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Executive Summary

This Position Paper provides the Council with an overview of matters in relation to flood risk, drainage and minerals in the new Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area and to assist in the allocation of development uses up to 2030.

Any future decision making will need to be made within the context of a Sustainability Appraisal under the provision of Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011. This paper is therefore intended to generate members' ideas on how policy and proposals for the new Local Development Plan can be shaped, given the development constraints outlined.

It is important to stress that in compiling the Position Paper the best information available has been used however it may need revised in light of the release of any new data (particularly in relation to the new Flood Risk Management Plans to be published by DARD Rivers Agency during December 2015).

The paper will provide a foundation on which work can commence on the Preferred Options Paper as part of introducing the new Plan Strategy for Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council to replace that contained in the existing Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

The aims of the paper are:

- To build the capacity of members to make informed planning decisions, particularly within the plan making context;
- To provide baseline information which will inform Development Plan policy making at local level; and
- To link with important ongoing work in relation to the development of a Community Plan and other strategic work being undertaken by the Council.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to inform the members of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council of matters in relation to flood risk, drainage and minerals in the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area and to assist in the allocation of development uses up to 2030. It sets out the regional and local policy context for planning in relation to old drainage, flood risk and minerals and includes the identification of all existing water impoundment reservoirs within the new Council area.
- 1.2 This paper contains an evaluation of how flood risk, drainage and minerals can be addressed within the context of the Regional Development Strategy and regional planning policy. The Council is encouraged to consider flood risk, drainage and minerals issues when accommodating growth as they can act as a constraint on development or establish a need for new development.

2.0 REGIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)

Flood Risk & Drainage

- 2.1 **Policy RG1 of RDS 2035** states that when allocating land for future employment uses, areas which are at risk of flooding should be avoided, where possible.
- 2.2 In relation to new development and flood risk, **Policy RG8 of RDS 2035** states that residential development should not take place in areas which are known to be at risk of flooding. This policy also states that as part of the Housing Evaluation framework, an assessment of flood risk should be considered when allocating land for housing growth.
- 2.3 **Policy RG12 of the RDS 2035** also advises that increased population, changes in household size, urban development and our lifestyles are putting pressure on our water resources and drainage systems.

2.4 Climate change will also have an impact on our water environment. Without action there are expected to be discrepancies between water demand and availability leading to the potential for water stress in some areas, more water quality problems in the natural environment and increased flood events from drainage systems, rivers and surface water run-off. Planning for the provision of water and drainage infrastructure and treatment facilities is both a practical and environmental necessity for regional development.

2.5 The key policy aims of RDS 2035 in relation to water, flood risk and drainage are:

- Integrate water and land-use planning. Land-use planning should be informed by current water and drainage infrastructure and future investment programmes. This will involve close cooperation between planning authorities and the water industry in the preparation of local development plans and long-term water strategies.
- Manage future water demand by reducing waste. To help manage future water demand in new developments, initiatives such as grey water recycling and rainwater harvesting should be promoted;
- Encourage sustainable surface water management. This will involve initiatives such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in significant development proposals. SuDS involve the use of natural systems with low environmental impact to dispose of dirty water and surface water in order to reduce the amount of water being released back into the watercourses.

Minerals

2.6 In relation to mineral development **Policy RG11** is the key policy within RDS 2035. It states that Northern Ireland has a remarkably diverse range of rocks and geomorphological features. While selected sites require protection for their scientific, educational and research value, other topographical and geological features, if sensibly managed, can play an active role in economic development. The key aim of the policy in relation to minerals is to protect and manage important geological and geomorphological features.

- 2.7 Policy RG11 also states that designating special areas for protection is an effective way of ensuring our wildlife and natural landscapes retain their individual characteristics. Some areas are deemed of such importance that they are formally designated under various pieces of national and international legislation. One of the key aims of the policy is to protect designated areas of countryside from inappropriate development (either directly or indirectly) and continue to assess areas for designation.

Regional Planning Policy Statements

PPS 15 Planning and Flood Risk

- 2.8 The existing Planning Policy Statement for the assessment and determination of development within floodplains is Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 15 – Planning and Flood Risk which contains a general presumption against development within designated floodplains.

Role of the Development Plan

- 2.9 The preparation of a development plan provides a key opportunity for the planning authority to consider how best to plan for and facilitate sustainable patterns of development in the plan area in accordance with the broader sustainability objectives of the RDS and the Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy. Flood risk management is one important aspect of sustainable development as flooding has far reaching and long term implications for society, the economy and the environment.
- 2.10 The role of development plans and flood risk management has assumed greater significance in recent years as a result of implementation of the European Union (EU) Floods Directive in Northern Ireland
- 2.11 When zoning land for development, the Council should adopt the precautionary approach and avoid land which has been identified as being at risk of flooding. Even if the proposal involves altering the levels of the land to mitigate against

the potential for flooding, this will only serve to shift the flood risk to another location further along the watercourse.

2.12 When preparing policies for the Local Development Plan, the Council should ensure that, where possible, land which has been identified as being at risk of flooding is not zoned for certain types of development such as housing or industry. Such zoning would eradicate the natural function of such land to act as a flood relief pondage area.

2.13 Development plans have a role to play in furthering a more sustainable approach to flood management. This includes a number of measures such as:-

- the careful selection of housing and employment zonings;
- safeguarding flood plains from development likely to impact upon their flood storage and conveyancing capacity;
- identifying and safeguarding from development areas of storm exceedance; and
- promoting sustainable drainage schemes. (SuDS)

2.14 Development plans can reduce flood risk to vulnerable development (existing or proposed) through planning for storm exceedance. For example, within a site zoned for housing or economic development, the plan may, if appropriate, designate areas within or close to the site that could preferentially flood during extreme weather events, thereby reducing or avoiding flood risk to buildings whilst at the same time enhancing biodiversity.

Flood Risk and Climate Change

2.15 The most recent climate change predictions indicate an increased preponderance of hotter drier summers and warmer wetter winters, coupled with increased frequency of extreme weather occurrences such as heatwaves, dry spells, heavy rain and flooding.

2.16 Whilst flood risk is generally expected to increase in response to climate change, there is uncertainty surrounding the flood risks that particular areas of Northern Ireland face both today and in the future. This uncertainty applies both

to the degree of climate change that will occur, and the implications this will have for rainfall patterns, and the permeability of the land. A precautionary approach is, however, recommended. The LDP should take account of the “Climate Change 2030” Strategic Flood Map (see Annex 1) as well as Detailed Flood Hazard Maps (See Appendices 2 – 8). These identify risks of pluvial and fluvial flooding within the Plan area.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement

- 2.17 The final version of the SPSS was published by the Department of the Environment in September 2015. The provisions of the SPPS must be taken into account in the preparation of Local Development Plans, and are also material to all decisions on individual planning applications and appeals.

Flood Risk & Drainage

- 2.18 The SPPS seeks to prevent future development that may be at risk from flooding or that may increase risk of flooding elsewhere. It promotes sustainable development through the retention and restoration of natural floodplains and natural watercourses as a form of flood alleviation and an important environmental and social resource. It also promotes sustainable development through encouraging the use of sustainable storm water management for the drainage of new development (SuDS). The Local Development Plans (LDPs) should also promote sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) within the plan area, for example, by requiring such solutions, where appropriate, for zoned land as a key site requirement.
- 2.19 The policy objectives within the SPPS in relation to flood risk and drainage are:
- Prevent inappropriate new development in areas known to be at risk of flooding, or that may increase the risk of flooding elsewhere;
 - Ensure that most up to date information on flood risk is taken into account when determining planning applications and zoning / designating land for development in LDPs;
 - Adopt a precautionary approach to the identification of land for development through the LDP process and the determination of development proposals,

in those areas susceptible to flooding where there is a lack of precise information on present day flood risk or future uncertainties associated with flood estimation, climate change predictions and scientific evidence;

- Manage development in ways that are appropriate to the four main sources of flood risk in Northern Ireland i.e. fluvial, coastal, surface water and water impoundment (reservoir) breach or failure;
- Seek to protect development that is permitted within flood risk areas by ensuring that adequate and appropriate measures are employed to mitigate and manage the flood risks;
- Promote sustainable development through the retention and restoration of natural floodplains and natural watercourses as a form of flood alleviation and an important environmental and social resource;
- Promote sustainable development through encouraging the use of sustainable storm water management for the drainage of new development (SuDS).
- Promote public awareness of flood risk and the flood risk information that is available and of relevance to undertaking development. Promote an integrated and sustainable approach to the management of development and flood risk which contributes to:
 - the safety and well-being of everyone,
 - the prudent and efficient use of economic resources,
 - the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, and
 - the conservation and archaeology and the built heritage

Role of Local Development Plans

2.20 The Local Development Plan must take account of the potential risks from flooding over the plan period and beyond. Flood risk may be a consideration in the definition of settlement limits and in decisions concerning the designation of new settlements. LDPs should also promote sustainable drainage within the plan area (for example through key site requirements).

2.21 LDPs must take account of the most up to date information on flood risk, in particular the Strategic Flood Maps prepared by Rivers Agency.

2.22 The LDP should apply a precautionary approach to development in areas that may be subject to flood risk now or in the future. LDPs should not bring forward sites or zone land that may be susceptible to flood unless in exceptional circumstances.

Minerals

2.23 The SPPS recognises that whilst minerals development can deliver significant economic benefits, there are also a number of challenges arising from this type of development which fall to be addressed through the planning system. The planning system has a key role to play in facilitating a sustainable approach to minerals development, and ensuring the appropriate restoration of sites after working has ceased. However, as the impact of mineral working on the environment can never be entirely reversed the broader role and responsibilities of government, the industry, customers and key stakeholders also need to be recognised.

2.24 The key policy objectives within the SPPS in relation to mineral development are:

- facilitate sustainable minerals development through balancing the need for specific minerals development proposals against the need to safeguard the environment;
- minimise the impacts of minerals development on local communities, landscape quality, built and natural heritage, and the water environment; and
- secure the sustainable and safe restoration, including the appropriate re-use of mineral sites, at the earliest opportunity.

Role of Local Development Plans

2.25 The SPPS advises that in plan preparation the Council should bring forward appropriate policies and proposals that reflect the SPPS but are tailored to the specific circumstances of the plan area. In particular, the LDP should:-

- ensure that sufficient local supplies of construction aggregates can be made available for use within the local, and where appropriate, the regional market area and beyond, to meet likely future needs over the plan period;
- safeguard mineral resources which are of economic or conservation value, and seek to ensure that workable mineral resources are not sterilised by other surface development which would prejudice future exploitation;
- identify areas (normally referred to in Development Plans as ‘Areas of Constraint’) which should be protected from minerals development because of their intrinsic landscape, amenity, scientific or heritage value. There should be a general presumption against minerals development in such areas, however, where a designated area such as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers expansive tracts of land, the LDP should carefully consider the scope for some minerals development that avoids key sites and would not unduly compromise the integrity of the area as a whole or threaten to undermine the rationale for the designation.

3.0 EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 3.1 **The Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2015** is a development plan prepared under the provisions of Part 3 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 by the Department of the Environment (DOE). The Plan covers the City Council areas of Belfast and Lisburn and the Borough Council areas of Carrickfergus, Castlereagh, Newtownabbey and North Down. The Plan was adopted on 9th September 2014.
- 3.2 Volume 3 and Volume 5 of BMAP 2015 sets out policies on the former Lisburn and Castlereagh Districts respectively (“District Proposals”). These policies have been developed in the context of the Plan Strategy and Framework contained in Volume 1 of the Plan and are in general conformity with the RDS.
- 3.3 BMAP 2015 outlines the following with respect to flood risk & drainage and minerals within Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council area;

Flood Risk & Drainage

- 3.4 Volume 1 Plan Strategy and Framework, identifies a number of recorded flooded areas that significantly affect particular settlements within the Plan Area. One of these is the River Lagan towards Lisburn, another is the RAVARNET RIVER (page 97). Planning applications in these areas must be accompanied by an assessment of the flood risk in the form of a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) with particular emphasis on flood resilience and resistance¹. In relation to flooding, BMAP 2015 also specifies through key site requirements where a flood risk assessment may be necessary.
- 3.5 Prospective developers are advised to liaise early in the formulation of their proposals with Northern Ireland Water and Rivers Agency to clarify flooding or flood plain issues that may affect particular sites.
- 3.6 Volume 3 and Volume 5 of BMAP 2015 sets out policies on the former Lisburn and Castlereagh Districts respectively. These policies have been developed in the context of the Plan Strategy and Plan Proposals contained in Volume 1 of the Plan and take account of the policy contained within the RDS.
- 3.7 BMAP 2015 Technical Supplement 9 – Public Services and Utilities includes the following information in relation to drainage:

NI Water, a Government owned company (GOCO) provides the water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland. It is responsible for drainage and disposal of surface water from the periphery of a development in accordance with the Water and Sewerage Service (NI) Order 1973 and the Amendment of 1993 (provided the drainage and disposal is within reasonable cost). It will adopt storm sewerage infrastructure within a development, provided it is constructed in accordance with NI Water under Article 17 of the Order and the developer is in possession of a “consent to discharge” from DARD Rivers Agency (if required).

¹ CIRIA C688 Flood resilience and resistance for critical infrastructure.

Rivers Agency, a division of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is the statutory drainage and flood defence authority for Northern Ireland. It regulates storm drainage discharge to natural watercourses and assumes responsibility for improvement schemes to alleviate flooding where such schemes meet the necessary cost/benefit criteria. Where required, Rivers Agency will be consulted in relation to applications for development, which may affect watercourses and floodplains.

Minerals

- 3.8 BMAP 2015, Volume 1 Planning Strategy & Framework seeks to sustain a living and working countryside while protecting areas which are visually or environmentally sensitive.
- 3.9 The diversity of landscapes in the BMAP Plan Area provide a unique resource of significant environmental quality. The Metropolitan Urban Area enjoys a magnificent natural setting situated at the head of Belfast Lough, between the edge of the Antrim Plateau and the Castlereagh and Holywood Hills, with the River Lagan flowing through the Cities of Belfast and Lisburn. The Plan designates **Areas of High Scenic Value (AOHSV)** to protect the setting of the Metropolitan Urban Area and other areas of particular landscape merit. The following AOHSVs are located within the LCCC district: Portmore Lough, Magheraknock Loughs, Belfast Basalt Escarpment (majority within Belfast City Council Area), Castlereagh Slopes and Castlereagh Escarpment. Policy COU 6 of the Plan states that Planning permission will not be granted for development proposals that would be likely to have a significant adverse effect on the quality, character and features of interest in Areas of High Scenic Value.
- 3.10 In addition, a number of **Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs)** and **Landscape Wedges** are designated throughout the Plan Area at locations which possess significant amenity value, landscape quality or local significance and must therefore be protected from undesirable or damaging development. Development likely to have a significant adverse effect on designated LLPAs or where visual separation between settlements is not maintained, will not be approved. There are also a number of **Sites of Local Conservation Interest**

(SLNCIs) designated throughout the Plan Area. Policy for the control of development within or SLNCIs is contained within PPS 2: Natural Heritage.

- 3.11 Mineral exploration and development provides employment and necessary materials for construction in localised areas where useful deposits occur. However, extraction and processing can have a significant impact on the countryside. The Plan recognises the need for a sustainable approach that takes account of the need to protect and conserve environmental resources. Regional planning policies for mineral developments are currently set out in A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (See Annex 1). This contains a range of policies for the control of mineral developments, taking into account environmental protection, visual amenity, public safety and traffic considerations. Mineral developments also need to respect the environmental policies contained in PPS 2: Natural Heritage and PPS 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage.

4.0 STRATEGIC FLOOD MAP AND FLOOD HAZARD MAPS

- 4.1 The EU “Floods Directive” (2007/060/EC) came into force on 26th November 2007 and aims to establish a framework that will contribute to reducing the impact of flooding on communities and the environment.
- 4.2 Compliance with this Directive is the responsibility of DARD Rivers Agency who have recently begun implementing the Directive by presenting flood risk and hazard maps which were published in 2013.
- 4.3 With reference to flooding in each specific river basin, Rivers Agency are currently planning to publish Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) for the three main river basins in Northern Ireland (Lough Neagh – Bann, North West and North East). These plans are currently at consultation stage and it is hoped that they will be published during December 2015. The Council should ensure that the new LDP is compatible with these FRMPs.

- 4.4 Rivers Agency, Planning Advisory Unit advises on the flooding potential for individual sites which are the subject of planning applications and where flooding is likely to occur. Rivers Agency currently operate a presumption against development within the floodplain in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 15 (PPS 15). Rivers Agency recommends that any flooding policy prepared as part of LDP should be closely aligned with the current policy (i.e. PPS 15).
- 4.5 The Rivers Agency Flood Maps (Climate Change 2030 Strategic Flood Map and Flood Hazard Maps) contained in Appendices 2 – 9 identify land in existing settlements within the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council District which have at least a 1% chance of flooding in any given calendar year. The Flood Hazard Maps concentrate on an overall total of 69 Areas of Significant Flood Risk (ASFR) within settlements in Northern Ireland (49 of these locations are subject to further study), and a total of 5 of the ASFRs fall within the LCCC area (as identified in Appendices 3-9).

5.0 FLOOD RESILIENCE

- 5.1 The Department for Regional Development (DRD) has launched a consultation paper entitled “Sustainable Water – A Long Term Water Strategy for Northern Ireland²” on the best way forward for managing the water supply in Northern Ireland. The paper is divided into 5 separate parts and launched for public consultation in June of 2014.
- 5.2 Part 3 of the document entitled “Flood Risk Management and Drainage” makes a range of recommendations which may be considered when preparing the Local development Plan. It calls for the construction of “resilient development” which can withstand extreme rainfall events with minimal or no flood damage. The document also stresses that the Council should prevent development in areas of high flood risk and ensure that future development does not increase flood risk. Furthermore, another document published by

² Sustainable Water – A Long Term Strategy for Northern Ireland, DRDNI June 2014

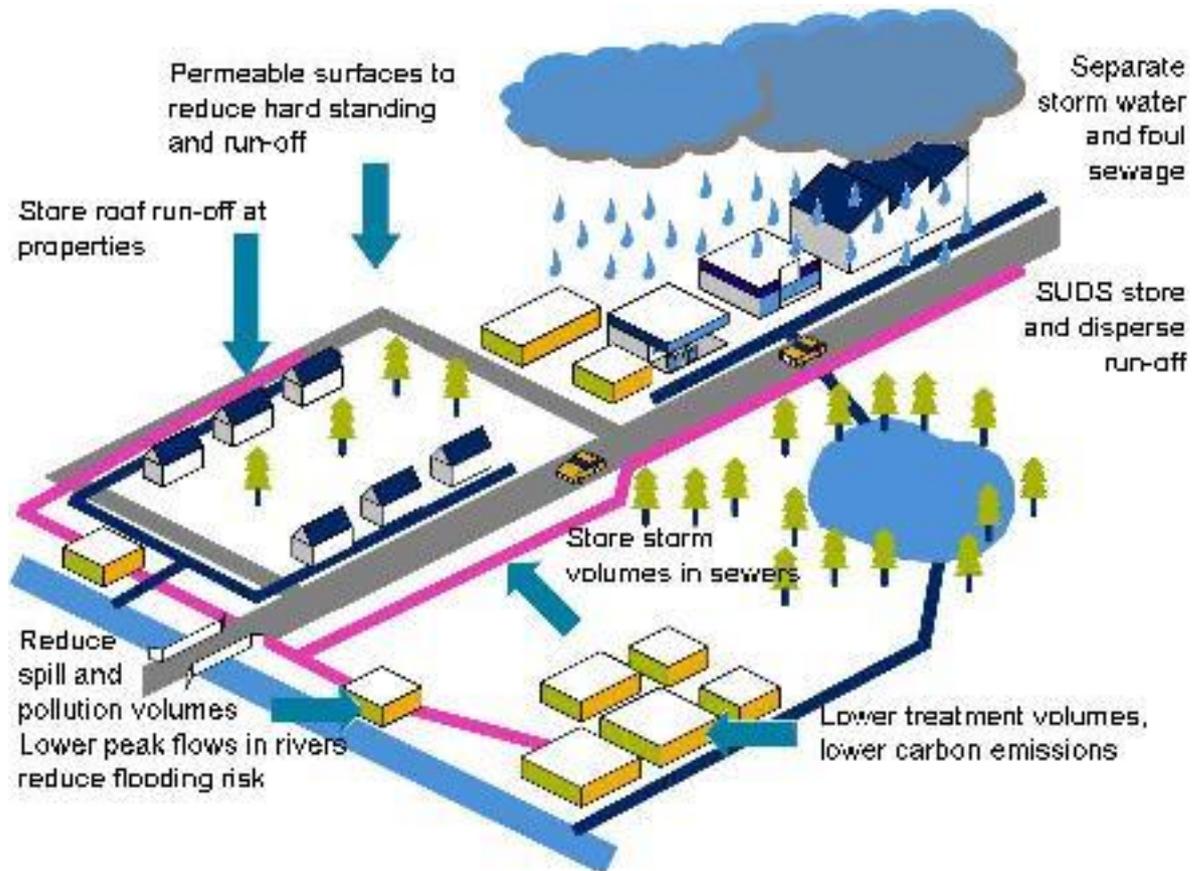
NIEA entitled “Managing Water³” states that the concept of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be promoted through future regional planning policy and via local development plans. The aims of both these documents can be encouraged through the following measures:

- When zoning land for development, large surface water schemes such as lakes, wetlands and wet woodlands could be created to meet the future drainage needs of proposed development in the area. A typical example is the Craigavon balancing lakes, created in the 1970s to take rainwater from the built up area of Craigavon and which also provide a recreational facility for the local community.
- Planning policy should require that drainage proposals are considered at the design stage so that the final scheme minimises surface water run-off. It is likely that a range of SuDS will be required to ensure this. Typical examples include green roofs, permeable paving, soakaways, ponds and wetlands.
- Planning policy should incorporate the requirement for “design for exceedance proposals in all new development. In other words, developers must indicate how the proposed drainage system will cope in the event of surface water run-off flows exceeding normal or expected levels.
- Planning policy should require that SuDS are the preferred option for all new development. Figure 1 shows an example of how Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) can be provided.

³ Managing Stormwater – A Strategy for Promoting the Use of Sustainable Drainage Systems, NIEA, September 2011

Figure 1 Example of a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS)

Source: <https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/future/sustainable/drainage/current>



6.0 RESERVOIRS

- 6.1 The incoming Reservoir's Bill (Northern Ireland) is intended to ensure that the existing 'controlled reservoirs' in Northern Ireland are managed in a more efficient and safety conscious manner.
- 6.2 Where development is proposed close to a reservoir, the developer will be required to carry out a flood risk assessment to show how the development will not be at risk of flooding from the nearby reservoir.
- 6.3 Consequently, when preparing an LDP the SPPS states that new development within the flood inundation area of a controlled reservoir can only be justified where the condition, management and maintenance regime of the reservoir are

appropriate to provide assurance regarding reservoir safety. Development will be precluded where the FRA indicates a likelihood of fast flowing and/or deep inundation. In the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council District there are 12 reservoirs, detailed in Table 1. Most of these reservoirs are in, or close to existing settlements.

Table 1: Existing Reservoirs in Lisburn & Castlereagh City District

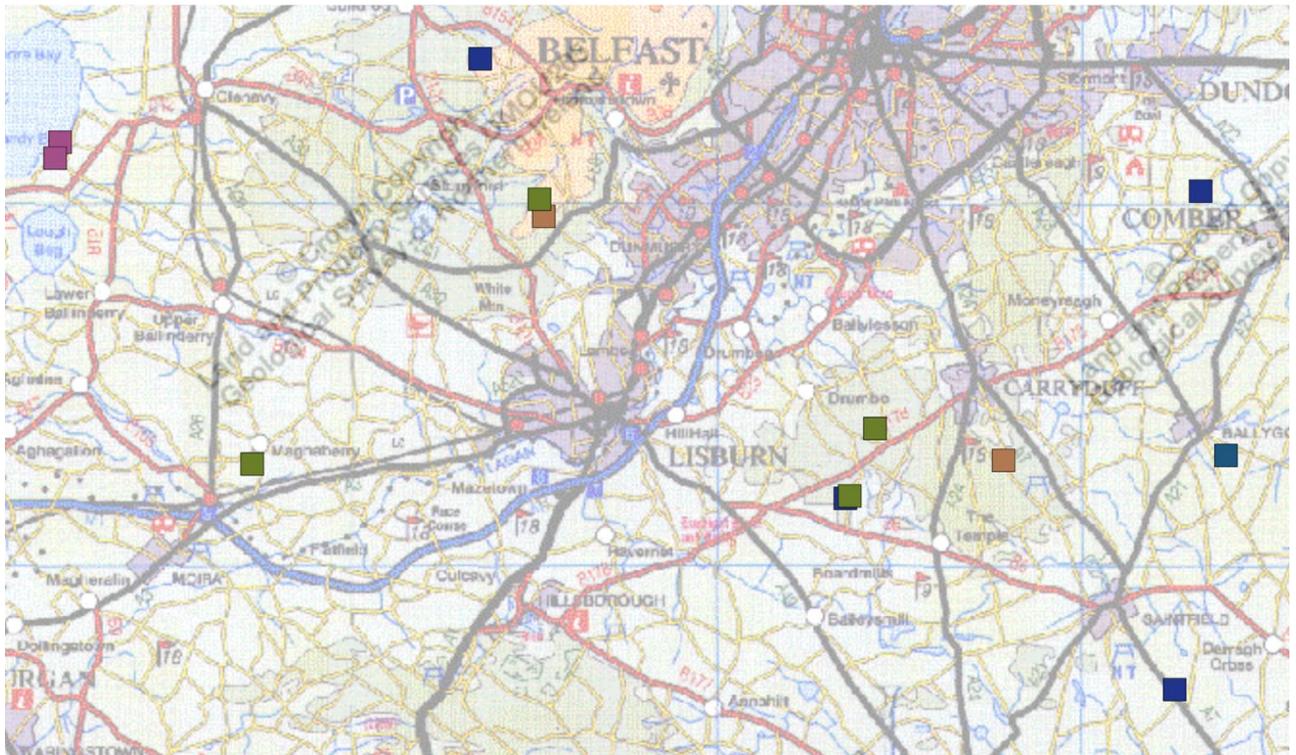
Reservoir Name	Location	Current Status
Boomer's Reservoir	Derriaghy Road, Lisburn	Not in use - reserve
Broad Water	Old Church Lane, Aghalee	Private
Culcavy	Culcavy Road, Hillsborough	Private
Duncan's Dam	Duncan's Road, Lisburn	Not in use
Hillsborough Castle Pond	Hillsborough Castle, Hillsborough	Not in Use
Knockbrackan Open Reservoir	Saintfield Road, Belfast	Not in use - reserve
Lambeg Pond	Lambeg Road, Lisburn	Private
Park Lake, Hillsborough	Park Street, Lisburn	Not in use
Leathemstown Reservoir	Hannahstown Road, Lisburn	Not in use
Monlough	Monlough Road, Carryduff	Private
Stoneyford Reservoir	Stoneyford Road, Lisburn	Not in use
Wallace Park	Magheralave Road, Lisburn	Not in use

Source: Reservoirs in Northern Ireland, Rivers Agency DARDNI

7.0 ACTIVE QUARRIES

7.1 In the LCCC district there are a total of 9 quarries as detailed in Map 1 and Table 2 below:

Map 1: Location of Active Quarries within LCCC District and surrounding area



Source: gsn geindex

Table 2: Active quarries in LCCC District

	Location	Type	Owner/Operator
1	Sandy Bay No 1, Shore Road, Crumlin	Sand & Gravel	Mulholland Bros. Brick and Sand
2	Sandy Bay No 2, Shore Road, Crumlin	Sand & Gravel	Northstone Materials
3	White Mountain Quarry	Basalt & Igneous Rock excl. granite	Whitemountain Quarries Ltd

4	Budore Quarry, Dundrod	Sandstone/Gritstone	McQuillan Group
5	Trummery Lane Quarry, Maghaberry	Basalt & Igneous Rock excl. granite	Lisburn Envirocare Ltd.
6	Ballymagarrick Quarry, Carryduff	Basalt & Igneous Rock excl. granite	M W Johnston & Sons
7	Temple Quarry, Boardmills	Basalt & Igneous Rock excl. granite	Whitemountain Quarries Ltd
8	Ballystockart Quarry, Comber	Sandstone/Gritstone	Whitemountain Quarries Ltd
9	Cashel Quarry, Belfast Road, Saintfield	Sandstone/Gritstone	Conexpo (NI) Ltd

Source: UK Directory of Mines and Quarries 2014

7.2 When preparing an LDP the Council is advised to safeguard mineral resources which are of economic or conservation value, and seek to ensure that workable mineral resources are not sterilised by other surface development which would prejudice future exploitation.

8.0 KEY FINDINGS

8.1 A summary of the key findings are as follows:-

Flood Risk and Drainage

- Local Development Plans should be compatible with and compliment the Flood Risk Management Plans which are due to be published by Rivers Agency in December 2015;
- Consideration should be given to avoiding zoning land for residential development which has been identified as being at risk of flooding, either on

the Strategic Climate Change or the Hazard Flood maps or land close to existing reservoirs;

- Consider opportunities for formulating planning policy which makes drainage a key element of design and which promotes the use of SuDS.

Minerals

- Consider how the new Local Development Plan should safeguard mineral resources which are of economic or conservation value, and seek to ensure that workable mineral resources are not sterilised by other surface development which would prejudice future exploitation;
- Consider how the Local Development Plan should identify areas which, because of their intrinsic amenity value such as designated AONBs including area of scientific value or archaeological or historic interest should be protected from minerals development

Annex 1 – A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland

Minerals Policy

Policy MIN 1 Environmental Protection

To assess the need for the mineral resource against the need to protect and conserve the environment.

Mineral exploration and working may damage or destroy nature conservation sites and structures and remains of historic and archaeological interest that are of importance. The early identification of the presence and importance of such sites, structures and remains liable to be affected by proposed mineral developments is important. The minerals industry should seek to ensure the physical preservation of important nature conservation sites, historic buildings and ancient monuments along with their settings.

Mineral developments within or in close proximity to areas such as Areas of Special Scientific Interest or National Nature Reserves which have been declared or proposed for declaration on the basis of their scientific value in regard to flora and fauna, etc, will not normally be given permission where they would prejudice the essential character of such areas. The same will apply to areas which have been or are to be designated, scheduled or listed because they contain features of archaeological or historic interest.

The Department will balance the case for a particular mineral working proposal against the need to protect and conserve the environment, taking account of all relevant environmental, economic and other considerations. In all areas, decisions on mineral applications will be made with regard to the preservation of good quality agricultural land, tree and vegetation cover, wildlife habitats, natural features of interest in the landscape and sites of archaeological and historic interest.

Extensions to existing mineral workings which minimise environmental disturbance in the countryside will normally be preferred to new workings on green field sites.

Permission for the extraction of peat for sale will only be granted where the proposals are consistent with the protection of boglands valuable to nature conservation interests, and with the protection of landscape quality particularly in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Where applicable, measures designed to prevent pollution of rivers, watercourses and ground water should be included in applications for mineral extraction and processing plant, including settlement ponds. The provision of reliable protective measures will be an important factor in assessing the acceptability of the extraction proposal.

Policy MIN 2 Visual Implications

To have regard to the visual implications of minerals extraction.

Visual intrusion is often the most significant environmental impact associated with mineral workings. Where permission is granted landscape quality will be protected by attaching conditions designed to avoid or mitigate visual disturbance. To minimise their visual impact in the landscape workings should, where possible, be located to take advantage of existing landforms and features. Particular regard will be paid to the preservation of skylines and to the proposed location of plant, stockpiles and overburden/waste within the working.

It is a fact of geology that some of the more beautiful parts of the countryside such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and areas of high scenic value contain easily workable reserves of rock and sand and gravel. It would be unrealistic to dispense with essential sources of supply. Nevertheless applications for new mineral workings and extensions to existing workings in these areas will be subject to rigorous examination with particular attention being given to the landscape implications of the proposals.

Policy MIN 3 Areas of Constraint

To identify Areas of Constraint on Mineral Developments.

If for visual, conservation or other reasons, areas require to be protected from mineral developments they will be identified as Areas of Constraint on Mineral Developments in development plans.

Areas of Constraint may form all or part of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or be outside an AONB altogether. They may include or be part of areas designated, listed or otherwise protected for their scientific value or archaeological or historic interest. Within these Areas of Constraint there will be a presumption against the granting of planning permission for the extraction and/or processing of minerals. Exceptions to this policy may be made where the proposed operations are short-term and the environmental implications are not significant. In such cases, on-site processing of the excavated material is unlikely to be permitted.

Policy MIN 4 Valuable Minerals

Applications to exploit minerals, limited in occurrence and with some uncommon or valuable property, will be considered on their merits.

From time to time minerals may be discovered which are particularly valuable to the economy. Oil, gas and lignite are examples. Exploitation may create environmental effects which are particular to the methods of extraction or treatment of that mineral. There will not be a presumption against their exploitation in any area. In considering a proposal where the site is within a statutory policy area due weight will be given to the reason for the statutory zoning.

Policy MIN 5 Mineral Reserves

Surface development which would prejudice future exploitation of valuable mineral reserves will not be permitted.

Where there are mineral reserves, e.g., lignite (brown coal) which are considered to be of particular value to the economy and those reserves have been proven to acceptable standards, surface development which would prejudice their exploitation will not be permitted. Policy Areas in respect of such minerals will, where appropriate, be defined in development plans.

Policy MIN 6 Safety and Amenity

To have particular regard to the safety and amenity of the occupants of developments in close proximity to mineral workings.

The continuous and disruptive nature of mineral operations make them "bad neighbours" particularly of housing. The potential for conflict will be reduced by requiring a degree of separation to be kept between mineral workings and other developments particularly where mineral operations involve blasting. The distance required will vary according to the nature of the mineral operations and neighbouring developments.

Permission will not normally be granted for mineral workings and other developments to be in close proximity where potential sources of nuisance are judged to be incompatible with standards of amenity acceptable to the Department and other relevant authorities. Where permission is granted for a mineral working in close proximity to other developments, conditions designed to mitigate disturbance from the working will, where appropriate, be attached to the permission.

In relation to proposals to extract minerals by underground methods, careful consideration will be paid to the effect such developments are likely to have on the stability of the surface lands directly above and surrounding the mine areas. Where there are existing buildings, in particular housing, on these surface lands planning permission for mining will not normally be permitted.

Conversely, proposals to develop the surface lands directly above or surrounding areas from which minerals have been or are being extracted by underground methods will be carefully considered in relation to the attendant risks. Developments which involve the erection of buildings will not normally be permitted in the interests of public safety.

Policy MIN 7 Traffic

To take account of the safety and convenience of road users and the amenity of persons living on roads close to the site of proposed operations.

Mineral resources can occur where the public road network is unsuitable for the volume of heavy traffic which mineral developments can generate. Where traffic from such a development would prejudice the safety and convenience of road users planning permission will normally be refused unless the roads can be satisfactorily improved. If the traffic using an access from a proposed mineral development would prejudice the safety and convenience of road users planning permission will normally be refused, unless a satisfactory access can be provided.

When considering applications for new mineral developments with access onto the main traffic route network, particular attention will be paid to the importance of the mineral to the economy of the area, alternative sources of the mineral, the availability of an alternative access and the suitability of the access having regard to the standards of sightlines, radii, gradients, etc.

Vehicles transporting materials from a mineral site may be directed to use particular routes in order to avoid environmental disturbance to people living adjacent to other roads in the locality.

Where appropriate, conditions will be applied to prevent dirt on the wheels of vehicles being deposited on the public road.

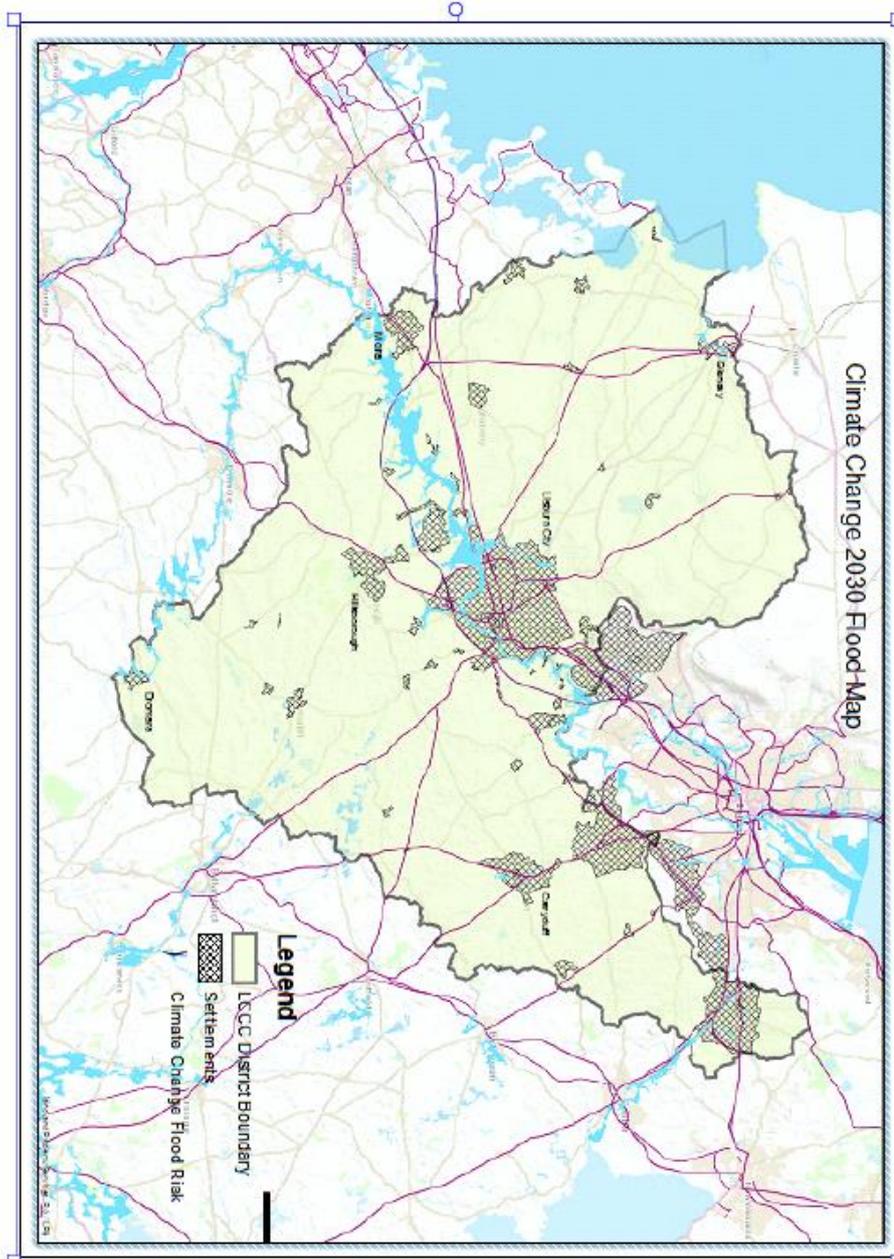
Policy MIN 8 Restoration

To require mineral workings to be restored at the earliest opportunity.

Restoration is required to make mineral workings fit for beneficial use and environmentally acceptable following extraction. The standard of restoration has generally improved in recent years and there are a number of uses to which sites can be restored. The preferred types of reclamation and after use depend on the characteristics of the deposits, nature of excavation, availability of fill materials, the surrounding landscape, the needs of the local community and the potential for nature conservation on the site.

Applications for the extraction of minerals must include satisfactory restoration proposals. Where practicable such proposals should provide for progressive restoration of sites.

Annex 2 Climate Change Flood Risk Map



Annex 3 Flood Hazard Extent Maps

See attached PDF