS in regard to telecommunications and other utilities is to facilitate the development of infrastructure in an efficient and effective manner whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. The SPPS acknowledges that planning has an important role in addressing existing or potential barriers to sustainable development, including the growth capacity of our water and sewerage infrastructure.

The Regional Strategic Objectives for telecommunications and other utilities are to:

- ensure that where appropriate new telecommunications development is accommodated by mast and site sharing;
- ensure that the visual and environmental impact of telecommunications is kept to a minimum;
- minimise, as far as practicable, undue interference that may be caused to radio spectrum users (for example mobile phone services, media broadcasting and wireless broadband services) by new telecommunications development; and
- encourage appropriate provision for telecommunications systems in the design of other forms of development.

In seeking to meet these objectives, the SPPS specifies that the LDP should bring forward policies which set out detailed criteria for consideration of new telecommunications development in its area including siting, design and impact upon visual amenity.

Furthermore, the SPPS also directs that in certain circumstances, the LDP may allocate specific sites for major new telecommunications development, subject to technical limitations on location and siting. In specific regard to power lines, the SPPS directs that proposals for the development of new power lines should comply with the 1998 International Commission

on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), the main objective of which is to minimise the exposure to electric, magnetic and electromagnetic fields in order to provide protection against known adverse health impacts. Additionally, such proposals will be considered with regard to potential impact on amenity and should, where appropriate, avoid areas of high landscape sensitivity.

Energy Supply, Water and Sewerage

The aim of the SPPS in regard to utility service provision is to facilitate the development of infrastructure in an efficient and effective manner whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. The SPPS acknowledges that planning has an important role in addressing existing or potential barriers to sustainable development, including the growth capacity of our water and sewerage infrastructure.

In relation to utilities the SPPS directs that LDPs should allocate sufficient land to meet the anticipated needs of the community, in terms of health, education and other public services.

In specific regards to power lines the SPPS highlights that current Government policy is that exposures to powerline Electromagnet Fields (EMFs) should comply with the 1998 International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) Guidelines. A voluntary Code of Practice Power Lines: Control of Micro shocks and other indirect effects of public exposure to electric fields A voluntary Code of Practice (DECC, July 2013) has been agreed by the Department of Energy and Climate Change, the Department of Health, the Energy Networks Association, the Welsh Government, the Scottish Government, and the Northern Ireland Executive. It sets out what is regarded as compliance with those aspects of the EMF exposure guidelines that relate to indirect effects as far as the electricity system is concerned. Further Government policies relating to EMFs from overhead power lines, advise that as a precautionary measure they should, where reasonable, have optimum phasing. This is the subject of a companion Code of Practice "Optimum phasing of high voltage double-circuit power lines". This Code of Practice applies in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

Furthermore, the SPPS directs that any proposal for the development of new power lines should comply with the 1998 International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). Furthermore, such proposals will be considered having regard to potential impact on amenity and should avoid areas of landscape sensitivity, including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

UK Marine Policy Statement (2011)

The UK Marine Policy Statement (MPS) was published in September 2011 under the Marine Coastal Access Act 2009 and provides the policy framework for the marine planning system and taking decisions affecting the marine environment. The MPS provides the high-level policy context within which marine plans will be developed and 3 monitored and will ensure consistency in marine planning across the UK marine area. The MPS will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom marine area. Although the Borough does not directly connect to a coastline, waterways will have connectivity to marine areas, therefore the draft Plan Strategy has had regard to the MPS.

Draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland

The draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland has been prepared under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MCAA) and the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 (The Marine Act) and

within the framework of the UK Marine Policy Statement. Published in April 2018, it provides a framework of policies to be considered by public authorities taking decisions that affect or might affect the marine area. The Northern Ireland marine area is made up of an inshore and an offshore region. The marine area comprises all marine waters including seabed, subsoil, sea loughs and tidal rivers, so far as the tide flows at Mean High Water Spring Tide. Although the Borough does not directly connect to a coastline, waterways will have connectivity to marine areas, therefore the draft Marine Plan for NI has been taken into consideration in the preparation of the draft Plan Strategy.

Planning Policy:

Planning Policy Statement 10 (PPS 10) Telecommunications

PPS 10 sets out a range of policies in relation to telecommunications. It embodies the Government's commitment to facilitate the growth of new and existing telecommunications systems whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. It also addresses health issues associated with telecommunications development.

The policy objectives of PPS 10 are to:

- facilitate the continuing development of telecommunications infrastructure in an efficient and effective manner;
- ensure that where appropriate new telecommunications development is accommodated by mast and site sharing;
- ensure that the visual and telecommunications development is kept to a minimum;
- minimise, as far as practicable, undue interference that may be caused to terrestrial television broadcasting services by new development; and encourage appropriate provision for telecommunications systems in the design of other forms of development.

It is important to note that Policy TEL 2 'Development and Interference with Television Broadcasting Services' of PPS 10 is no longer an operational policy due to the switch over from terrestrial television to digital television.

Planning Policy Statement 21 (PPS 21) – Sustainable Development in the Countryside

PPS 21 sets out a range of planning policies for development in the countryside, acknowledging that overdevelopment in the open countryside would have the potential to bring with it significant environmental, financial and social costs.

In particular PPS 21, recognises that water is one of our most vital resources as it is essential to sustain life, economic development and our social well-being. Furthermore PPS 21 acknowledges that our water resource is vulnerable to pollution if not managed in a sustainable way, recognising that new development relying on non-mains sewerage may increase the risk of groundwater pollution and adversely affect the ecology and chemical quality of the water environment. As such, PPS 21 directs that development relying on non-mains sewerage will only be acceptable where it does not create or add to a pollution problem (Policy CTY 16: Development relying on non-mains sewerage).

The Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (PSRNI)

The PSRNI acknowledges that roads, sewage treatment works, water sources and electricity generation can all be of vital importance not only to industry and commerce but to the quality

of life of society as a whole. However, due to their scale and nature many such projects can have a significant impact on the environment and on the amenity of local communities.

Policy PSU 8 'New Infrastructure' addresses the need for new infrastructure, including extensions to existing facilities and includes criteria against which such proposals will be considered.

PSU 11 'Overhead Cables' sets out the planning policy for overhead cables development and embodies the Government's commitment to facilitate the development of such infrastructure in an efficient and effective manner whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. As such, PSU 11 aims to control the siting of electricity power lines and other overhead cables, focusing on the visual impact that they may have on the environment and in particular on designated areas of landscape and townscape value.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

DCAN 14 Development Control Advice Note 14 (DCAN 14) – Siting and Design of Radio Telecommunications Equipment

Development Control Advice Notes set out the criteria and technical standards to be considered when dealing with specific categories or aspects of development. DCAN 14 is regional in focus and unlike several of the other DCAN's, it will be retained unless (and until) it is replaced by the Department.

DCAN 14 is not a statement of policy as to where telecommunications equipment can or cannot be installed, rather it is intended to provide advice on the process of site selection and design and illustrates how radio telecommunication equipment can be sensitively installed. It also explains why additional base stations are needed to serve the growth in customer demand and in response to changing technical requirements, including the third generation of mobile phones. In terms of health considerations, DCAN 14 refers to PPS 10 which addresses health issues associated with telecommunications development

Creating Places – Achieving Quality in Residential Development

'Creating Places' describes the contributions to quality and sustainability that developers in Northern Ireland will be expected to make through the design of new residential developments. Chapter 21 'Utilities' provides direction on electricity, gas, water and sewerage services in new residential development.

Other Strategies, Plans and Documents

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

The Sustainable Development Strategy, 'Everyone's Involved' identifies six priority areas which provide the framework for the actions that Departments will take in support of sustainable development.

Priority Action 3, 'Driving sustainable, long-term investment in key infrastructure to support economic and social development' acknowledges that the commitment to a sustainable future must be built around an infrastructural legacy that will support the transformation to sustainability. In order to achieve this, the Strategy identifies that this will require a commitment to the concept that future infrastructural provision will enable high quality

services, sustainable transport, resource efficiency, energy efficiency and renewable energy employment.

Priority Action 5, 'Ensuring reliable, affordable and sustainable energy provision and reducing our carbon footprint' highlights the importance of promoting energy efficiency, reducing the amount of fossil fuels we need by promoting renewable energy.

The Sustainable Development Strategy seeks to achieve 'an appropriate balance between the responsible use and protection of natural resources in support of a better quality of life and a better-quality environment.' It highlights that in all aspects of our lives, from development planning to waste management, we must be aware of our environment as a finite resource and that we need to recognise the need to live within environmental limits, acknowledging how our consumption of natural resources affects the ability of the natural environment to support us in the future.

Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011- 2021 'Building a Better Future' (ISNI, 2015)

The Investment Strategy acknowledges that modern infrastructure is critical to the success of Northern Ireland, it underpins our economy and society, helping to improve public services. The Strategy identifies that Northern Ireland's water and waste treatment facilities, and telecommunications network, has benefitted from significant improvements as a result of investment and that this momentum of improvements needs to be sustained.

The Strategy highlights that good telecoms links and reliable and affordable energy are among the factors that help to encourage investment, highlighting that investment in cutting edge telecoms connectivity, creating faster and more reliable access to the global internet is helping to support job creation.

The Strategy identifies that a coordinated approach is required towards the provision of services, employment and infrastructure and it therefore seeks to address regional disadvantage by addressing poverty, encouraging diversification, enhancing connectivity and improving service provision. Between 2011 and 2021, the Strategy identified telecoms as one of the investment priorities for NI:

- Supporting investment of the telecoms network to ensure the region keeps pace with development, allowing local businesses to remain competitive and attracting inward investment.

The Strategy identifies that key achievements in respect of telecommunications investment in Northern Ireland include the delivery of Project Kelvin, which provides a high-speed transatlantic internet connection, and also the Next Generation Broadband Project, which provides access to superfast broadband services.

In terms of energy, the Strategy promotes a shift from reliance on fossil fuels towards clean renewable generation, in addition to addressing energy demand. Between 2011 and 2021, the Strategy identified energy as one of the investment priorities for Northern Ireland:

- Security of energy supply, increasing use of renewable energy sources and cost of energy.
- Encouraging extension of the natural gas network, to enhance diversity of fuel supply and customer choice and reducing CO2 emissions.

Sustainable Water - A Long-Term Water Strategy for Northern Ireland (2015-2040) (DRD, 2016)

‘Sustainable Water – A Long-Term Water Strategy for Northern Ireland (2015- 2040)’ sets out a range of initiatives to deliver the Executive’s long-term goal of a sustainable water sector in Northern Ireland.

This Strategy acknowledges that water is essential to life but can cause widespread damage if not managed appropriately. As the responsibility for the water sector is spread across a number of Government Departments, the Strategy seeks to deliver a more joined up approach, setting out a range of initiatives to deliver the Executives long term goal of a sustainable water sector in Northern Ireland.

The strategy intends to achieve this by encouraging a sustainable and integrated approach to managing all our different water needs in a way that promotes regional development, without compromising the environment or increasing flood risk.

Part 2 of the Strategy ‘Drinking Water Supply and Demand’ acknowledges that there are many challenges in providing safe, sufficient supplies of drinking water, such as funding and environmental protection, and therefore a sustainable approach is required towards drinking water supply and treatment. In order to provide high quality, sustainable supplies of drinking water to households, industry and agriculture, the Strategy identifies three key aims delivered through a number of policies:

- DW Aim 1 Manage drinking water quality risks in a sustainable manner from source to tap.
- DW Aim 2 Meet the water demand needs of society, the economy, and the environment.
- DW Aim 3 Resource efficient drinking water treatment and supply chains.

The various policies directed at achieving these aims include maintaining and reviewing Drinking Water Safety Plans for all drinking water catchments, putting effective protection measures in place for drinking water sources and introducing sustainable catchment management at all drinking water sources.

Part 4 of the Strategy ‘Environmental Protection and Improvement’ acknowledges that protecting and improving the longer-term quality of the water environment is fundamental to securing high quality, safe drinking water supplies for households, industry and agriculture. In order to meet the environmental requirements of the Water Framework Directive in a sustainable manner, the Strategy identifies five key aims delivered through a number of policies including EP Aim 1 Sustainable environmental policy and regulation, EP Aim 2 Sustainably manage the catchment to reduce diffuse pollution and EP Aim 3 Effective and efficient wastewater collection and treatment. The various policies directed at achieving these aims include providing access to efficient, safe, secure drinking water supplies, water resource management and drought planning, encouraging households and businesses to be water efficient and the delivery of water efficient residential and commercial development.

Part 5 of the Strategy ‘Water and Sewerage Services’ acknowledges that the supply of clean, healthy drinking water and the effective treatment of our wastewater are essential for public health, the economy and the environment. In to provide sustainable water and sewerage services that meet customers’ needs the Strategy identifies five key aims delivered through a number of policies including WSS Aim 1 Provide efficient and affordable water and sewerage services and WSS Aim 4 Provide resilient and secure water and sewerage services. The various policies directed at achieving these aims include transforming water and sewerage

assets and infrastructure through sustainable solutions, improving the resilience of water and sewerage assets, infrastructure and systems, effective incident planning and preservation of services, management of the NI Water estate to promote recreation, biodiversity and cultural heritage.

The 7th Annual Report on the implementation of ‘Sustainable Water A Long-Term Water Strategy for Northern Ireland (2015 – 2040)’ (DfI, January 2024), highlights the various programmes and plans that have been put in place to achieve the aims of the Strategy, as detailed above, and tackle areas of drinking water quality, flood risk, environmental requirements and water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland.

‘Economy 2030’ Draft Industrial Strategy for NI (DfE, 2017)

One of the ambitions of the Strategy is that Northern Ireland will be recognised as having world class economic infrastructure supporting the growth of a modern, dynamic, connected and competitive economy. In order to achieve this, the Strategy identifies the following objectives:

- Investments in energy, water, transport and connections, digital communications, waste disposal networks and facilities, as key components for a competitive modern economy.
- Investment in key infrastructure projects to provide the physical and digital connectivity to enable our business to thrive globally;
- Investment both in better access to major population and business centres through our strategic road network in the West and in tackling significant drainage and flood risk issues in Belfast and other regional centres.

In order to achieve these objectives, the Strategy outlines a number of actions including: becoming Europe’s best-connected region for broadband by 2030, investing in infrastructure, enhancing the security, sustainability and cost-efficiency of our energy supply and developing a new Energy Strategy to meet Northern Ireland’s medium- and longer-term energy needs.

The Strategy also acknowledges that global markets are continually evolving and new and enhanced technological opportunities are emerging and therefore it will be vital to support the development and exploitation of breakthrough technologies and new products.

‘Physical infrastructure for high-speed communications networks’ Building Control Regulations (NI) 2012 – Technical Booklet M (Jan 2017)

Following the publication of new building control requirements (Part M of new NI Building Regs: 77(a) and 77(b)), there is a requirement that all new development should be provided with physical infrastructure (holes and ducts) to accommodate a high-speed electronic communications network. This requirement will ensure that all new development has necessary infrastructure in place to allow supply of high-speed broadband, when it is commercially viable to do so.

In order to create incentives for future investment in digital infrastructure it is important that the LDP supports the roll out and expansion of digital infrastructure and networks across the Borough. The SPPS states that LDPs should ‘encourage appropriate provision for telecommunications systems in the design of other forms of development’ and it also highlights that ‘due to the cost associated with retrofitting telecommunications infrastructure planning authorities should encourage applicants to consider provision for such technology as early as possible in the design stage of proposals where appropriate.’

NI Climate Change Adaption Plan 2019-2024 (Second Edition) (DAERA, 2019)

The NI Climate Change Adaption Plan (NICCAP2) focuses on key priority areas identified as requiring urgent adaptation action over 5 years. The Vision of the NICCAP2 is to achieve ‘A resilient NI which will take timely and well-informed decisions to address the socio-economic and environmental impacts of climate change.’

One example of the actions that the government will take forward, that will contribute to both the delivery of Outcome Objective IF1 (*‘we have transport and network services that are resilient to the impacts of flooding and extreme weather’*) and the management of the relevant NI Evidence Report climate change risks and opportunities includes DfI engagement with local councils. The Adaptation Plan identifies that this engagement would assist local councils in bringing forward Local Development Plan policies and proposals that take account of climate change adaptation considerations in accordance with the provisions of the SPPS and any other policies or advice in guidance issued by the DfI.

The preparation of the Local Development Plans was one of the examples identified by the NICCAP2 which will help shape future development and growth as well as provide a local planning policy framework for decision-taking. The NICCAP2 highlights that in bringing forward local planning policies, councils must take account of the SPPS for Northern Ireland which identifies climate change considerations.

Draft Third Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme (NICCAP3)

In June 2025 DAERA launched a public consultation on the draft Third Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme (NICCAP3), as required by section 60 of the Climate Change Act 2008. The Draft NICCAP 3 sets out the framework and vision for a future where Northern Ireland is well-adapted and resilient to the impacts of climate change, acknowledging the economic, social, health and environmental benefits that this will bring.

The Draft NICCAP 3 emphasises that the challenge of climate change must be tackled on two fronts, climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation. This involves limiting increases to global temperatures by reducing GHG emissions and achieving net zero whilst also recognising that we must adapt to the climate impacts that exist because of historic emissions, so that our environment, society and economy are robust and resilient.

The Draft NICCAP 3 identifies that extreme weather scenarios such as flooding and storms will have an impact on the provision of telecommunications and ICT, with risks including mobile base station power failure, damage to infrastructure and local outages. Actions identified within the Draft NICCAP 3 include upgrading Signals and Telecoms infrastructure to improve resilience to extreme weather through improved planning and improvements in the design, location and setting of S&T elements which reduce the exposure or impact.

The Draft NICCAP 3 highlights that the Climate Change Committee’s (CCC) independent review of NICCAP2 emphasised that further action is required in relation to energy supply in NI to meet future adaptation needs. It identifies that the provision of a resilient, renewable energy system supplied from a diverse mix of sources and supported by resilient network infrastructure will ensure a reliable energy supply that limits the potential for power outages. Additionally, it highlights that climate change projections indicate that severe weather events, will become more frequent, emphasising the need for the energy system to be ‘climate resilient in its design, supply diversity and storage capacity’ to ensure that generation and supply will continue during periods of low rainfall, low wind speeds and poor weather. The Draft NICCAP 3 also highlights that new buildings must have resilience built into its design whilst existing

building stock is upgraded to improve energy efficiency, so to improve the climate resilience of our built environment. Relevant actions identified within the Draft NICCAP 3 include energy policy development to ensure a reliable energy supply in the transition to net zero, the development of Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards for the Private Rented Sector and increased awareness of adaptation as part of current and future policy development for energy efficiency programmes that aid mitigation towards Net-Zero.

The Draft NICCAP 3 identifies that sufficient water supply is essential for many aspects of life including energy, industry, agriculture, natural environment and public use and as such climate change could have significant impacts if there is not the necessary investment in adaptation. It highlights that the increased frequency of flooding, storm events and prolonged periods with no rainfall, all because of climate change, put pressure on NI's water supply and quality. Relevant actions identified within the Draft NICCAP 3 include balancing supply and demand against future changes from population growth, climate change and environmental pressure

Northern Ireland Energy Strategy 'The Path to Net Zero Energy' (2021, DfE)

The Northern Ireland Energy Strategy aims to ensure that Northern Ireland has an affordable, secure and clean energy system for current and future generations. As such, the Strategy sets out a pathway for energy to 2030 that will help to achieve the vision of net zero carbon and affordable energy by 2050.

The Strategy defines net zero carbon energy as when 'overall greenhouse gas emissions from energy are zero' and highlights that this will require a reduction in the emissions from energy used for transport, electricity generation etc. and removing any remaining emissions with schemes that offset an equivalent amount from the atmosphere.

In order to achieve this vision, the Strategy outlines three targets:

1. Energy Efficiency: Deliver energy savings of 25% from buildings and industry by 2030.
2. Renewables: Meet at least 70% of electricity consumption from a diverse mix of renewable sources by 2030.
3. Green Economy: Double the size of the low carbon and renewable energy economy to a turnover of more than 2 billion by 2030.

Two of the five key principles of the Strategy are of particular significance:

'Replace fossil fuels with renewable energy'- phasing out of fossil fuels by growing the indigenous renewable base, supported by sustainable renewable imports and use these to decarbonise power, heat and transport.

'Create a flexible, resilient and integrated energy system'- create a flexible, smart and digitised energy system that integrate renewables across heat, power and transport, create value for customers and enhance security of supply.

The Strategy acknowledges that although Northern Ireland has been successful at utilising its natural resources to meet its electricity needs, particularly wind resources, a significant proportion of its electricity consumption still comes from fossil fuels. It identifies that in order to achieve a renewable electricity consumption target of 70%² the renewable generating capacity will need to be doubled in order to meet demand. The Strategy highlights that this will involve a more diverse renewables base with back up from more conventional plant and the introduction of less familiar technologies.

² Whilst the Northern Ireland Energy Strategy 'Path to Net Zero Energy' established a renewable electricity consumption target of 70% by 2030 this was then increased to 80% by 2030 by the Climate Change (Northern Ireland) Act 2022 (Sectoral Plan for the Department for the Economy).

The Strategy highlights that the pathway to decarbonising heat is complex and will include a range of technologies, however these will need to be fully considered to ensure they do not lead to adverse impacts on human health or the environment. The Strategy acknowledges that whilst expertise will be developed in the installation and use of a range of low carbon technologies over the next ten years, there is greater uncertainty about the future balance of existing and energy sources and technologies in our energy system. Whilst the Strategy anticipates that some new technologies will become more cost effective, such as electrolyzers, floating platform offshore wind and carbon capture, usage and storage this will be dependent on their future development over the coming years.

Mobile Action Plan for Northern Ireland (June 2022, DfE)

The Mobile Action Plan for Northern Ireland (MAP NI) was developed by a cross-sectoral working group which included members from central and local government who consulted with stakeholders including industry, UK Government and Ofcom. The Aim of MAP NI is to identify issues which inhibit the rollout of mobile networks and sought to establish solutions to enable better, faster and more consistent mobile coverage throughout Northern Ireland.

MAP NI identifies that affordable and secure digital infrastructure is essential to citizens and businesses, with the availability and exchange of information being essential for long term prosperity. It acknowledges that modern society demands reliable and fast communication networks to 'drive economic activity, to allow citizens to keep in touch, access public services and participate in modern society'.

Draft Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland (2021, DAERA on behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive)

The Draft Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland acknowledges that continuing to meet consumption by traditional methods and unsustainable use of natural resources is having a damaging impact on our environment. As such, the Strategy highlights that every country must urgently reduce the greenhouse gases they produce and that radical change is required in order to tackle climate change. It recognises that an opportunity exists for Northern Ireland to embrace its world-famous innovation, by examining things can be done differently, more efficiently and within a circular economy.

The Strategy considers that balancing climate and environment action with economic ambition can be achieved by following high level Green Growth Principles and ensuring they are at the core of all future policy development. The Green Growth Principles include decarbonising and reducing wasteful use of resources.

One of the key commitments of the draft Green Growth Strategy is to develop Northern Ireland's first Climate Action Plan. The Climate Action Plan, led by DAERA, will set out the carbon budget will be achieved for the Climate Action Plan period and the overall emissions reduction targets as stated in the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.

Transmission Development Plan Northern Ireland 2021 – 2030 (SONI)

The Transmission Development Plan Northern Ireland (TDPNI) 2021 – 2030 is SONI's annual report setting out the planned development to be carried out by SONI and NIE Networks on the Northern Ireland electricity transmission system over the next ten years that is required to maintain the system and to enable the energy transition and further decarbonisation of energy usage.

The TDPNI highlights SONI's commitment to delivering the transformation required in the electricity system to facilitate Northern Ireland's new energy policy. It identifies that the

transmission grid needs to be made stronger and more flexible to transport the anticipated increases in clean energy generation and to ensure energy supply is reliable and secure.

The TDPNI 2021-2030 is the blueprint for the development of the transmission network and interconnection, with a number of projects aimed at ensuring the transmission grid is fit for the future. It also outlines future needs that may drive future potential projects.

Northern Ireland Gas Capacity Statement 2021/22 – 2030/31 (Northern Ireland Transmission System Operators)

The Northern Ireland Gas Capacity Statement ‘provides an assessment of the ability of the NI gas transmission system to provide for supply and demand over a number of potential scenarios across the next ten years up to 2031/32, based on forecasts supplied by power sector and distribution users of the network.’

The Statement acknowledges that the Northern Ireland gas network plays a hugely significant role in NI’s energy supply mix, highlighting that increasing access to gas connections across the region has created access for households to a cleaner source of energy and is important for industrial and economic development.

The Northern Ireland Gas Capacity Statement highlights that the gas grid is widely expected to play a key role in the decarbonising energy (and wider) industry, with natural gas as a transition fuel in the short to mid-term, transitioning to renewable gases (biomethane and hydrogen) in the mid to long-term, acknowledging that the benefits of gas include its affordability, reliability and its ability to be a crucial component of a flexible and integrated energy system, all of which ensures security of energy supply.

While energy policy in Northern Ireland is a devolved matter, which DfE have responsibility for in NI, the Statement highlights that understanding the interaction between the respective energy (gas and electricity) networks is critical to planning for the future development of the markets so to ‘produce efficient outcomes on a whole energy supply system basis’.

Our Strategy 2021-2046 (NI Water)

Our Strategy 2021-2046 (‘Our Strategy’) is designed to make NI a more healthy, sustainable and prosperous place in which to live. It acknowledges that every aspect of life in NI relies on the services provided by NI Water; recognising that the delivery of high-quality drinking water and recycling wastewater safely is essential to support a healthy and thriving population, a growing economy and a flourishing natural environment.

‘Our Strategy’ highlights that more value must be placed on water including reducing pollutants entering our waterways, designing our homes to use less high-quality drinking water and ensuring we are better prepared for more extreme weather conditions.

One of the strategic risks identified in ‘Our Strategy’ that will impact service delivery is the climate emergency. It highlights the issue of climate change resilience, in recognition of the vulnerability of the industry to the impacts of changing weather patterns and more frequent extreme weather events.

Actions identified in ‘Our Strategy’ include investing in water infrastructure to ensure there is a balance between the supply and the demand for water and efficiently delivering infrastructure to underpin sustainable growth.

Draft ‘Infrastructure 2050’ The Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Executive & ISNI, 2022)

The Vision of the 2050 draft Investment Strategy is that Northern Ireland has the necessary infrastructure that enables everyone to lead a healthy, productive and fulfilling life, supports sustainable development and protects our environment.

The draft Investment Strategy includes 5 objectives for infrastructure investment in the region for the next 30 years including decarbonising our economy and society and building a strong, connected and competitive region by improving our digital and physical connectivity, internationally, nationally and locally.

Connected Nations 2022 UK Report (OFCOM, Dec 2022)

OFCOM seeks to support investment in strong and secure networks and getting everyone across the UK connected. Each year, OFCOM produces a Connected Nations Report which measures the progress in the availability of broadband and mobile services in the UK, including the newest full fibre and 5G networks being rolled out.

The Connected Nations 2022 Northern Ireland Report, published alongside the Connected Nations 2022 Report, acknowledges that connectivity in Northern Ireland continues to improve, as existing networks are being upgraded and new fixed infrastructure is being built. The purpose of the report is to measure progress in the availability and capability of broadband and mobile services in Northern Ireland. It also highlights the work Ofcom is doing, alongside UK and devolved governments and communications companies, to improve the UK's connectivity. Statistics and information from this report is set out in Section 4.0 Borough Profile.

Energy in Northern Ireland 2022 (June 2022, DfE / NISRA)

'Energy in Northern Ireland 2022' aims to provide a comprehensive and accessible overview of key statistics and information relating to energy in Northern Ireland. Statistics and information from this report is set out in Section 4.0 Borough Profile.

Draft Transmission Development Plan for Northern Ireland 2023-2032 (SONI)

The Draft Transmission Development Plan 2023-32 for Northern Ireland is a 10-year plan for the development of the NI transmission system. It sets out a range of network development projects that aim to:

- Increase capacity for demand
- Improve resilience and security of supply across the network
- Strengthen the all-island grid and interconnection with Great Britain
- Allow the grid to handle increasing levels of renewable generation
- Reduce costs for Northern Ireland consumers and businesses

Key projects identified in the Draft Transmission Development Plan 2023-32, which are aimed at achieving the target of 80% of electricity from renewable sources by 2030, include the North-South Interconnector.

Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap Version 1.1 (July 2023, SONI & EirGrid)

Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap Version 1.1 was published in July 2023 as an update to the previous publication in November 2021, in order to take account of the following changes made to the Northern Ireland climate change policy in 2022:

- Increased renewable targets were increased whereby 80% of the electricity used must be from renewable sources by 2030.
- Introduction of carbon budgets which set out a limit for the total amount of carbon emissions that Northern Ireland can emit over 5-year blocks of time.

The roadmap acknowledges that the electricity grid requires unprecedented change in the lead up to 2030 and as such the main objective of the roadmap is to outline how the grid can be mobilised so that 80% of Ireland's and Northern Ireland's electricity can come from renewable sources, like the wind and sun, by 2030.

The roadmap highlights that although natural gas is expected to still be used to generate some electricity, renewable electricity will increasingly replace fossil fuels, such as oil and coal, and as such there will be increasing demand for electricity to facilitate other requirements, including transport and heating.

It also identifies that Ireland and Northern Ireland will need at least another 19 gigawatts (GW) of electricity from clean sources, approximately three times as much clean electricity compared to what is currently available. It acknowledges that in order to prepare for this demand, the electricity grid will need to be stronger, capable of carrying more power, and more flexible.

Whilst the existing grid will be utilised, the roadmap highlights that due to the scale of change, new grid infrastructure such as underground cables, pylons and substations will be required. One of the main challenges identified in the roadmap is that renewable electricity is generated at a different frequency to the rest of the power on the grid, presenting a significant technical challenge. The roadmap acknowledges that the present grid is not capable of carrying the extra power required or moving power cross-country from renewable sources (renewable energy is often generated far from where it's needed).

For example, the roadmap highlights that that the greatest resource of onshore wind in Northern Ireland is in the north and west and the greatest resource of solar power is located in the southeast, however the greatest demand for electricity is in the east. It acknowledges that moving this much power across the grid is a huge challenge that will require a significant number of projects aimed at upgrading or adding to the grid.

Water, Flooding and Sustainable Drainage: Improving How We Manage Water (DfI, 17 July 2023)

In 2022 the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) carried out a public consultation exercise regarding proposals to amend legislation aimed at improving how water, sewerage and flooding services are delivered in Northern Ireland. The consultation centred around nine policy proposals including whether NI Water should be given a new power of entry onto land to enable it to carry out works beyond the laying of pipes, such as flood management or if DfI should be given a power to issue future arrangements and guidance on the design, approval, and maintenance of sustainable drainage systems. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council was one of 30 respondents that submitted comments within the consultation period.

'Water, Flooding and Sustainable Drainage: Improving How We Manage Water' summarises the findings of this public consultation, alongside DfI's response to the comments / issues raised, which will in turn help shape and influence proposals for a Water, Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Bill.

Following consideration of the specific issues raised in the consultation the Department made a number of proposals including:

- The introduction of primary legislation to provide it with a power to introduce future guidance on the design, approval, and maintenance of SuDS
- The introduction of primary legislation to provide NI Water with a power to adopt pre-1973 private drainage infrastructure which is critical to the effective operation of the sewerage network.
- The introduction of primary legislation to provide the Department with a power to amend, update or revoke the Drainage (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 and the Water Environment (Floods Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009.

Draft Northern Ireland Climate Action Plan 2023-2027 (2025- DAERA, on Behalf of the NI Executive)

The draft Climate Action Plan acknowledges that to realise the vision of a more sustainable and efficient Northern Ireland, new opportunities must be embraced, new skills, technology and innovation must be developed, and difficult decisions must be made. It identifies that the impact on people and the environment from climate change, will be far greater if nothing is done.

The draft Climate Action Plan sets out a road map, consisting of fifty-two ambitious policies, proposals and actions aimed at reducing emissions and achieving the first carbon budget for Northern Ireland³. The policies and proposals are arranged into nine sectors: energy production and supply, business and industrial processes, residential and public buildings, transport, land use, land use change and forestry, waste management, fisheries and agriculture.

Importantly, the draft Climate Action Plan recognises that although Government has an important role to play in meeting our targets, through policy development and resource allocation, effort and commitment is required from all members of society in making changes to our everyday lives. This includes reduced reliance on the private vehicle, greater use of efficient technologies and more efficient use of our resources.

The draft Climate Action Plan acknowledges that planning policy and planning decisions both have significant roles to play in enabling the delivery of climate action and emphasises that the planning system should 'positively and proactively facilitate development that contributes to a more socially, economically and environmentally sustainable Northern Ireland'. It also recognises the importance of ensuring that the legislative, policy and guidance frameworks for plan making and decision making is appropriate and suitably future proofed, so that planning authorities- through the LDP and planning decisions- continue to contribute to the wider efforts of government in addressing the climate emergency.

Policies, proposals and actions outlined within the draft Climate Action Plan that are of particular relevance to this topic include the:

- Introduction of a new Renewable Electricity Support Scheme.
- Development of legislative changes to facilitate greater connection of energy storage facilities to the network.

³ In the first carbon budget (2023-2027) greenhouse gases emissions need to reduce by an annual average of 33% from the 1990 baseline emission levels across the five-year period

- Digitalisation of the electricity network to reduce the need for grid reinforcement, increase the effectiveness of network management, increase the use of renewable electricity, and lower the cost to energy consumers.
- Assessment for the need for further interconnection to establish the optimal level for security of supply, how to create/ access new routes to market for renewable energy and ensure cost-effective utilisation of any new interconnection assets.

The draft Climate Action Plan acknowledges that Information and Communication Technology and digital services are an integral part of the solution to meeting emissions reduction targets, for example by facilitating remote working and reducing the need to travel.

Whilst there are no specific policies and proposals relating to an 'infrastructure sector', the draft Climate Action Plan notes that associated emissions are incorporated in the policies and proposals of other sectors, such as transport, energy and buildings. It also highlights, in addition to developing new technologies and low carbon construction materials, a necessity for Infrastructure to be designed and constructed to be more resilient to the changing climate and to withstand the challenges presented by increased flooding, extreme weather and rising global temperatures. Additionally, it highlights that emissions originate from various stages of the infrastructure lifecycle (including construction, maintenance, operation and decommissioning) and as such action is required to reduce infrastructure emissions, and where possible, promote a circular economy approach to minimise environmental and carbon impacts.

Energy Strategy- Path to Net Zero- Action Plan 2024 (DfE, 2025)

The Energy Strategy Action Plan for 2024, delivered in the context of the Climate Change (Northern Ireland) Act 2022, outlines some of the key actions being delivered as part of the Executive's Energy Strategy - The Path to Net Zero Energy, detailed above.

The Action Plan focuses on the strategic priorities:

- Replacing Fossil Fuels;
- Improving Energy Efficiency;
- Growing Renewable Electricity;
- Supporting the Electricity Grid; and
- Growing the Green economy.

Actions include publishing a consultation on the future of domestic energy efficiency support and delivery, identifying solutions to rapidly increase the quantity of onshore renewables on the electricity grid and the publication of new regional strategic planning policy on renewable and low carbon energy.

Environmental Improvement Plan for Northern Ireland (DAERA, 2024)

The Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP), which forms part of the Green Growth Agenda, acknowledges that Northern Ireland faces a range of local environmental challenges including habitat and species loss, greenhouse gas emissions, climate change, waste management and water / soil / air quality. The EIP will form the basis of a set of interventions aimed at delivering improvements in the quality of the environment, and in doing so improving health and well-being, creating opportunities for the economy; protecting the global environment and elevating Northern Ireland as 'an environmental leader.'

The Strategic Environmental Outcomes of the EIP that are of particular relevance to this topic include:

- Excellent air, water and land quality- includes actions and targets such as investment in sewage infrastructure & treatment works, the development of improved monitoring and data collection to enable the impacts of energy decarbonisation policies on air quality to be measured and the achievement of sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources including water & soils by 2031
- Sustainable production and consumption on land and at sea- includes actions and targets such as the development of an action plan to deliver 1GW of offshore wind from 2030, development of low carbon heat demonstrator projects and increase overall recycling of packaging to 76% by 2031.
- Net zero greenhouse gas emissions and improved climate resilience and adaptability- includes actions and targets such as publication of Northern Ireland's first Climate Action Plan, publication of a Nature based Solutions Plan to enhance ecological and climate resilience and the development of new legislation to ensure greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets for the years 2030 and 2040 are in line with the Climate Change Act's net zero by 2050 target.

Lough Neagh Report and Action Plan - Blue Green Algae and Water Quality in Northern Ireland (DAERA in conjunction with DfI and NIW, 2024)

The Lough Neagh Report and Action Plan addresses the specific water quality crisis experienced in Lough Neagh and other water bodies throughout Northern Ireland. It identifies that 'improving water quality in Northern Ireland requires action, resources and all of us working together', including everyone taking responsibility for the waste we produce and how it is dealt with.

The Lough Neagh Report and Action Plan acknowledges that despite the protected status of Lough Neagh (ASSI, SPA and Ramsar) the existing regulatory and policy frameworks have failed to adequately protect water quality, the Lough Neagh ecosystem and our wider environment. It identifies that Northern Ireland's lakes, rivers, streams and coastline are suffering from the effects of pollution, the impacts of which, on society and the environment, are unsustainable.

The Lough Neagh Report and Action Plan identifies that the significant Blue Green Algae blooms experienced in Lough Neagh were due to several factors including pollution from agriculture, wastewater, septic tanks and industrial processes in addition to an increase in water temperature (because of climate change) and the presence of the invasive zebra mussels. It highlights that if the amount of pollution getting into Lough Neagh is not immediately addressed, there is potential for permanent adverse impacts on health and the economy.

The Report and Action Plan identifies key steps required to reduce nutrient inputs which includes ensuring that all existing and emerging DAERA policies contribute to the achievement of "Good" water quality status, given the increasing trends of excess nutrients in the environment from sources such as agriculture, wastewater, domestic discharges and industry. The Action Plan includes 37 Actions aimed at delivering on a wide range of outcomes including the provision of a clear policy framework and associated route map to improving the environmental status of Lough Neagh, its wider ecosystem and waterbodies across Northern Ireland and improving water quality over the longer term.

Water Resource and Supply Resilience Plan (2025, Northern Ireland Water)

The Water Resources and Supply Resilience Plan (WR&SRP), which covers the 50-year period between 2020 and 2070, provides an overview of the challenges facing water supply and the actions Northern Ireland Water (NI Water) plan to take to meet the demand for water.

The WR&SRP reports that within Northern Ireland the total demand for water is expected to increase by 45 million litres per day by 2045 and if no action is taken to address this increased demand, there could be a shortfall in water supplies for customers of 27 million litres per day, by 2045. It also forecasts that there will be supply demand deficits in five of the ten Water Resource Zones during summer peak conditions, with four of those zones currently in deficit today- including the South Water Resource Zone, which is the zone that relates to Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough.

In order to resolve the challenge of supply / demand and maintain a surplus in water supplies a number of potential solutions, such as further reducing leakage and the adoption of new sources, were assessed and screened to establish the best value water resources management plan - which takes account of social and environmental impacts and seeks to support a 'healthier and more sustainable, biodiverse environment and respond to customer expectations of good stewardship of the water environment in a cost effective way'. Recommendations of the best value plan to resolve the forecast deficit in the South Water Resource Zone include a new Water Pumping Station (WPS) at Castor Bay WTW (planned for completion by 2027) and a new borehole at Gortlenaghan.

Local Policy Context

The key pieces of local policy relating to this subject area include the following:

Existing Area Plans

The existing 4 statutory Area Plans covering the Borough provide the policy framework against which development proposals are considered.

- The Armagh Area Plan (AAP) 2004
- The Armagh Area Plan Alteration No 1: Countryside Proposals
- The Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan (BNMAP) 2015
- The Craigavon Area Plan (CAP) 2010
- The 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 number 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 considered in the development of the draft Plan Strategy. Policies within the respective development plans that are related to telecommunications, energy supply, water and sewerage are laid out below.

Armagh Area Plan 2004

The Armagh Area Plan (AAP) 2004 provides a planning framework for the growth and development of the Armagh area. Whilst the AAP does not specifically refer to public utility's development, it does aim to provide a framework of development proposals which will allow the area to 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 2010

The Craigavon Area Plan (CAP) 2010 identifies that telecommunication provision within the Borough is mainly the responsibility of British Telecom supplemented by a number of other providers. Whilst the CAP does not include any specific policies in relation to this topic, it refers to Planning Policy Statement 10 for further direction and guidance in respect of telecommunication proposals.

The CAP also highlights that the provision of utilities within Craigavon Borough is primarily the responsibility of a number of Government Departments and Agencies, the Borough Council and statutory bodies. However, the role of the private sector as service providers is gaining in importance. The Plan acknowledges that over the plan period, the provision of utilities will be influenced by advances in technology and improving standards. Although it does not contain any policies relating to utilities, CAP highlights that A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland contains policies for new infrastructure and overhead cables.

Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015

The Banbridge / Newry and Mourne Area Plan (BNMAP) 2015 - recognises the importance of modern telecommunications for the growing needs of business and individuals. It acknowledges that telecommunications provision within the Plan area is primarily the responsibility of British Telecom, supplemented by a number of other private companies. Whilst the BNMAP does not include any specific policies in relation to this topic, it refers to Planning Policy Statement 10 for further direction and guidance in respect of telecommunication proposals.

The BNMAP also highlights that the provision of public services and utilities within the Plan Area is primarily the responsibility of a number of Government Departments, Agencies and statutory bodies as well as Banbridge and Newry and Mourne District Councils. BNAMP identifies that the main public services and utilities are water and sewerage, drainage, waste disposal, cemeteries, electricity, telecommunications and natural gas. Although it does not include any specific policies in respect of utility services BNMAP highlights that The Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland contains current regional policies on new infrastructure and overhead electricity cables.

Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan 2010

The Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan (DSTAP) 2010 identifies that telecommunication provision within the Borough is mainly the responsibility of British Telecom supplemented by a number of other providers. Whilst the DSTAP does not include any specific policies in relation to this topic, it refers to Planning Policy Statement 10 for further direction and guidance in respect of telecommunication proposals.

The DSTAP also highlights that the provision of utilities within Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough is primarily the responsibility of a number of Government departments and agencies, the Borough Council and statutory bodies. However, the role of private sector bodies as service providers is gaining in importance. DSTAP acknowledges that over the Plan period, factors such as advances in technology and improving standards will influence the provision of utilities. Although it does not include any specific policies in respect of utility services DSTAP highlights that The Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland contains current regional policies on new infrastructure and overhead electricity cables.

Other Council Documents and Strategies

City / Town Centre Masterplans

Whilst the Area 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 Place Plans and had been considered during the POP and early policy development but have since been superseded by Place Plans for each respective settlement.

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.

‘Our People, Our Place, Our Future’- The Councils Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027

The Corporate Plan 2023-27 sets out the vision, values and priorities of the Council and represents its aspirations and dedication to continuous improvement. It is the roadmap for delivering Council's Community Plan 2017 – 2030 and sets out the Councils commitment to uphold the highest standards of service delivery, facilities, projects, and programmes for the benefit of our people, our place and our future.

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 Corporate Plan proposes five priorities, each with three commitments outlining what the Council are going to do alongside actions aimed at achieving the commitments. The priorities and commitments that are of particular relevance to this subject area 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 plays a critical role in sustainably planning for the future, underpinning the wellbeing of societies, economies, and ecosystems. It also highlights the Councils commitment to addressing climate change and supporting efforts to reduce carbon emissions, generate and use energy more cleanly so that the Borough remains a progressive and vibrant place to live, work and visit. With regards to future growth the Corporate Plan recognises that sustainability, productivity, and connectivity must be the cornerstone of economic growth.

The Corporate Plan also acknowledges the LDP as the spatial outworking of the Corporate Plan in recognition that the implementation of the LDP is one way which the Councils ambitions can be achieved.

Connected a Community Plan for Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough 2017-2030

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 is an overarching strategy for the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. 'Connected' was launched on 4th May 2017 and updated in 2025. It provides a strategic framework for collaborative working, helping to integrate other local and regional strategies and the delivery of positive change for communities. The Community Plan will be taken into account throughout the preparation of the LDP, which will provide the spatial reflection of the Community Plan.

The Community Plan 2030 Vision is 'We have a happy, healthy and connected community, a vibrant and sustainable economy and appealing places for living, working and learning.'

The Community Plan aims to achieve the vision through three strategic themes of *Community*, *Economy* and *Place* and nine shared outcomes, as follows:

- 1. Community:** Connected | Healthy | Welcoming
- 2. Economy:** Enterprising | Inclusive | Skilled
- 3. Place:** Creative | Revitalised | Sustainable

The three cross-cutting themes at the centre of the Community Plan are: *Connectivity*, *Equality* and *Sustainability*. These form the foundation of and underpin the Plan. The Community Plan identifies strong strategic alignment, including with the Programme for Government. Due to the close relationship between the two plans, the LDP Vision will be based on the Community Plan Vision; citizen focused and aspiring to improve the quality of life for everyone. However, within the LDP, emphasis will be placed on land use and the creation of quality places.

In respect of telecommunications, 'Connected' identifies connectivity as being integral to improving our quality of life, and as such it is one of the three cross cutting themes of Connectivity, Equality and Sustainability that underpins the Community Plan. In order to

reflect this, the Community Plan seeks to: *‘transform and connect all areas of our Borough physically, digitally and socially through shared collaborative approaches.’*

The Connectivity outcome aims to connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure. The Community Plan also acknowledges the need to identify solutions for our infrastructure requirements to attract higher levels of investment and ensure that the Borough is an enticing, collaborative and supportive environment for business start-ups, growth and innovation.

Craigavon Integrated Development Framework (CIDF) 2010

The aim of the CIDF is to guide how the 3 town centres of Central Craigavon, Portadown and Lurgan will develop and thrive over the next 20 years and sets out a strategy for regeneration.

Recovery and Growth Framework (2021)

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.

It 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.

The Armagh Place Plan (March 2022)

The Armagh Place Plan identifies that in order for Armagh to lead the way in sustainable and green thinking, we need to invest in the jobs and skills in emerging sectors that will transition us away from fossil fuel industries. This will involve new economic opportunities in retrofitting buildings, renewable energy, social economy, digital skills and advanced manufacturing. It also recognises that becoming self-sufficient and resilient as a community means being able to reduce waste and bring it back into new uses, working towards a circular economy. The Place Plan acknowledges that by bringing waste products back into the economy, innovative new production techniques and business ideas could be developed, creating new economic opportunities and growth areas for the city.

The Banbridge Place Plan (March 2024)

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.

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. Actions of relevance to this subject area include improving connectivity in public places and the creation of a digital innovation hub.

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 within 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, serving as a road map 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.

Other Documents, Strategies and Studies

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council- Rural Broadband Research

Broadband connectivity is a critical requirement for economic development and social inclusion. The Rural Broadband Research report identifies that issues and difficulties with broadband provision have a growing impact upon the quality of life experienced by rural dwellers and businesses, given the increasing reliance on internet-based technology to access information for education and business, sharing information and files as well as marketing and business promotion.

iBub Communications was commissioned by Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council to undertake research across four village areas⁴ in the borough in order to identify current levels of broadband provision in these areas including identifying issues in relation to coverage and available speeds and identify potential solutions that could be implemented within each of the four areas to improve broadband provision for local residents and businesses.

The research involved consideration of a broad level of information including background research, baseline area analysis, consultation process, options development and assessment process from which a number of key actions and points were highlighted, including the recognition that issues experienced with broadband provision are having a significant impact upon the quality of life experienced by residents and inhibiting the operations and growth of local businesses.

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Digital Strategy (2018)

The Councils Digital Strategy acknowledges that digital technology is increasingly permeating every aspect of society and recognises that the digital economy (an economy that is driven by digital technologies) can ensure that Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon can provide the

⁴ Clady Milltown, Blackwatertown, Ednego / Kilmacrew and Donaghcloney

connectivity and access to services previously only enjoyed by its much larger neighbours and urbanisations. The Strategy highlights the Councils commitment to ensuring that all stakeholders in our community are given the best chance to harness the opportunities that the digital transformation will bring.

The Strategy outlines the following commitments:

- Advance a local response to digital transformation;
- complement central government initiatives;
- play an advocacy role for the Borough in developing its digital development needs; and
- provide leadership and focus in growing the digital sector and its role within the wider Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon economy.

Mid-Southwest (MSW) Regional Economic Strategy (2020)

The MSW Region makes up almost half of Northern Irelands land mass and encompasses three Northern Ireland Council areas: Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon; Fermanagh and Omagh and Mid Ulster.

The Strategy sets out a vision and ambition for the region, identifies the opportunities and challenges that will be faced and sets out the priority pillars around which future investment and actions will be framed. Additionally, the Strategy provides a high-level indication of potential specific projects/interventions that may sit under each of the pillars. The priority pillars of the Strategy are as follows:

- Future proofing the skills base
- Enabling infrastructure
- Boosting innovation and digital capacity
- Building a high performing visitor / tourist economy

The Strategy acknowledges that investment in infrastructure is a critical enabler to realising growth and sets out a number of potential actions / project concepts for development including enhancements to physical connectivity / roads infrastructure. The Strategy also identifies the Carn and Seagoe area (Within Craigavon Urban Area) as a major employment hub within the MSW, that 'exemplifies the positioning of our region as the 'economic engine of NI' and highlights, in respect to digital investment, the need to underpin the innovation 'project hotspots' in selected localities within the MSW region.

4.0 Borough Profile

Borough Profile - Telecommunications

NI Broadband and Mobile Coverage

The Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) is a local authority-led development organisation which works in the cross-border areas of Northern Ireland (involving NI Councils of Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon, Fermanagh & Omagh, and Mid Ulster) and Ireland (involving Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan and Sligo)).

ICBAN was tasked by the local authority members, on both sides of the border, to seek solutions to the gaps in broadband service provision and produced a number of reports highlighting the challenges faced in broadband infrastructure investments and service delivery.

‘Fibre at a Crossroads’ (ICBAN, 2017) acknowledged that broadband is an important issue within Northern Ireland, particularly for those without access to any service or a quality service and it is becoming increasingly important for people’s everyday lives. It also identified that rural dwellers and businesses are more likely to have service issues / lack of any service than their urban counterparts. Furthermore, it recognised that broadband connectivity is a key component in Northern Ireland’s economy yet issues with service performance were still regularly raised in complaints. Whilst ICBAN acknowledged an improvement in service from 2010-2017, it highlighted that more needed to be done in respect of broadband investment and service delivery.

Northern Ireland Broadband Coverage Statistics⁵

- 695,000 homes in Northern Ireland have access to full-fibre broadband connections; over 155,000 more than last year. These connections can deliver much higher download speeds and are also more reliable than older, copper-based broadband.
- Among the four UK nations, Northern Ireland (85%) has the highest availability of full fibre services, compared to England (41%), Scotland (41%) and Wales (40%).
- Northern Ireland’s full fibre position is a result of a combination of aggressive commercial rollout and publicly funded schemes designed to improve broadband in rural areas.
- Superfast broadband (at least 30 Mbit/s) is available to 94% of premises in Northern Ireland up from 91% the previous year.
- The average broadband download speeds in Northern Ireland have increased by 40% to 115 Mbit/s, up from 82 Mbit/s in 2021, and reflects increasing availability and take-up of faster broadband services.
- The average download speeds are lower in rural areas but have increased to 68 Mbit/s in 2022, compared to 50 Mbit/s in 2021.
- The average monthly broadband data use in Northern Ireland has increased to 481 GB per connection in 2022.

⁵ Source of information: Ofcom Connected Nations 2022 Northern Ireland Report

Local authority	>=30Mbit/s (Superfast)	Change since 2021	Full fibre	Change since 2021
Belfast	99%	-	90%	+7 ppt
Ards and North Down	96%	+1 ppt	89%	+7 ppt
Lisburn and Castlereagh	96%	+2 ppt	86%	+15 ppt
Antrim and Newtownabbey	93%	-	87%	+12 ppt
Derry City and Strabane	94%	+3 ppt	87%	+14 ppt
Mid and East Antrim	94%	+4 ppt	87%	+13 ppt
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	94%	+5 ppt	84%	+14 ppt
Causeway Coast and Glens	93%	+6 ppt	84%	+18 ppt
Newry, Mourne and Down	92%	+4 ppt	84%	+13 ppt
Mid Ulster	88%	+8 ppt	75%	+22 ppt
Fermanagh and Omagh	86%	+18 ppt	71%	+35 ppt
NI	94%	+3 ppt	85%	+14 ppt

Table 1: Coverage of superfast and full fibre broadband by NI Local Authority (% of premises)
(Source: Ofcom Connected Nations 2022 – Northern Ireland Report- Analysis of provider data)

As detailed in Table 1 above, it is evident that broadband services and speeds vary across Northern Ireland with Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough having, compared to other Local Authorities such as Belfast or Ards and Down, lower availability of superfast (>=30 Mbit/s) and full fibre services.

The Connected Nations 2022 Northern Ireland Report acknowledges that local authority areas with greater numbers of rural premises have lower availability of superfast and full-fibre services as a result of more dispersed properties in rural areas which are more expensive to provide new, faster, fixed line broadband services to.

However, in spite of this, Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon Borough has experienced a significant improvement in the availability of faster broadband services with full fibre coverage now extending to some 84% of residential premises, up from 70% in 2021 and 59% in 2020⁶.

The Connected Nations 2022 Northern Ireland Report acknowledges that the main network providers (Openreach, Virgin and Fibrus) continue to expand their full fibre footprints in Northern Ireland. For example, it highlights that in 2022 Openreach confirmed that it had doubled the number of customers connected to its full fibre network in Northern Ireland from 100,000 to 200,000 over a one-year period and currently covers around 80% of homes and businesses across Northern Ireland.

Furthermore, the Connected Nations 2022 Northern Ireland Report highlighted that Fibrus is aiming to pass 350,000 premises in Northern Ireland, including 85,000 which are part of Project Stratum, while Virgin Media continues to expand and upgrade its network.

Ofcom anticipates that the availability of full fibre services is set to expand further with the Northern Ireland Executive's Project Stratum broadband intervention scheme.

⁶ Source: Ofcom Connected Nations 2021 Northern Ireland Report

The Connected Nations 2022 Northern Ireland Report also highlights that Project Gigabit (see Investment in NI Telecommunications Infrastructure', below, for further detail) will help push Northern Ireland towards 100% full fibre availability.

Investment in NI Telecommunications Infrastructure

Northern Ireland continues to have the highest full fibre coverage of any UK nation, with increased provision of high-speed fixed broadband services in urban and rural areas⁷. This position is a result of continued investment, including the following programmes and projects:

Northern Ireland Broadband Investment Programme (NIBIP) (Department for the Economy)

The Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project (NIBIP) was part of a larger, national Broadband Improvement Project, which lays new fibre optic telephone lines from existing exchanges to new, small broadband exchanges in more rural areas. The build phase for the project was completed in 2017, with the take-up phase expected to be complete by December 2021.

Superfast Rollout Programme (SRP2) (Department for Economy)

The build phase of the Superfast Rollout Programme (SRP2) was completed in 2018 and was a project involving the laying of new fibre optic telephone lines to cabinets (green cabinets at the side of roads), and in some cases to premises.

Project Stratum (Department for Economy)

Project Stratum aims to improve broadband connectivity by extending Next Generation Access (NGA) broadband infrastructure. It is an investment of £150m by the Department for the Economy (DfE) and £15m by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

The overarching objective for Project Stratum is to provide universal, or near universal, high speed broadband coverage in Northern Ireland by increasing provision (broadband access infrastructure such as cables, ducts, and other electronic systems), in areas which are currently poorly served and not capable of attracting wholly commercial investment. Project Stratum aims to improve broadband connectivity by extending Next Generation Access (NGA) broadband infrastructure to approximately 79,000 premises across Northern Ireland that cannot yet access NGA broadband services.

In August 2021, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport announced it would allocate a further £25m towards bringing an additional 8,500 premises into Project Stratum, including premises omitted from the original contract due to lack of funding, as well as approximately 6,000 additional premises which have recently been identified as eligible.

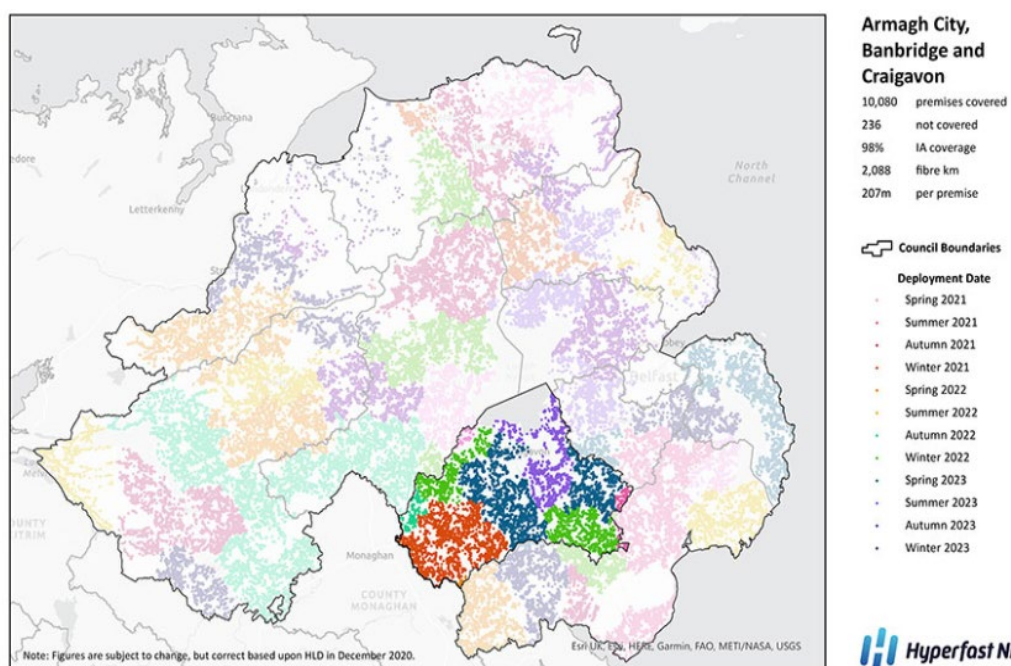
As of October 2022,⁸ Project Stratum had reached the halfway mark, with more than 46,000 premises passed. However, additional capital funding of £32 million has been secured⁹ in order to bring an extra 8,500 premises, including 2,500 hard-to-reach premises, into its broadband intervention scheme, Project Stratum. This will bring the total number of premises to benefit from Project Stratum to 85,000. The deployment of the new full fibre network to

⁷ Source: Ofcom Connected Nations 2022 Northern Ireland Report

⁸ Source: Ofcom 2022 UK Report

⁹ Source: Ofcom 2022 UK Report – The Department for the Economy secured funding from The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the Department for Education and the Department of Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Affairs. Fibrus Networks, which is delivering Stratum, also made an additional contribution.

reach all 85,000 premises will continue across four extended quarters of network build, with Fibrus Networks expected to complete deployment by March 2025.



Map 1: Stratum Network Deployment by Council Areas (Source: Broadband Improvement - Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk))

The timing for Project Stratum high speed broadband is available to view on:

<https://hyperfastni.com/>

Within Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council an estimated 10,080 premises are expected to benefit from Project Stratum. As of 2023, the current timing for deployment in the Borough is Spring / Summer 2023 (Source: Hyperfast NI Portal), however it is noted that this may be subject to change.

Project Gigabit¹⁰

In 2022, following £25 million investment from the UK Government, more than 900 public buildings in Northern Ireland were connected to high-speed 'gigabit broadband' as part of two UK-Government-funded schemes to level up public services. This included 240 GP surgeries, 148 community centres, 90 council offices, 79 recycling centres, 69 fire stations and 63 leisure centres.

Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon – Local Full Fibre Network Project

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council was successful in securing money from the Department of Digital Culture, Media and Sport to help install full fibre "Gigabit capable" broadband in public sector buildings. These include sites such as community centres, Council buildings, fire stations, GP surgeries and health clinics.

¹⁰ Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/more-than-900-public-buildings-in-northern-ireland-get-broadband-boost>

This project was aimed at improving the infrastructure of Gigabit capability throughout the Borough and to set the foundations for full fibre to be rolled out to residential and commercial properties in separate commercial investment plans. The benefits of Full Fibre Networks to Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough include:

- Provision of better, cheaper and easier ways to keep in touch with friends and family across the world; creating opportunities to work and learn successfully from home, revolutionising our lives.
- Lightning quick connection speeds with fibre access to cloud computing and video conferencing.
- Fibre broadband can help transform existing businesses and enable new start-ups to get established. Reliable and consistent connectivity can boost productivity, even at the busiest times, regardless of the number of users online, and make it possible to build new business contacts around the world, reduce travel, and save money.
- Fibre broadband can revolutionise businesses can communicate with customers and colleagues – improving customer service and cutting bills by speaking face to face with clients using video conference platforms for ‘virtual’ meetings in real-time.

Mobile Coverage in Northern Ireland¹¹

- 5G networks are still in the early stages of deployment and coverage in Northern Ireland (outside of premises) from individual mobile network operators ranges from 14-26% (based on High Confidence measure¹²).
- Individual operators (EE, Virgin Media O2, Three and Vodafone) provide good 4G coverage across Northern Ireland, with geographic mobile coverage ranging from 88-92% (up from 87-92% in 2021), depending on the operator. Coverage from all four operators is available across 81% of Northern Ireland, up from 79% in 2021.
- Voice calls are available across 89-98% of Northern Ireland, depending on the operator while coverage from all operators is available across 87% of Northern Ireland, which remains unchanged from 2021.

	Virgin Media O2	Vodafone	EE	Three
Geographic – 4G	90%	92%	88%	92%
Geographic – voice	98%	98%	89%	94%
Indoor premises – 4G	91%	91%	85%	85%
Indoor premises – voice	99%	98%	89%	91%
Outdoor premises – 4G	98%	99%	98%	98%
Outdoor premises - voice	99+%	99+%	98%	99%

Source: Ofcom analysis of operator data.

Table 2: Mobile coverage by operator in Northern Ireland (Source Ofcom Connected Nations 2022 – Northern Ireland Report- Analysis of provider data)

The Connected Nations 2022 Northern Ireland Report highlights that in recent years, there has been increased consolidation and sharing of masts between Virgin Media O2 and Vodafone, and between EE and Three, which has seen coverage between sharing network providers converge. Furthermore, the report highlights that there are also more than 30 virtual network operators including Sky, Virgin Mobile, giffgaff and Tesco Mobile.

¹¹ Source: Ofcom Connected Nations 2022 Northern Ireland Report

¹² Ofcom's confidence levels reflect the likelihood of coverage predicted by the mobile network operators matching up to coverage on the ground for consumers in a particular location

Investment in NI Mobile Coverage Infrastructure

The Shared Rural Network (SRN) Project¹³

The Shared Rural Network (SRN) project was agreed between the UK Government and the four main UK mobile network operators (EE, O2, Three and Vodafone) in March 2020. The SRN project is aimed at transforming mobile coverage by making 4G mobile broadband available to 95% of the UK, aligning with the UK Government's ambition of achieving 95% coverage of the UK landmass by 2025. It is expected that the SRN project will also extend coverage to 280,000 premises and an additional 16,000km of roads within the UK.

It is anticipated that the improvements will be felt more in rural areas where mobile coverage is lower presently, therefore helping to boost productivity and attract investment. Under the SRN all new masts will be shared between multiple network operators, reducing the number of masts required to deliver the improvements to mobile coverage.

As detailed in the Connected Nations 2022 Northern Ireland Report each mobile network operator (MNO) is committed to reaching 88% 4G coverage of UK landmass by 2024, and 90% of landmass by 2027. The UK Government also expects that as a result of this activity there will be good 4G coverage available across 95% of the UK landmass by the end of 2025. For Northern Ireland specifically, it is expected that by 2026 4G mobile coverage will reach 98% from at least one operator, and 85% from all four operators. The improvements will be felt more in rural areas where mobile coverage is lower presently.

Local authority	4G coverage from all MNOs		4G coverage from at least one MNO	
	Pre-SRN	Forecast post-SRN	Pre-SRN	Forecast post-SRN
Antrim and Newtownabbey	86%	94%	99%	99%
Ards and North Down	85%	99%	99%	99%
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	82%	93%	99%	99%
Causeway Coast and Glens	77%	87%	96%	99%
Derry City and Strabane	61%	76%	92%	97%
Fermanagh and Omagh	71%	79%	96%	98%
Lisburn and Castlereagh	88%	96%	99%	99%
Mid Ulster	73%	87%	99%	99%
Mid and East Antrim	81%	88%	98%	98%
Newry, Mourne and Down	67%	80%	94%	98%

Table 3: Coverage Predictions / Forecast for 4G coverage pre and post Shared Rural Network by local Authority (excluding Belfast) Source: Ofcom Connected Nations 2021 – Northern Ireland Report

¹³ Source: Connected Nations 2021 Northern Ireland Report and Connected Nations 2022 Northern Ireland Report

Borough Profile – Energy

Electricity and Gas Generation and Consumption in Northern Ireland¹⁴

There are three major fossil-fuel based power generating sites in Northern Ireland:

- Ballylumford (gas fuelled), with an installed capacity of over 730 MW.¹⁵
- Coolkeeragh (gas fuelled) with an installed capacity of some 470 MW.
- Kilroot (mainly coal and oil fuelled) with an installed capacity of some 700 MW.

In addition, Northern Ireland also has renewable energy sources, in addition to interconnection with the Scottish grid and the Republic of Ireland grid, which help to maintain security of supply.

Energy in Northern Ireland 2022 (DfE, June 2022) highlighted the following key statistics regarding electricity and gas in Northern Ireland:

- In 2021 (and each year since 2016) Northern Ireland was able to meet all (or the overwhelming majority of) its own electricity demands without relying on imports or transfers of electricity from other countries.
- In 2021, Northern Ireland was a net exporter in terms of electricity trades with the Republic of Ireland (via the North South tie-lines). Northern Ireland exported more than was imported in each year 2017 to 2021 with exports to Ireland in 2021 (1,417 GWh) at their highest level since 2006.
- In 2021, Northern Ireland was a net importer of electricity from Scotland (via the Moyle interconnector). Indeed, electricity transfers from Scotland in 2021 (1,637 GWh) were at their highest level since 2012.
- In terms of the fuel type used for electricity generation, in Northern Ireland in 2020 renewables (45.6%) accounted for a higher share than gas (42.5%). Northern Ireland's proportion of electricity generated from gas was similar to England (39.1%), significantly lower than Wales (55.7%) but significantly higher than in Scotland (10.4%).
- In 2021, Electricity consumption was the second lowest in the thirteen years (around 6% lower compared to 2009 and over 10% lower than the peak in 2010.).
- The total number of gas connections in Northern Ireland continues to rise each year, although rises were not seen across all market segments. Over the five-year period 2016 to 2021 the total number of gas connections in Northern Ireland rose substantially, by over 75,000 or 33%, with gas consumption rising by 26% over the same period.
- In 2019 52,476 GWh of total energy was consumed in Northern Ireland. Consumption of these energy products in 2019 was 4% higher than in 2015.
- Of the 28,833 GWh of petroleum products consumed in Northern Ireland in 2019, 45% was for Road Transport; a further 26% was due to domestic consumption and around 22% was consumption by industry.
- In Northern Ireland consumption of Bioenergy and Wastes increased by nearly 80% over the period 2015-2019.

Energy Consumption in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough

The 'Energy In Northern Ireland 2022' (DfE 2022) report also identified the following in respect of energy consumption.¹⁶ in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough in 2019:

¹⁴ Source: Energy in Northern Ireland 2022 (DfE)

¹⁵ Note: Capacities of the electricity generating sites are subject to change from year to year

¹⁶ Based on final energy consumption data for 2019 published by Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) at District Council Area level. Note: In 2023 BEIS was split to form: the Department for Business

- Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon council area was the district council with the largest share of Northern Ireland consumption of petroleum products in 2019 (at 3,678 GWh or 12.8% of total NI consumption).
- Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon council area had more than two and a half times the petroleum products consumption than the council area with the lowest consumption of petroleum products in 2019 (Ards & North Down which had 1,426 GWh of consumption or 4.9% of the total).
- Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon council area was the district council with the second highest electricity consumption in Northern Ireland.
- Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon council areas total energy consumption represented 11.6% of the total energy consumption in Northern Ireland.
- During the 2018-2020 period, there was a 29% increase in the number of gas meters Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon council area.
- Over 2018 to 2020 gas consumption in Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon council area rose from 620GWh to 693GWh.

Electricity Transmission and Distribution in Northern Ireland¹⁷

‘Transmission’ is the bulk transfer of electrical energy from large electricity generators to electrical substations whilst ‘electricity distribution’ relates to the local wiring between high-voltage substations and customers is referred to as electric power distribution.

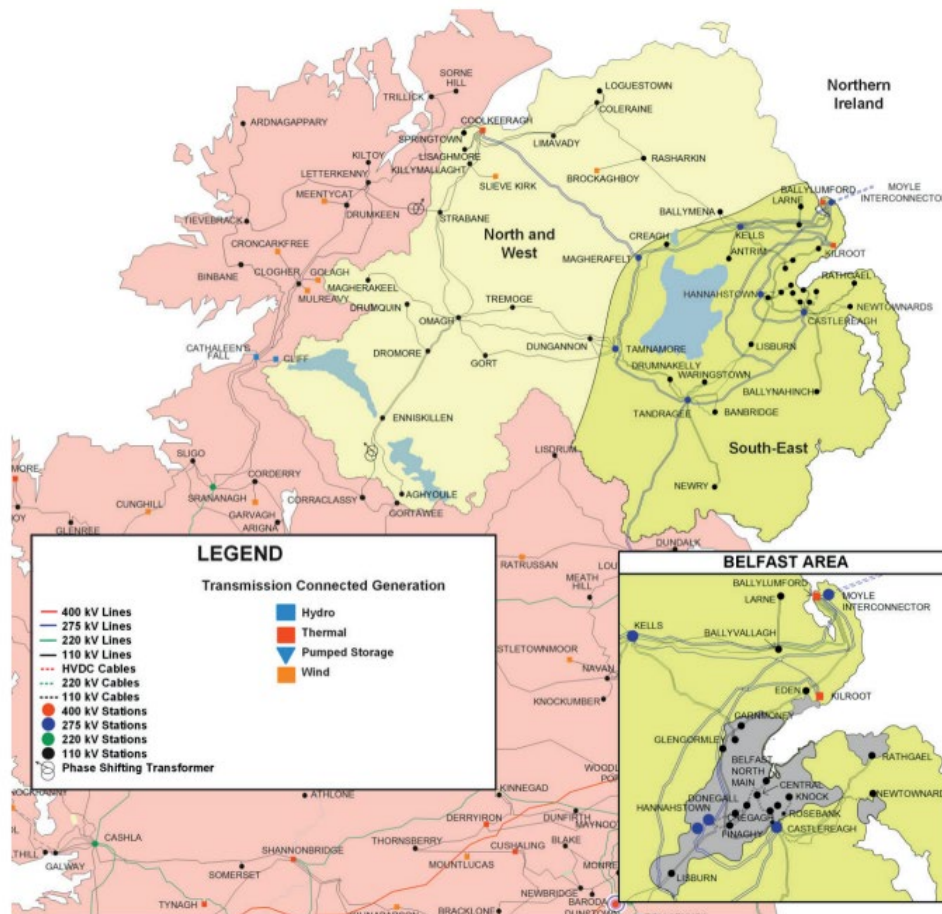
The transmission network is operated by the System Operator for Northern Ireland (SONI) and ownership of the transmission system lies with Northern Ireland Electricity Networks Ltd (NIE Networks).

The transmission network is a network of interconnected systems consisting of substations, overhead pylons and underground cables. NIE Networks is responsible for transmission construction and maintenance and also operating the distribution network which transports electricity to customers in both the domestic and non-domestic sectors. Map 2 below depicts Northern Ireland’s Electricity Transmission System Network.

As acknowledged in ‘Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap’ (Version 1.1, July 2023, SONI & EirGrid), as detailed in Section 3.0, the electricity grid requires unprecedented change in order to meet the renewable energy and carbon budget targets. It identifies that many projects are needed to reinforce the network infrastructure, acknowledging that whilst optimising the use of existing network infrastructure is key the use of innovative technologies could help to manage network congestion and maximise capacity.

and Trade (DBT), the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT).

¹⁷ Source of information: Energy in Northern Ireland 2020 (DfE)



Map 2: Northern Ireland's Electricity Transmission System Network (Source: Transmission Development Plan for Northern Ireland 2021-2030)

The Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap (Version 1.1) proposes, alongside other committed projects, four large scale renewable hubs, and 16 network projects in Ireland alongside 3 three network projects in Northern Ireland. The projects proposed in Northern Ireland involve the uprating of existing circuits so that an existing line or cable is capable of taking more power at the same voltage and the development of new substations, which would allow new electricity generators or users to connect to the grid.

Electricity Network Capacity

Northern Ireland Electricity Networks 'Network Capacity Map'¹⁸ provides an indication of the networks capability to connect loads greater than 200 Amps and generators applying under G99 to major substations.

As of Summer 2023, the capacity map indicates that there are areas within the Borough which have low available capacity and would likely require substantial network reinforcement to facilitate additional generation, including Armagh North, Keady Central, Armagh central, Markethill Central, Richill Central, Benburb and Tullygoonigan. It is, however, important to note that the data presented on the capacity map is provided as an indication only and is subject to change.

¹⁸ [Connect a new home, business or property to our network | Northern Ireland Electricity Networks \(nienetworks.co.uk\)](https://nienetworks.co.uk)

North South Interconnector¹⁹

The proposed North South Interconnector project involves the construction of a 400kV overhead line that would serve to connect Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland's electricity grids. The project will allow for the flow of 900 MW of renewable electricity across the border, in both directions, enough to power 600,000 homes on green energy. It is proposed that the interconnector, which will be built and maintained by NIE Networks, will commence at a substation in Turleenan, Co Tyrone and then run into Counties Armagh, Monaghan, Cavan and Meath.

The interconnector will not only be part of Northern Ireland's response to climate change but will also reduce consumer costs. It is anticipated that the project will save Northern Ireland customers approximately £20m each year and will improve the reliability and security of the electricity supply.

The route and nature of the proposed Interconnector has proven to be a contentious issue. The preferred option and the applications lodged by SONI / Eirgrid are for over ground pylons, a more cost-effective scheme. Although it has been highlighted by SONI that failure to progress the interconnector will leave NI vulnerable to electricity supply 'blackouts' (echoed by the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment (DETI) and the NI Utility Regulator) the proposed over ground interconnector option has received opposition from residents along the route, and beyond, who would prefer the connector cables to be located underground.

In July 2019 SONI submitted updated environmental information on the proposed North South Interconnector project to the Department for Infrastructure, as part of the planning process. In the 'Further Environmental Information 2019 addendum', SONI presents a number of detailed technical environmental assessments, which were undertaken in 2019. These deal with issues such as ecology, the local landscape, the local community, transport and socio-economic impacts. The report concluded that there is no change to the environmental information previously submitted by SONI.

In September 2020 Minister Mallon MLA approved planning permission for the North South Interconnector, however this was legally challenged. In October 2021 Belfast's High Court upheld Planning Approvals for the North South Interconnector project.

As of February 2022, the window to appeal the High Court decision has expired and preparation to deliver the project has commenced, with procurement for the supply of materials for the construction of the overhead line underway and testing of the final pylon designs being undertaken. It is anticipated that construction will begin in 2023, with the project fully operational by 2026.

Gas Transmission and Distribution

Three Distribution Network Operators currently operate within Northern Ireland²⁰, Phoenix Natural Gas (own and operate the distribution network in the Greater Belfast (including Larne) and 'East Down' area), Firmus Energy (Distribution) Limited (own and operate the distribution network in the 'Ten Towns' area) and SGN Natural Gas (own and operate the distribution network in the main conurbations in the west of Northern Ireland).

There are four gas transmission pipelines in Northern Ireland²¹:

¹⁹ Source of information [What's Happening Now? \(soni.ltd.uk\)](https://www.soni.ltd.uk)

²⁰ Source: Northern Ireland Gas Capacity Statement 2021/22 – 2030/31

²¹ Source Energy in Northern Ireland 2022 (DfE)

1. Scotland to Northern Ireland Pipeline (SNIP) is 135 kilometres long and runs from Twynholm in Scotland to Ballylumford.
2. Belfast Gas Transmission Pipeline (BGTP) is 26 kilometres long and is connected to the SNIP and to the Northwest Pipeline.
3. Northwest Pipeline (NWP) is 112 kilometres long and runs from Carrickfergus to Coolkeeragh power station.
4. South North Pipeline (SNP) is 156 kilometres long and runs from County Antrim to Gormanstown in County Meath, Ireland where it links into the NWP.



Map 3: Map of Gas Transmission Pipelines (Source: Northern Ireland Gas Capacity Statement 2021/22 – 2030/31)

Gas Supply in Northern Ireland²²

The active gas suppliers in the 'Ten Towns' area (includes Craigavon, Banbridge and Armagh) are:

- Firmus energy- supplies gas to domestic and industrial & commercial customers
- Flogas- only supplies gas to industrial & commercial customers
- Go Power - only supplies gas to industrial & commercial customers
- SSE Airtricity - only supplies gas to industrial & commercial customers
- Electric Ireland- only supplies gas to industrial & commercial customers

²² Source Energy in Northern Ireland 2022 (DfE)

During the period 2016 to 2021 the total number of gas connections in Northern Ireland has risen significantly (by over 75,000 connections or 33%). Over this period gas connections in the Ten Towns area have risen by approximately 29,000 connections or 90%.

By the end of September 2021, Firmus Energy had connected 59,431 customers in the 'ten towns' licence area and taken natural gas to some 20 additional urban areas, including Tandragee, Warrenpoint, Bushmills, Richhill, and Moy.²³

Gas to the West

In February 2015, the Utility Regulator awarded gas conveyance licences to West Transmission Ltd (part of the Mutual Energy Group) and SGN Natural Gas to provide new infrastructure to connect eight further towns in the West to gas.

The major infrastructure within this £250 million project was completed in 2019 and has brought natural gas to Dungannon, Coalisland, Cookstown, Magherafelt, Omagh, Enniskillen, Derrylin and Strabane. The new gas networks in the West are expected to serve some 40,000 businesses and households, with around 2,175 consumers connected to date.²⁴

Borough Profile- Water Supply and Sewerage Infrastructure

Water Supply in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough

NI Water Infrastructure²⁵

NI Water has the responsibility for delivering the water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland. It costs approximately £460m each year to deliver water services in Northern Ireland, which includes the operation and maintenance of thousands of assets including:

- Over 45,000km of water mains and sewers
- 26 impounding reservoirs
- 25 water treatment works
- 354 pumping stations (drinking water)
- 363 service reservoirs
- 1019 wastewater treatment works
- 66 sludge management centres

Price Control 21 (PC 21) acknowledges that NI is facing unprecedented risks to the environment and to the economy arising from its aging water and sewerage infrastructure and the current climate emergency.²⁶

In addition to setting out the performance improvements NI Water are committing to delivering, the PC 21 business plan set out the investment required to address the critical needs required to deliver high quality drinking water and return wastewater safely to the environment, both now and in the future. The PC21 business plan was designed to start reversing decades of underinvestment in wastewater, with over £2 billion agreed for essential upgrades to protect public health, the environment, and support economic growth across Northern Ireland. The

²³ Source: Northern Ireland Executive [Gas | Northern Ireland Executive](#)

²⁴ Source: Northern Ireland Executive [Gas | Northern Ireland Executive](#)

²⁵ Source: Our Strategy 2021-2046 (NI Water)

²⁶ NI Water Price Control 21 Business Plan - April 2021 to March 2027 (NI Water)

key delivery window being PC21 Years 4 to 6 (from 2024 to 2027) when major projects were due to progress.

However, since 2024 the funding situation has shifted dramatically. Instead of the approx. £500–£600 million per year agreed with the Utility Regulator, NI water have been advised to plan on £321 million annually. That creates roughly a £500 - 600 million shortfall across PC21, with this reduced level expected to continue beyond the PC21 period. As a result, NI Water has had to focus funding on keeping existing assets running, maintaining essential operations, and ensuring safe drinking water. This leaves very limited scope for wastewater upgrades.

Drinking Water Quality in Northern Ireland

The Drinking Water Quality in Northern Ireland report (NIEA, November 2024) provides an independent assessment of drinking water quality of both public and private supplies for 2023. It reports that the overall public drinking water quality for 2023 remained high with 99.92% compliance, a slight increase from 2022 (99.91%) and the compliance of private water supplies was 99.11%, also an increase from 2022 (99.02%).

Whilst it emphasises the risk that blue-green algae blooms pose to public drinking water; the report highlights that there were no water quality issues affecting public health as a consequence of these blooms in 2023.

The report advises that 48 water quality events occurred in 2023, the same as during 2022. Approximately 7 of these events related to the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, including a period of high-water demand due to hot and dry weather.

NI Drinking Water Annual Report 2024 (NI Water)

Northern Ireland Water's (NI Water) Annual Drinking Water Quality report highlights that the overall drinking water quality compliance in 2024 for Northern Ireland was 99.98%, above the Price Control 2021-2027 (PC21) target of 99.83%.

The compliance at customer tap (including Supply Points) within Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough (2019-2024) is detailed in the following table:

Year	Percentage compliance
2019	99.9%
2020	99.9%
2021	99.7%
2022	99.9%
2023	99.9%
2024	99.9%

With the exception of 2021, the water quality compliance at customer tap within the Borough has been 99.9%, which is above the Northern Ireland and ABC compliance targets of 99.7%.

Within Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough there are eight water supply zones, wholly are partially within the Council Area:

- Clay Lake, Keady
- Seagahan Armagh
- Castor Bay Tandragee

- Castor Bay Portadown
- Castor Bay Craigavon East
- Castor Bay Moira
- Fofanny Dromore
- Fofanny Hilltown

The report also sets out the capital investment programme to maintain and safeguard water quality for the reporting period. The 2024 water quality capital works programmes affecting the council area include the Drought Mitigation Project, Clean Water Network Modelling and new watermains New (Lead Pipe Replacement Programme).

The full list of water quality capital works programmes affecting the council area can be found at <https://www.niwater.com/media/geso5q40/2024-ni-water-drinking-quality-annual-report.pdf>

Wastewater System Capacity in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough

The potential capacity of the existing sewerage infrastructure in the Borough will have a bearing on whether or not land is zoned for new development. The proximity to existing Waste Water Treatment Works (WwTW) will also be a factor in considering the location of new development land as it is generally desirable to avoid land which is near existing treatment works as these can cause nuisance.

The settlements in the Borough that are served by WwTWs are detailed in Appendix 1. This WwTW capacity document was developed by Northern Ireland Water (August 2025) as part of a comprehensive assessment of wastewater capacity in the Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Borough Council area. The information detailed in this table indicates, using a traffic light system, the current planning status of WwTW (their capacity to receive additional waste beyond that already built or committed (i.e. planning application approvals)), and the current network status, such as the sewer pipe capacity to carry wastewater.

This information serves as a valuable resource to help local authorities and stakeholders plan for future infrastructure developments and wastewater management and helps to identify where settlement expansion may be restricted (without WwTW upgrade or provision of a private works). It is, however, important to note that the headroom table is based on an analysis of the existing Area Plan settlement boundaries. As such, could be subject to change if any of the settlement boundaries change as a result of the LDP.

In respect of the Hubs; Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Urban Area (comprising Portadown, Central Craigavon & Lurgan), the Headroom Table indicates that although there is currently available capacity in the WwTW for new development, there is currently limited capacity in the network (i.e. as of August 2025). In respect of the estimation of WwTW capacity based on LDP Growth Factors, it is indicated in the Headroom table that all of the Hubs have capacity for a growth factor of 20% i.e. there is reasonable capacity.

Whilst there is currently available capacity in the WwTWs for new development for four of the local towns²⁷- Dromore, Gilford, Keady and Tandragee- there is currently no capacity in the WwTW for new development in Markethill and Rathfriland. Furthermore, in respect of the estimated WwTW capacity, based on the LDP Growth Factors of 5, 10 and 20 %, there is insufficient capacity in Markethill and Rathfriland. Dromore currently has no capacity in the

²⁷ Tandragee, Markethill, Dromore, Gilford, Rathfriland and Keady

network and has insufficient estimated capacity based on the LDP Growth Factors of 10% and 20%.

It is important to note that there is no public sewerage network available for a number of the small settlements, including Ballyroney, Closkelt, Stonebridge and Tassagh. Of the villages and remaining small settlements, 23 currently have no WwTW capacity (i.e. new connections refused) including Tullylish, Moneyslane, Derrynoose, Annaclone, Lawrencetown and Ballynabragget. Some of these settlements, including Waringstown, Mountnorris and Donaghcloney also have no current capacity in the network.

According to the Headroom Table, the upgrade of the Robinsonstown Wastewater Treatment Works was programmed to commence during the 2025/26 financial year, and the project has commenced and positive planning responses are able to be issued. NI Water continues to work closely with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) on the funding required to facilitate the delivery of its capital investment programme for the remainder of the PC21 Price Control period (2025 – 2028).

The accompanying 'Network Issues' footnotes clarify that negative planning responses may be provided by NI Water in parts of certain catchments, including Armagh City, Ballynacorr, Dromore, Gilford, Markethill, Mountnorris, Moy, Rathfriland Drumlough, Richhill, Tandragee and Waringstown wastewater networks as NI Water's sewer network capacity mapping tool and sewer network modelling activities have identified capacity issues in these locations²⁸. It is, however, important to note that in areas where there are constraints within the wastewater network, but there is still capacity at the WwTW it may still be possible to find a bespoke drainage solution to accommodate development. This would be identified by NI Water's solution engineering team working with the developer through the Wastewater Impact Process, and any solutions identified would be developer led and funded

The information contained in Appendix 1 is updated annually by NI Water in order to ensure that it remains current and reflects any changes that may occur. As such, the Council is committed to collaborating closely with NI Water throughout the preparation of the LDP.

²⁸ NI Water can consider the provision of positive planning responses where developers can demonstrate (including calculations): 1. Like for like development 2. Extant previously approved development 3. Where the development will offer a reduced loading on the sewer network, which may include storm separation and/or attenuation (may be subject to Article 154)

5.0 Preferred Options Paper

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.

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. The Key Issues emerged from our evidence base; from engagement with Elected Members and Section 75 Groups; and from formal and informal consultation with Statutory Consultation Bodies. In order to inform the POP, a preliminary review of operational planning policy was also carried out, with a commitment to complete a more detailed policy review in advance of the Plan Strategy.

The POP did not cover every issue, policy and proposal that will be included in the LDP. Instead, the POP focused upon the main planning issues that had been identified through the work undertaken in developing the evidence base for the LDP, including consultation with statutory consultees and council officials, workshops with Elected Members and through the Community Plan process.

A total of 201 responses, from members of the public and statutory consultees, were received during the 9-week public consultation period, these included a wide range of comments in relation to the POP, supporting documents and the POP consultation process.

Key Issue

Key Issue ECN 12 'Facilitating sustainable infrastructure, telecommunications and utilities development to meet the needs of the Borough.'

Preferred Option

The preferred approach to ECN 12 recommended providing a criteria-based policy in-line with existing policies and regional direction. The POP acknowledged that the provision of a reliable and modern infrastructure, telecommunications and utilities network is not only crucial to everyday living and our quality of life, but it is also essential to support sustainable growth and encourage investment in the Borough. It also recognised that as this sector continues to grow, so shall the requirements and demand for further, high quality infrastructure to meet our social and economic needs.

The preferred option sought to bring forward a criterion-based approach towards infrastructure, telecommunications and utilities development in line with the existing planning policies in PPS 10 (Telecommunications), PPS 11 (Waste Management), PPS 21 (re. non-mains sewerage) and PSRNI (PSU 8 and 11). However, the policy wording would be updated to reflect regional direction in the SPPS and ensure that such infrastructure is developed in an efficient and effective manner, whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum.

Summary of POP Commitments

POP Commitments in respect of telecommunications and utilities development (including energy supply (electricity and gas), water and sewerage) included:

- Providing a criterion-based policy in-line with existing policies and regional direction, however the policy wording would be updated to reflect regional direction in the SPPS and

ensure that such infrastructure is developed in an efficient and effective manner, whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum.

- Updating policy wording to ensure that undue interference that may be caused to mobile phone services, media broadcasting and wireless broadband services by new telecommunications development is minimised as far as practicable, so to align with regional direction of the SPPS.
- Allocating specific sites for major new telecommunications development, subject to criteria, which may be required over the plan period so to align with regional direction in the SPPS and assist in the delivery of the Council's commitment to identifying solutions for our infrastructure requirements in order to ensure that the Borough is an enticing environment for investment.
- Provision of a clear and robust policy framework that will support investment in telecommunications infrastructure, so that rural broadband deficiencies can be addressed as viable solutions become available.
- Updating policy wording to ensure that the development of new power lines comply with the 1998 International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) to minimise the exposure to electric, magnetic and electromagnetic fields in order to provide protection against known adverse health impacts.
- Removal of any references to the Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) in accordance with the recommendations of the Revised Waste Management Strategy 'Delivering Resource Efficiency' (2013).
- Consideration will also be given to the future capacity of water, sewerage and waste treatment infrastructure when zoning land for development to ensure that they are capable of accommodating future growth.

POP Representations

Of the total 201 responses received in respect of the POP, 35 referred to Key Issue ECN 12. Whilst only 49% of these responses were categorised as being generally supportive of the preferred approach, a significant number (43%) were considered to be non-committal (or unclear), with only 8% of the responses categorised as unsupportive.

One of the respondents highlighted that there was a need for the LDP to respond to recent technological advances in sustainable infrastructure, telecommunications and utilities development (POP ref 179) whilst a number of respondents acknowledged the need to address the provision of broadband, particularly in rural areas and local towns (POP ref 062 and POP ref 176).

One of the respondents suggested, as part of the integrated approach which the LDP is seeking to advocate, that early dialogue with other utility providers could lead to a co-ordinated effort in areas where infrastructure is proposed, thereby helping transform the area and its natural heritage / tourism potential for the future (POP ref 135).

One of the respondents (POP ref 001) expressed concerns regarding the visual impact of communications infrastructure, the lack of co-ordination of works by different service providers and disruption from ongoing public realm. The respondent considered that more services need to go underground and acknowledged that future infrastructure needs to be greener to be truly sustainable. One of the respondents (POP ref 135) highlighted that inappropriately located power lines can pose a risk to not only the area's scenery, but the ability to sustainably restore the wetland landscape for nature, tourism and recreational economic benefit. As such, the

respondent suggested that power lines need to be avoided, and opportunities should be explored to work with the utility regulator and others to bury lines where this is feasible.

Another respondent highlighted concerns regarding the cumulative impact of the type of structures and associated groundwork necessary (e.g. service route ways to such facilities) in the landscape and around heritage assets (POP ref 080). As such, the respondent highlighted the need to consider the protection of historic environment features, as well as the settings of individual and linked / connected heritage assets and their settings, from inappropriately sited infrastructure developments.

In specific regards to rural broadband provision, one of the respondents highlighted that future investment must prioritise areas that have the weakest internet access on the basis of objective need and suggested that the Council should investigate community schemes in response to poor broadband and were found to be viable should support such schemes (POP ref 125).

Another of the respondents, whilst supportive of the preferred approach towards infrastructure, telecommunications and utilities development, suggested that there should be some protection for Local Landscape Policy (LLPAs) or (ATCs), so to help protect them from development of telecoms masts or other infrastructure schemes that may impact on these areas (POP ref 064).

It was also highlighted that there are potential impacts from infrastructure development upon biodiversity (SA ref 001) and that measures must be in place to stop the destruction of sites of cultural significance, and to reduce and minimise the impact on both the landscape and the people who live within it (POP ref 002).

One of the respondents, although supportive of the principle of avoiding areas of high landscape sensitivity, advised that it may not always be possible to avoid sensitive locations because of the nature of generator and demand locations. Therefore, the respondent considered that policy wording should be amended to state that areas of landscape sensitivity be avoided *where possible* and not just a policy to reflect the SPPS (POP ref 099).

It was also highlighted that the Councils desired growth over the plan period will require the enhancement of the water and sewerage infrastructure and wastewater treatment facilities within the Borough, acknowledging that the Councils close working relationship with NI Water will help to determine locations where new / upgraded WWTWs may be needed to accommodate current and future demand but not at the detriment of the environment or amenity (POP ref 113).

Consideration

Modern telecommunication networks, utilities and infrastructure are an essential and beneficial component of everyday living for the people of and visitors to the Borough. They are not only crucial for maintaining our quality of life, but they are essential for supporting sustainable economic growth and stimulating investment. As such, the LDP will seek to support the relevant statutory authorities, operators and infrastructure providers in meeting the demands of planned growth, and addressing existing constraints, by facilitating telecommunication, utility and infrastructure development in an efficient and effective manner whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum, in line with regional direction.

The Council also acknowledges the importance of ensuring that the LDP is capable of responding to technological advances in sustainable infrastructure, telecommunications and utilities development. One example of this, is ensuring that the suite of LDP policies are responsive to emerging sources of energy by facilitating infrastructure associated with new energy sources. This approach will not only assist with securing a sufficient energy supply that is capable of supporting growth over the plan period but will also help to reduce energy consumption and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

The POP comments regarding the visual impact of telecommunications and utilities infrastructure are also noted, including the cumulative impact of the type of structures and associated groundwork necessary in the landscape and around heritage assets. The Council acknowledges that due to their scale and nature, infrastructure and utilities development can often have a significant impact on the environment and amenity (including visual amenity) of local communities. As such the LDP will seek to bring forward a suite of telecommunications and utilities policies that appropriately consider all relevant matters, including impact on visual amenity and environmentally sensitive features or locations, including features of the natural and historic environment. With specific regard to infrastructure and utilities development, for example, the LDP will require that proposals demonstrate that there is an overriding regional or local requirement for the proposed development, and all alternative sites / routes have been thoroughly explored, in acknowledgement that such development can have a significant impact on the environment and amenity of local communities. Furthermore, to achieve satisfactory and sustainable forms of development all proposals will be required to demonstrate that they will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment or features of the natural and historic environment, which will assist in protecting areas such as LLPAs or ATCs.

It was noted that a number of the POP responses supported the undergrounding of overhead lines / cables, with the view to protecting visual amenity. The LDP will seek to control the siting of electricity power lines and other overhead cables so to minimise their visual impact. This will include a requirement for them to avoid sensitive landscapes and designated areas of the natural / historic environment and follow natural features of the environment to ensure visual intrusion of the proposal is minimised. To further mitigate visual impact, the LDP will seek to ensure that the wirescape in urban areas is kept to a minimum, with preference being given to undergrounding of services, where appropriate. Additionally, to protect the important scenic quality of landscapes (including Strategic Landscape Policy Areas) and mitigate the visual impact of overhead lines in such locations, applicants will be required demonstrate that the feasibility of undergrounding has been fully considered as a potential mitigation measure to address potential impacts on visual amenity.

The Council acknowledges that in certain circumstances there may be occasions when sensitive landscapes, or sites and areas of the natural and historic environment cannot be avoided. This may be due to NIE's legal obligation to offer the 'least cost, technically acceptable solution' for a new connection or alteration to the electricity network, and as such the LDP needs to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate such proposals. In such instances, the LDP will retain flexibility, yet will require applicants to demonstrate why they are necessary and how landscape and visual amenity impacts will be appropriately mitigated.

The Council notes the comments regarding biodiversity and acknowledges that the benefits we derive from biodiversity cannot be understated. Conserving biodiversity is fundamental to sustainability and as such the LDP will seek to ensure that all development proposals incorporate appropriate measures to conserve, and enhance, biodiversity. It is recognised that even the smallest contribution towards biodiversity and as such all development proposals will

be required to complete a Biodiversity Checklist²⁹ and will also be considered against the relevant provisions of the Natural Heritage Policies.

In specific regards to rural broadband provision, one of the respondents highlighted that future investment must prioritise areas that have the weakest internet access on the basis of objective need and suggested that the Council should investigate community schemes in response to poor broadband and were found to be viable should support such schemes (POP ref 125). The Council's Digital Strategy, detailed in Section 3.0, highlights its commitment to advocating the needs of the Borough in relation to digital development. The Council will continue to speak out clearly across a range of issues including improving the fixed line and mobile digital infrastructure of the Council area, particularly in rural areas. The Digital Strategy states that the Council will work to tackle digital exclusion both through this strategy and through its community development, urban regeneration and rural development action plans, and in doing so, will complement UK and Northern Ireland Government initiatives.

The Council acknowledges that the desired growth over the plan period will require the enhancement of the water and sewerage infrastructure and wastewater treatment facilities within the Borough. To ensure that the needs of the community and economy can be met over lifetime of the Plan, the Council will continue to liaise with NI Water to establish locations where new / upgraded WwTWs will be required, but not at the detriment of the environment or amenity.

Whilst the provision of infrastructure and utilities development is primarily the responsibility of several different government branches, agencies and statutory bodies, the Council will continue to work with those responsible to ensure that sufficient land is allocated at LPP stage to meet anticipated needs for infrastructure and utility development.

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

www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

²⁹ Unless the application is to be accompanied by an ecological assessment or survey

6.0 Stakeholder Engagement

Internal Stakeholders

Planning Officers in Development Management & Enforcement Sections

Consultation was carried out with planning officers in the Planning Department's Development Management and Enforcement Sections 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 consideration in finalising draft policies prior to being presented at Council Members workshops.

Other Council Departments

Representatives from relevant Council departments have been engaged to ensure that due account has been taken of Council's Community Plan, as well as other Council strategies and initiatives.

This engagement was undertaken by way of individual meetings with council departments, in particular the Community Plan Team to ensure account was taken of the Council's Community Plan.

A meeting also took place with a 'Project Management Team.' The Project Management Team was comprised of Officers from a range of council departments, including Community Plan, Tourism, Economic Development, Environmental Health and Environmental Services.

Elected Members Workshops

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 the preparation of the draft dPS policies.

Engagement with the Elected Members has been facilitated through a series of workshops. That engagement included the following draft policies set out below:

- Policy TUI 1- Telecommunications Development
- Policy TUI 2- Infrastructure, Utilities and Overhead Lines

Whilst there was general agreement with the draft policy wording, Elected Members highlighted the following in respect of Policy TUI 2:

- the visual impact of overhead lines on local communities.

The visual impact of overhead lines was acknowledged, and it was agreed that the siting of electricity power lines and other overhead cables should be controlled to minimise their visual impact, including a requirement for them to follow natural features of the environment to ensure visual intrusion of the proposal is minimised.

External Stakeholders

Government departments and agencies

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 and guidance issued by the Department and other relevant government strategies and plans. As such the Council has engaged key consultees representing relevant central government departments and agencies in the preparation of the draft Plan Strategy policies.

Cross Boundary Context and Consideration of Neighbouring Council Approaches

In developing draft-planning policies for telecommunications, utilities and infrastructure development, 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 (by Lough Neagh);
- Newry Mourne and Down District Council;
- Mid Ulster District Council;
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council; and
- Monaghan County Council, in the Republic of Ireland.

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

Table 4 below, outlines adjoining Councils position in regard to telecommunications, utilities and other infrastructure.

Adjoining Council	Position
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (ANBC) published its Local Development Plan- draft Plan Strategy on 28 June 2019 for a four-week period of pre-consultation. A formal period of public consultation also ran from 26 July 2019 to 20 September 2019. The Draft Plan Strategy was submitted to DfI on 8th March 2021. The Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) have now completed their Independent Examination of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Councils Draft Plan Strategy, with hearings held during May and June 2022. Telecommunications Draft Policy DM16 'Telecommunications Facilities and Digital Services' sets out ANBCs approach to telecommunications

	development. The aim of DM 16 has taken account of the SPPS and is to promote enhanced digital connectivity across the Council area and to enable the telecommunications industry to operate in a way that meets the demands of modern technical connectivity, whilst keeping the visual and environmental impact of telecommunications equipment to a minimum. The policy also requires development proposals for 10 or more dwellings or developments of 500 m2 or more to provide service ducting to accommodate and enable future connection to digital services. Energy Supply, Water and Sewerage Treatment Draft policy DM 14 'Public Utilities and Infrastructure' is a criteria-based policy that sets out ANBCs approach to water supply, wastewater treatment, drainage, electricity and gas infrastructure in addition to overhead power lines. Policy DM 14 requires that proposals respect and visually integrate into the landscape and townscapes, as well as protecting amenity. It also requires that alternative routes or sites are investigated, as well as identifying any adverse effect that the development could cause. On 3 July 2025 ANBC adopted their Local Development Plan 2030 - Plan Strategy, in accordance with Section 12 of The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and Regulation 24 of The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015
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. Telecommunications and Other Utilities NMDs 'Telecommunications and Other Utilities' Strategy seeks to facilitate the development of telecommunications and other utilities in a manner that balances the need for the facility against the objective of conserving the environment and protecting amenity. The Strategic Policy TUS1 support the provision of new and upgraded telecommunications and utilities infrastructure where: there is a specific locational requirement for the infrastructure related to constraints on the existing network and the proposal seeks to minimise visual intrusion and does not have a significant adverse impact on local amenity and the environment. The Strategic Policy also seeks to ensure that new development is future proofed to facilitate the installation of new or upgraded technology. NMDs dPS brings forward three operational policies TCU1–

	TCU3, which offer policy direction on the control of telecommunications development, future proofing of new developments for telecommunications infrastructure and public services and other utilities (combined criteria for utilities infrastructure and overhead lines). Policy TCU1 Control of Telecommunications Development includes policy direction for Special Countryside Areas (SCA). TCU 1 will 'not normally' permit telecoms development in SCAs. Whilst the Map Viewer indicates that there are no proposed SCAs adjoining or overlapping the shared boundary, the proposed Slieve Croob SCA is approximately 1 mile from the shared boundary. Policy TCU2 Future Proofing of New Developments for Telecommunications Infrastructure requires that new development fully considers, and where necessary, provides for the need for telecommunications infrastructure at the design stage. Requires that all new developments, where appropriate, provide suitable service ducting to enable future connection to digital services. Additionally, it requires that proposals must not result in unacceptable damage or harm to environmentally sensitive features or locations. TCU3 Public Services and Other Utilities seeks undergrounding of electricity lines in sensitive landscapes (such as SCAs & AONBs as well as those close to prominent ridgelines or summits) unless it is not feasible to do so.
Mid Ulster District Council	Mid Ulster District Council (MUDC) published its Local Development Plan 2030 – Draft Plan Strategy on 22nd February 2019, the Council re-consulted on its Draft Plan Strategy, which closed at 5pm on 24th September 2020. The draft Plan Strategy has now been submitted to the Department for Infrastructure on 28th May 2021. Telecommunications The strategy of Mid Ulster District Council is to facilitate telecommunications infrastructure so to enable an increase in the use of broadband and mobile data in order to address the urban / rural imbalance. draft Policy TOHS 1 'Outside of Areas of Constraint on Wind Turbines and High Structures' will seek to encourage mast and site sharing wherever possible whilst also offering a greater additional layer of protection to MUDCs most prominent landscapes in the Sperrin's and in the Clogher Valley. The dPS proposes the introduction of an Area of Constraint on Wind Turbines and High Structures (AOCWTHS) wherein there will be a presumption against development over 15 metres in height (unless one of three exceptions are met).

	MUDC dPS also introduces Special Countryside Areas, at Lough Neagh / Lough Beg, at Slieve Beagh and in the High Sperrin's, within which there will be a presumption against all new development in order to protect the quality and unique amenity value of these unique landscapes. However, the dPS acknowledges that within SCA's MUDC may make an exception for communications apparatus where it is to serve a recognised 'not spot' i.e. a location where there is no telecommunications coverage at all. Energy Supply, Water and Sewerage Treatment MUDC dPS acknowledges that important utilities include the provision of gas, water and cemeteries stating that such development can be acceptable in both urban and rural areas and often constitute permitted development. The dPS identifies that where permission is required, key considerations will normally relate to impact on the environment and neighbouring residents, and the General Principles Planning Policy will provide the framework in this regard. Draft Policy GP1 'General Principles Planning Policy' includes considerations such as amenity, nature and scale of development and infrastructural requirements, such as the provision of adequate waste, sewerage and drainage infrastructure.
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council	Lisburn and Castlereagh City Councils (LCCC) draft Plan Strategy was published for formal consultation on Friday 8th November 2019, and it was submitted to the Department for Infrastructure on 22nd March 2021. Independent examination of the dPS began on 28th March 2022 and the public hearing sessions completed in May 2022. Telecommunications Draft Policy TEL 1 'Telecommunications Development' sets out LCCCs approach to telecommunications development. TEL 1 is a criteria-based policy in-line with the PSRNI existing policy, however updated to reflect regional direction in the SPPS, including the sharing of masts to be considered where feasible and a requirement that the visual and environmental impact of telecommunications development is kept to a minimum. Energy Supply, Water and Sewerage Treatment# Draft Policy UT1 'Utilities' sets out LCCCs approach towards the provision of utility services, such as water, wastewater, electricity and gas. The policy requires that all new development proposals for utility development are laid underground (with an exception in rural areas where undergrounding is not feasible or viable). This presumption in

	favour of undergrounding is at odds with current operational policy PSU 11, which requires that wirescape is kept to a minimum in urban areas with a preference to undergrounding, where appropriate. On 26th September 2023 LCCC adopted their Local Development Plan 2030 - Plan Strategy, in accordance with Section 12 of The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and Regulation 24 of The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.
Monaghan County Council	Monaghan County Council adopted its County Development Plan 2025 - 2031 on 26 May 2025. One of the strategic aims of the Monaghan County Council Development Plan is to facilitate the development of County Monaghan through the provision of essential infrastructure and services, while minimising the adverse impacts of development on the environment. Water and Wastewater Policy, Policy WWP 1, seeks to only permit development in instances where there is sufficient capacity in the public water and wastewater infrastructure, subject to executed connection agreement with Uisce Éireann. Telecommunications objectives include supporting the delivery of high-capacity Information Communications Technology Infrastructure and broadband connectivity throughout the County, to promote economic competitiveness and to facilitate more flexible work practices (TCO 1) and achieving a balance between facilitating the provision of telecommunications infrastructure in the interests of economic and social progress and maintaining residential amenity and environmental quality (TCO 3).

Table 4: Adjoining Councils Position - Telecommunications, Energy, Water Supply and Sewerage

The Council has responded to neighbouring Councils Preferred Option Papers and draft Plan Strategies, as they have been published.

Although there are some differences in the draft policy wording of neighbouring Councils dPSs, it is not considered that there are any significant conflicts with Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Councils Draft Plan Strategy insofar as it relates to telecommunications, energy supply, water and sewerage. The Council will continue to liaise and engage with adjoining Councils, particularly in regard to landscapes that straddle council boundaries, such as the Lough Neagh environs.

7.0 Draft Plan Strategy Approach

As analysed above, the Council's draft telecommunications, utilities and other infrastructure policies 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 policies, the Council has taken account of a range of relevant matters, including the following:

- The RDS (in particular RG3 'Implement a balanced approach to telecommunications infrastructure that will give a competitive advantage', RG5 'Deliver a sustainable and secure energy supply' & RG 12 'Promote a more sustainable approach to the provision of water and sewerage services and flood risk management') and SPPS (in particular paragraphs 6.242-6.257).
- PPS 10 (Telecommunications) and The Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (PSRNI), policies PSU 8 'New Infrastructure' and PSU 11 'Overhead Cables'.
- The extant development plans within Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough.
- The Council's Community Plan (particularly in terms of the Plan's cross cutting theme of sustainability, which seeks to improve everyone's quality of life economically, environmentally and socially, without compromising our future generation's ability to develop, grow and flourish, its commitment to ensure the Plans outcomes and actions are sustainable, and its commitment to transform and connect all areas of our Borough physically, digitally and socially through shared collaborative approaches), 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 dPS, a range of general planning considerations, including design, integration and amenity, were incorporated into the General Policies or Design and Place-making Policies of the draft Plan Strategy³⁰. 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.

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.

³⁰ Exceptions to the General Policies and Design and Place-making Policies are set out in the dPS.

8.0 Soundness

The LDP has been prepared in accordance with the tests of soundness set out in the DfI's Development Plan Practice Note 6: Soundness (Version 2, May 2017). The draft Plan Strategy, insofar as it relates to the telecommunications, utilities and other infrastructure policies, is considered to be sound, as it satisfies the relevant tests of soundness, as summarised in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Consideration of Soundness

Procedural Tests	
P2	GP1, GP2, GP 3 & GP 4, DES 1 & DES 2 and TUI 1-2 have evolved from the POP and have taken account of responses to the POP and the POP Consultation Report.
P3	GP1, GP2, GP 3 & GP 4, DES 1 & DES 2 and TUI 1-2 have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal, including a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Further details are included in the Sustainability Appraisal Report.
Consistency Tests	
C1	GP1, GP2, GP 3 & GP 4, DES 1 & DES 2 and TUI 1-2 have taken account of the RDS and in particular RG3, RG5 and RG12.
C2	GP1, GP2, GP 3 & GP 4, DES 1 & DES 2 and TUI 1-2 have taken account of the Council's Community Plan, particularly in terms of the Plan's cross cutting theme of sustainability, which seeks to improve everyone's quality of life economically, environmentally and socially, without compromising our future generation's ability to develop, grow and flourish, its commitment to ensure the Plans outcomes and actions are sustainable, and its commitment to transform and connect all areas of our Borough physically, digitally and socially through shared collaborative approaches.
C3	GP1, GP2, GP 3 & GP 4, DES 1 & DES 2 and TUI 1-2 have taken account of existing planning policies as contained within the SPPS, in particular paragraphs 6.242-6.257, along with PPS 10 (Telecommunications) and The Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (PSRNI), policies PSU 8 'New Infrastructure' and PSU 11 'Overhead Cables'.
C4	GP1, GP2, GP 3 & GP 4, DES 1 & DES 2 and TUI 1-2 have taken account of the existing development plans within Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, ongoing Council initiatives and the neighbouring council context, including the Republic of Ireland.
Coherence and Effectiveness Tests	
CE1	GP1, GP2, GP 3 & GP 4, DES 1 & DES 2 and TUI 1-2 have taken account of the emerging LDPs of our neighbouring Councils in Northern Ireland and neighbouring council in the Republic of Ireland (Monaghan County Council) and are not considered to be in conflict with those.
CE2	GP1, GP2, GP 3 & GP 4, DES 1 & DES 2 and TUI 1-2 are founded on a robust evidence base which includes the baseline information contained in this technical supplement, the POP and responses to it and subsequent consultation with consultees, including DfI.
CE3	As part of the Council's ongoing monitoring framework, the number of planning applications approved which facilitate physical and digital connectivity to new residential and business developments will be annually monitored and assessed

	against relevant indicators to determine whether the strategy and policies are being implemented effectively, remain appropriate and continue to support the Plan's objectives. Monitoring findings will inform the future review of the Plan and any necessary policy intervention.
CE4	GP1, GP2, GP 3 & GP 4, DES 1-2 and TUI 1-2 will be reviewed at Plan Review stage. Where appropriate, the need for flexibility has been built into the strategic approach and draft policies to allow for changing circumstances. Local Policies Plan stage will provide further 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.

Appendices

Appendix 1- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Settlements Served by Wastewater Treatment Works (August 2025, Northern Ireland Water)

Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Works	WwTW Data				WwTW Network / Catchment	Comment
		WwTW Current Planning Status	Estimation of Capacity based on Growth Factor			Network Current Planning Status	
			5%	10%	20%		
Armagh	Armagh PPP						Armagh catchment includes Armagh City, Edenaveys, Milford & Salters Grange. Facility operated through Public Private Partnership. See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Banbridge	Banbridge						Banbridge catchment includes Banbridge, Lenaderg, Loughbrickland & Milltown. See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Craigavon Urban Area (CUA: Portadown, Central Craigavon & Lurgan).	Ballynacor PPP						Ballynacor catchment includes Craigavon, Lurgan, Portadown, Aghacommon, Ballymacmaine, Bleary, Derryadd, Derrymacash, Drumnacanvy, Dollingstown, Gibsons Hill, Magheralin & Scotch Street. Facility operated through Public Private Partnership. See Network Issue Notes 1, 2 & 3 below.
Dromore	Dromore						See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Gilford	Gilford						See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Keady	Keady						See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Markethill	Markethill						Markethill catchment includes Markethill & Mullaghbrack. See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Rathfriland	Rathfriland Drumlough						See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Tandragee	Tandragee						Tandragee catchment includes Tandragee, Auglish, Clare, Laurelvale/Mullavilly & Scarva. See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Aghacommon	Ballynacor PPP						Ballynacor catchment includes Craigavon, Lurgan, Portadown, Aghacommon, Ballymacmaine, Bleary, Derryadd, Derrymacash, Drumnacanvy, Dollingstown, Gibsons Hill, Magheralin & Scotch Street. Facility operated through Public Private Partnership. See Network Issue Notes 1, 2 & 3 below.
Aghagallon	Aghagallon					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Blackwatertown	Blackwatertown					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Bleary	Ballynacor PPP						Ballynacor catchment includes Craigavon, Lurgan, Portadown, Aghacommon, Ballymacmaine, Bleary, Derryadd, Derrymacash, Drumnacanvy, Dollingstown, Gibsons Hill, Magheralin & Scotch Street. Facility operated through Public Private Partnership. See Network Issue Notes 1, 2 & 3 below.
Charlemont	Moy						See Network Issue Note 1 below.
Clonmore	Tamnamore						Tamnamore catchment includes Clonmore, Derrylee & Tamnamore. See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Darkley	Darkley					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.

Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Works	WwTW Data				WwTW Network / Catchment	Comment
		WwTW Current Planning Status	Estimation of Capacity based on Growth Factor			Network Current Planning Status	
			5%	10%	20%		
Drumnacanvy	Ballynacor PPP						Ballynacor catchment includes Craigavon, Lurgan, Portadown, Aghacommon, Ballymacmaine, Bleary, Derryadd, Derrymacash, Drumnacanvy, Dollingstown, Gibsons Hill, Magheralin & Scotch Street. Facility operated through Public Private Partnership. See Network Issue Notes 1, 2 & 3 below.
Derrymacash	Ballynacor PPP						Ballynacor catchment includes Craigavon, Lurgan, Portadown, Aghacommon, Ballymacmaine, Bleary, Derryadd, Derrymacash, Drumnacanvy, Dollingstown, Gibsons Hill, Magheralin & Scotch Street. Facility operated through Public Private Partnership. See Network Issue Notes 1, 2 & 3 below.
Dollingstown	Ballynacor PPP						Ballynacor catchment includes Craigavon, Lurgan, Portadown, Aghacommon, Ballymacmaine, Bleary, Derryadd, Derrymacash, Drumnacanvy, Dollingstown, Gibsons Hill, Magheralin & Scotch Street. Facility operated through Public Private Partnership. See Network Issue Notes 1, 2 & 3 below.
Donaghcloney	Waringstown						Waringstown catchment includes Waringstown, Ballynabragget, Donaghcloney & Milltown. See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Glennane/Lisdrumchor	Mountnorris						Mountnorris catchment includes Mountnorris, Glennane/Lisdrumchor & Whitecross. See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Hamiltonsbawn	Hamiltonsbawn					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Kinallen	Kinallen					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Killylea	Caledon					*	Caledon catchment includes Caledon (Mid Ulster), Killylea & Tynan. See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Laurelvale/Mullavilly	Tandragee						Tandragee catchment includes Tandragee, Auglish, Clare, Laurelvale/Mullavilly & Scarva. See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Lawrencetown	Lawrencetown					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Loughbrickland	Banbridge						Banbridge catchment includes Banbridge, Lenaderg, Loughbrickland & Milltown. See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Loughgall	Loughgall					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Magheralin	Ballynacor PPP						Ballynacor catchment includes Craigavon, Lurgan, Portadown, Aghacommon, Ballymacmaine, Bleary, Derryadd, Derrymacash, Drumnacanvy, Dollingstown, Gibsons Hill, Magheralin & Scotch Street. Facility operated through Public Private Partnership. See Network Issue Notes 1, 2 & 3 below.
Middletown	Middletown					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Milford	Armagh PPP						Armagh catchment includes Armagh City, Edenaveys, Milford & Salters Grange. Facility operated through Public Private Partnership. See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Mountnorris	Mountnorris						Mountnorris catchment includes Mountnorris, Glennane/Lisdrumchor & Whitecross. See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.

Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Works	WwTW Data				WwTW Network / Catchment	Comment
		WwTW Current Planning	Estimation of Capacity based on Growth Factor			Network Current Planning	
			5%	10%	20%		
Poyntzpass	Poyntzpass					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Richhill PPP	Richhill PPP						Richhill catchment includes Richhill. Facility operated through Public Private Partnership. See Network Issue Notes 1, 2 & 3 below.
Tamnamore	Tamnamore						Tamnamore catchment includes Clonmore, Derrylee & Tamnamore. See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Tynan	Caledon					*	Caledon catchment includes Caledon (Mid Ulster), Killylea & Tynan. See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Scarva	Tandragee						Tandragee catchment includes Tandragee, Auglish, Clare, Laurelvale/Mullavilly & Scarva. See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Scotch Street	Ballynacor PPP						Ballynacor catchment includes Craigavon, Lurgan, Portadown, Aghacommon, Ballymacmaine, Bleary, Derryadd, Derrymacash, Drumnacanny, Dollingstown, Gibsons Hill, Magheralin & Scotch Street. Facility operated through Public Private Partnership. See Network Issue Notes 1, 2 & 3 below.
Waringstown	Waringstown						Waringstown catchment includes Waringstown, Ballynabragget, Donaghcloney & Milltown. See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Acton	Acton					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Aghory	Aghory					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Annacloyne	Monteith					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Annaghmore	Annaghmore					*	Annaghmore catchment includes Annaghmore (Moss Road) See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Annaghmore (Moss Rd)	Annaghmore					*	Annaghmore catchment includes Annaghmore (Moss Road) See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Annahugh	Annahugh					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Ardrress	Ardrress					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Artasooly	Benburb					*	Benburb catchment includes Benburb (Mid Ulster), Artasooly, Carrickaness & Milltown Co Armagh. See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Ashfield / Gowdystown	Ashfield					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Auglish	Tandragee						Tandragee catchment includes Tandragee, Auglish, Clare, Laurelvale/Mullavilly & Scarva. See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Ballymacmaine	Ballynacor PPP						Ballynacor catchment includes Craigavon, Lurgan, Portadown, Aghacommon, Ballymacmaine, Bleary, Derryadd, Derrymacash, Drumnacanny, Dollingstown, Gibsons Hill, Magheralin & Scotch Street. Facility operated through Public Private Partnership. See Network Issue Notes 1, 2 & 3 below.

Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Works	WwTW Data				WwTW Network / Catchment	Comment
		WwTW Current Planning	Estimation of Capacity based on Growth Factor			Network Current Planning	
			5%	10%	20%		
Ballymacnab	Ballymacnab					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Ballynabragget	Waringstown						Waringstown catchment includes Waringstown, Ballynabragget, Donaghcloney & Milltown. See Network Issue Note 1 & 3 below.
Blackskull	Blackskull					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Broomhill	Derryhale					*	Derryhale catchment includes Broomhill & Derryhale. See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Carrickaness	Benburb					*	Benburb catchment includes Benburb (Mid Ulster), Artasooly, Carrickaness & Milltown Co Armagh. See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Charlestown	Charlestown					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Cladymore	Cladymore					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Clare	Tandragee						Tandragee catchment includes Tandragee, Auglish, Clare, Laurelvale/Mullavilly & Scarva. See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Collegeland	Aghinlig					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Corbet	Corbet					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Derryadd	Ballynacor PPP						Ballynacor catchment includes Craigavon, Lurgan, Portadown, Aghacommon, Ballymacmaine, Bleary, Derryadd, Derrymacash, Drumnacanny, Dollingstown, Gibsons Hill, Magheralin & Scotch Street. Facility operated through Public Private Partnership. See Network Issue Notes 1, 2 & 3 below.
Derryhale	Derryhale					*	Derryhale catchment includes Broomhill & Derryhale. See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Derrylee	Tamnamore						Tamnamore catchment includes Clonmore, Derrylee & Tamnamore. See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Derrymore	Derrymore					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Derrynoose	Derrynoose					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Derrytrasna	Derrytrasna					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Drumhillery	Drumhillery					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Edenaveys	Armagh PPP						Armagh catchment includes Armagh City, Edenaveys, Milford & Salters Grange. Facility operated through Public Private Partnership.
Eglis (Co. Armagh)	Eglis					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.

Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Works	WwTW Data				WwTW Network / Catchment	Comment
		WwTW Current Planning	Estimation of Capacity based on Growth Factor			Network Current Planning	
			5%	10%	20%		
Gamblestown	Drumnaferry					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Gibsons Hill	Ballynacor PPP						Ballynacor catchment includes Craigavon, Lurgan, Portadown, Aghacommon, Ballymacmaine, Bleary, Derryadd, Derrymacash, Drumnacanvy, Dollingstown, Gibsons Hill, Magheralin & Scotch Street. Facility operated through Public Private Partnership. See Network Issue Notes 1, 2 & 3 below.
Glen	Glen Villas					*	Glen Villas WwTW is located within Newry, Mourne & Down Council Area. See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Katesbridge	Katesbridge					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Kilmore	Kilmore					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Lenaderg	Banbridge						Banbridge catchment includes Banbridge, Lenaderg, Loughbrickland & Milltown. See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Loughgilly	Mullaghmore					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Madden	Madden					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Maghery	Maghery					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Milltown (Aghory)	Milltown Aghory					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Milltown (Benburb)	Benburb					*	Benburb catchment includes Benburb (Mid Ulster), Artasooly, Carrickaness & Milltown Co Armagh. See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Milltown (Co Armagh)	Milltown (Maghery)					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Milltown	Waringstown						Waringstown catchment includes Waringstown, Ballynabragget, Donaghcloney & Milltown. See Network Issue Note 1 & 3 below.
Milltown	Banbridge						Banbridge catchment includes Banbridge, Lenaderg, Loughbrickland & Milltown. See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Moneyslane	Moneyslane					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Mullaghbrack	Markethill						Markethill catchment includes Markethill & Mullaghbrack. See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Salters Grange	Armagh PPP						Armagh catchment includes Armagh City, Edenaveys, Milford & Salters Grange. Facility operated through Public Private Partnership.
St Marys Terrace	Middletown					*	Middletown catchment includes Midletown & St Marys Terrace
Tartaraghan	Tartaraghan					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.

Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Works	WwTW Data				WwTW Network / Catchment	Comment
		WwTW Current Planning	Estimation of Capacity based on Growth Factor			Network Current Planning	
			5%	10%	20%		
The Birches	Robinsonstown						See Network Issue Notes 1, 3 & 4 below.
Tullylish	Locard Park					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Tullyroan Corner	Tullyroan					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Waringsford	Waringsford					*	See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Ardtanagh	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	No public sewerage network available.
Ballela	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	No public sewerage network available.
Ballyroney	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	No public sewerage network available.
Closkelt	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	No public sewerage network available.
Derryscollop	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	No public sewerage network available
Glasker	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	There are 2 developments within Glasker which are served by a private sewerage network & WwTW.
Granemore	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	No public sewerage network available.
Kilkinamurry	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	No public sewerage network available.
Lisnadill	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	No public sewerage network available.
Stonebridge	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	No public sewerage network available.
Stonebridge	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	No public sewerage network available.
Tassagh	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	No public sewerage network available.
Tullygoonigan	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	No public sewerage network available.

Key to Current WWTW and Network Planning Status		Key to WWTW Status based on Local Development Plan Growth Factors	
	Development permitted - Capacity AvailableWorks has		'Reasonable Capacity'
	Restriction on new Development - Capacity LimitedWorks is		'At or reaching Capacity'
	New Development refused - No CapacityWorks has Drainage Area Plan Model does not exist for this small		'Insufficient Capacity'
* settlement. Status based on high level network screening tool, Operator experience and current performance data.			
Network Issue Notes			
Note 1: NI Water's sewerage network capacity mapping tool and sewer network modelling activities have identified capacity issues in parts of the wastewater networks. Wastewater networks affected include Armagh City, Ballynacorr, Dromore, Gilford, Markethill, Mountnoris, Moy, Rathfriland Drumlough, Richhill, Tandragee and Waringstown. As a result, negative planning responses may be provided by NI Water in parts of these catchments. NI Water has identified parts of the network where Storm Overflows (SOs) are classified as Unsatisfactory Intermittent Discharges (UIDs). These SOs act as safety valves to prevent out of sewer flooding during rainfall events which may cause internal flooding of houses and business and environmental pollution. When SOs are operating more frequently than they should they are classified as UIDs. NI Water can consider the provision of positive planning responses where developers can demonstrate (including calculations): 1. Like for like development 2. Extant previously approved development (where NI Water has given a positive response) 3. Where the development will offer a reduced loading on the sewer network, which may include storm separation and/or attenuation (may be subject to Article 154). In areas where there are constraints within the wastewater network, but there is still capacity at the WwTW it may still be possible to find a bespoke drainage solution to accommodate development. This would be identified by NI Water's solution engineering team working with the developer through the Wastewater Impact Process, and any solutions identified would be developer led and funded. Note 2: Drainage Area Plans (DAPs) are planned for delivery in the second half of PC21 and the outputs will be used to inform capital works solutions. The delivery of any capital works solutions will be considered for future business planning (i.e. for PC28), and will be subject to prioritisation. This prioritisation process is undertaken with NIEA and other key stakeholders, and the delivery of specific projects during PC28 is dependent on a successful outcome from this process, and funding DAPs planned for delivery in the second half of PC21 include Ballynacorr and Richhill. All other planned DAPs within Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council have been completed. availability. Note 3: Status based on analysis of existing Area Plan settlement boundaries. Should any the settlement boundaries change as a result of the Local Development Plan (currently under development), headroom capacity status will be re-assessed and could be subject to change. Note 4: NI Water WwTW upgrades scheduled for PC21 delivery. The upgrade of Robinsonstown Wastewater Treatment Works is programmed to commence during the 2025/26 financial year. NI Water is working closely with the Department for Infrastructure on the funding required to facilitate the delivery of our capital investment programme for the remainder of the PC21 Price Control period (2025 – 2028).			
General Notes:			
Quality assurance/Quality control checks are conducted on NI Water corporate wastewater data sets to ensure accuracy. The Wastewater Headroom Capacity spreadsheet is compiled using information obtained from Annual Information Returns and is the best available information at this time, but it may change and will be revised annually. Changes may occur as the result of network modelling activities, planned WwTW and network upgrades or compliance issue arisals. Any significant changes occurring between the annual updates will be notified directly to the Council. Developing a Drainage Area Plan involves two stages: the Drainage Area Study (DAS) and the Needs and Options stage. • The DAS typically takes 2-3 years to complete and involves constructing a calibrated and validated sewer network model using CCTV survey work and flow monitoring surveys. • The Needs and Options stage involves assessing various sewer upgrade options and running scenarios for different design rainfall events. The sewer network model simulates a 25-year design horizon and takes into account growth, urban creep, and climate change. The model outputs are reviewed by NI Water's environmental regulator, NIEA, and discharge consent standards must be met via capital works network upgrade solutions. Capital work identified through this process will be put forward to the prioritisation process for inclusion in NI Water's Business Plans for the PC28 period (2028/29 – 2032/33). The DAS sewer model serves several essential purposes, including identifying areas where sewers are operating above their design capacity, developing appropriate solutions to address capacity issues, assessing the effectiveness of various options for informing capital works, as well as assessing the current capacity of the sewer			

INTERESTED IN DEVELOPMENT

in the Armagh City,
Banbridge and
Craigavon Borough

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