

# **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)**

**April 2016**

## Getting in Touch

Should you have a planning query, you can contact the Council's Planning Unit in the following ways:

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

**By post to:** Planning Unit  
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council  
Civic Headquarters  
Lagan Valley Island  
Lisburn  
Co. Antrim  
BT27 4RL

**By telephone on:** 0300 200 7830

**By text phone on:** 028 92 509 508

Additional copies of this document can be downloaded from our website at [www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk) or requested via the postal address, email address, telephone number and text phone number as above.

Should you require a copy of this Statement of Community Involvement in an alternative format, it can be made available on request in large print, audio format or Braille. It may also be made available in minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.

## Keeping the Community Informed

The Planning Unit is keen to communicate with local people on planning issues arising in our Council area and in particular progress on our new Local Development Plan. If your community/voluntary group would like to be included in this process please email your details to [planning@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:planning@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk).

If you have any queries regarding this document please contact us using the details above.

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **What is the Statement of Community Involvement?**

- 1.1 From the 1st April 2015 Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council became the main decision maker on the vast majority of planning applications in the Council area, and assumed powers for producing its Local Development Plan. It is the Council's responsibility, working with local people, to create a clear vision of how the Council area should develop and what it will look like in the years to come.
- 1.2 Councils are required under Section 4 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 1.3 The purpose of this statement is to set out policy for involving the community in the production of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's Local Development Plan and the consideration of planning applications. It describes who, how and when the community will be invited to participate in the different stages of both Local Development Plan formulation and the determination of planning applications.
- 1.4 This SCI is not intended to be a source of definitive legal advice. If any discrepancy exists between this statement and the legislation it refers to, the provisions of that legislation will prevail.

## **A Vision of Participation**

1.5 The Council's vision as set out in its Corporate Plan is:

***“To be a progressive, dynamic and inclusive council, working in partnership to develop our community.”***

1.6 The Council's core values are:-

- Accountability
- Civic Leadership
- Transparency
- Inclusivity
- Value for Money
- Excellent standards

1.7 This is a shared vision of participation in decision making and is aimed to ensure that:

- (i) Everyone has an early and informed opportunity to express their views on the development of the area and have them considered before decisions are made; and
- (ii) All groups in our community, regardless of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, sex, marital status, people with a disability and people without, sexual orientation, and those with and without dependants are enabled and empowered to participate.

1.8 This SCI has been screened in accordance with Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) requirements. The SCI will assist all persons in engaging better with the planning system and as such it is expected to equally benefit all Section 75 categories.

- 1.9 It is intended to adopt a proactive and timely approach to community involvement through providing clear information and encouraging participation during plan preparation and pre-application, planning application submission, assessment and determination stages. The process must therefore be informative, user friendly, as inclusive as possible, and conducted in an open and transparent way. Every effort is to be made to engage the community, record views and provide feedback.
- 1.10 The Local Development Plan provides a statutory link with the Council's Community Plan and will include a spatial land use reflection of the Community Plan, providing a vision of how places should change and what they will be like in the future.

**Figure 1: Important Linkages with other Council Plans and Strategies**



## **2.0 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE COUNCIL'S LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROCESS**

- 2.1 The purpose of the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Local Development Plan, comprising the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan, is to inform the general public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested bodies of the policy framework and land use proposals that will implement the strategic objectives of the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) and guide development decisions within the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area up to 2030.

### **Who can get involved?**

- 2.2 Anyone who wishes to get involved in the preparation of this Local Development Plan will be encouraged to do so at the opportunities provided. In particular the views of the following groups of people will be welcomed:
- People living within the area / neighbourhood;
  - Elected representatives;
  - Voluntary groups;
  - Community forums / groups / umbrella organisations;
  - Environmental groups;
  - Residents groups;
  - Business interests; and
  - Developers / landowners.
- 2.3 Elected members, forums, community and residents groups provide a voice for the local community. Other voluntary and interest groups also bring a special knowledge and can ensure that important concerns are

addressed. Annex 4 sets out the list of community/voluntary groups in Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Area.

### **Empowering disadvantaged and under-represented groups**

2.4 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires a public authority, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependants and persons without.

2.5 In addition, without prejudice to the above obligations, public authorities are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or race. The above “Section 75 groups” (as defined in para 2.4) are important participants within the planning process and include people who traditionally have been under represented or disadvantaged. These groups will be invited to take part in the consultation process on the Local Development Plan in order to obtain their views and contribute to the consideration of equality issues under Section 75. Their views on any equality screening documents or draft Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) will also be sought within the specified period for comment along with the draft Plan Strategy and draft Local Policies Plan.

2.6 To ensure that Local Development Plan and consultation documents are accessible to everyone they will be made available on the Council’s website at [www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk) and the Council, on request,

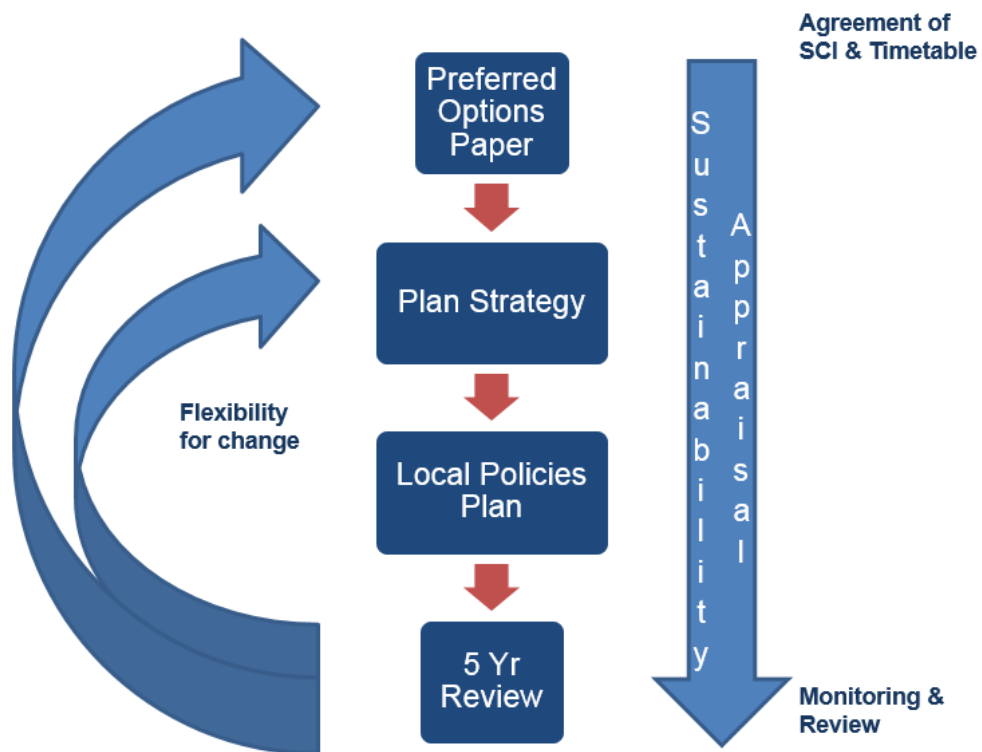


will take all reasonable steps to provide documents in alternative formats and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English. Plain English will be used for all publications. A telephone and text phone number will be stated on each document for people with hearing or speech impairments. If for any reason, a request for a document in a particular alternative format cannot be met, other possible solutions will be explored.

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

- 2.7 A Local Development Plan is made up of different stages, each presenting opportunities for community involvement (see Annex 1 for details). Each of these stages is identified along with the actions that are to be taken to involve the community. The actions will fulfil and in some cases exceed the statutory requirements on public consultation.

**Figure 2: Local Development Plan Process**



## **Stage 1 - Initial Plan Preparation**

- 2.8 The purpose of the plan preparation stage is to establish what is required of the new plan, the key issues to be addressed and the options for addressing them. This will be undertaken using a topic based approach which will address particular issues relevant to the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area.
- 2.9 This stage includes preparation of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and the Timetable for the Local Development Plan. Positions papers which set out the evidence base will assist in the preparation of the Preferred Options Paper. An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) will be undertaken, along with a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment) in consultation with Central Government as the Consultation Body.

## **Actions**

- Prepare and publish a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), listing the key consultees, Community Groups and under-represented (Section 75) groups who will be actively encouraged to participate in the process. These lists will be kept under review and written requests for inclusion from additional bodies will be considered.
- Prepare, agree and make available at the Council's Civic Headquarters a Timetable (including advertising and placing on the Council's website) which will provide indicative dates for:-
  - each stage of the preparation of the Local Development Plan process, including publication of the Preferred Options Paper, Plan Strategy, and Local Policies Plan, through to adoption;
  - The carrying out of the Sustainability Appraisal and the report on the findings.

- Set up a Steering Group<sup>1</sup> and Project Management Team<sup>2</sup> to oversee development of the Local Development Plan.
- Write to key consultees (see Annex 2) requesting them to participate in the plan making process by providing information on the key strategic issues that the Local Development Plan should address.
- Invite under represented (Section 75) groups to identify whether there are any types of planning policies which are likely to have a significant impact on the groups they represent. They will also be provided opportunity to identify any particular issues or needs which they feel the plan should address. Where requested this can be done through a face to face meeting with a planning official. Any comments received will be taken into account in preparing the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA).
- Send the Scoping Report of the Sustainability Appraisal incorporating SEA to the statutory Consultation Body and if necessary, Central Government may be requested to undertake trans-boundary consultation with the Republic of Ireland.
- Publish a Preferred Options Paper which will set out the key plan issues and the preferred options available to address them (and make available at the Council's Civic Headquarters and on the Council's website). The Preferred Options Paper is a consultation paper to promote debate on issues of strategic significance which are likely to influence the shape of future development within Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area.
- Issue a local advertisement<sup>3</sup>, press release and hold a launch/exhibition to announce publication of the Preferred Options

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<sup>1</sup> Comprises the Council Planning Committee, Chief Executive and Senior Planning Officials to ensure overview and strategic input.

<sup>2</sup> Consisting of Council officials and key consultees to ensure adequate co-operation of consultees and to act as the screening and scoping group for the Sustainability Appraisal and Equality Impact Assessment.

<sup>3</sup> Local advertisement means an advertisement for two successive weeks in at least one newspaper circulating in the Council area.

Paper, with public meetings, exhibitions or drop-in sessions as appropriate in various locations across the Council area.

- Make any relevant supporting documents including the Sustainability Interim Report and Position papers (such as the Countryside Assessment and Settlement Appraisal) available at the Council's Civic Headquarters and on the Council's website and provide hard copies on request at a specified price.
- Invite key consultees, elected members, local community groups and under-represented (Section 75) groups to the public events and advise them how they can view or obtain a copy of the Preferred Options Paper and ask for comment within a minimum 8 week consultation period.
- Present a Public Consultation Report to elected Members following a minimum 8 week consultation period.

## **Stage 2 - Preparation and Adoption of Plan Strategy**

- 2.10 This stage of plan preparation will set out the Council's objectives and strategic policies regarding the future development of the area. The Council will prepare a draft Plan Strategy based on all information previously gathered and the public responses to the Preferred Options Paper.
- 2.11 As part of the process the Council will also carry out a range of assessments including a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA), Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Rural Proofing. These will be published along with the draft Plan Strategy.
- 2.12 The draft Plan Strategy will be published for consultation, and all representations received will be available for public inspection, including any counter-representations. These will be considered at the

independent examination<sup>4</sup> which will examine the draft Plan Strategy against soundness tests<sup>5</sup>.

- 2.13 Following the independent examination, the examiner will issue a report of its findings to Central Government who will consider and issue a binding report to the Council. The Council must incorporate any changes outlined in the binding report before adopting the Plan Strategy.

## **Actions**

### *Publication of Draft Plan Strategy*

- Publish a draft Plan Strategy for an 8 week consultation period setting out the key strategic policies for the Council area (and make available at the Council's Civic Headquarters and on the Council's website).
- Issue a public notice<sup>6</sup>, local advertisement, press release and hold a launch/exhibition to announce publication of the draft Plan Strategy, with public meetings, exhibitions or drop-in sessions as appropriate in various locations across the Council area.
- Make any relevant supporting documents including the draft Sustainability Appraisal Report, draft Equality Impact Assessment and Public consultation report available at the Council's Civic Headquarters and on the Council's website and provide hard copies on request at a specified price.
- Invite key consultees, elected members, local community groups and under-represented (Section 75) groups to the public events and

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<sup>4</sup> The independent examination is requested by Central Government following submission of documents from the Council.

<sup>5</sup> Soundness involves testing the LDP against a key list of criteria. Detailed information set out in [Development Plan Practice Notes | Planning Portal](#).

<sup>6</sup> A public notice is placed in the Belfast Gazette, which is the official public record.

provide them with a copy of the draft Plan Strategy and ask for comments within 8 weeks.

#### *Plan Strategy – Representations*

- Make copies of representations available for inspection at the Council's Civic Headquarters and on its website and notify those who made representations of this.
- Write to key consultees and elected members informing them that representations are available for inspection and the places and times at which they can be inspected.
- Issue a Public Notice, local advertisement, and make available on the Council's website details of representations for inspection and the 8 week consultation period, including closing date for counter-representations.
- Make copies of counter-representations available for inspection at the Council's Civic Headquarters and on the Council's website.
- Report counter-representations to elected members.
- Fully consider representations and counter-representations before submitting the draft Plan Strategy and all supporting documents required in the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 to Central Government for independent examination.

#### *Plan Strategy - Independent Examination*

- Publicise and notify the consultation bodies on the draft Plan Strategy and all supporting documents submitted to Central Government for Independent Examination; make these submitted documents available for inspection at the Council's Civic Headquarters and on the Council's website.
- Continue to make the draft Plan Strategy and any accompanying documentation available at the Council's Civic Headquarters and on the Council's website.

- Issue a Public Notice, local advertisement and place on the Council's website, dates, times and venues for the independent examination at least 4 weeks before the independent examination is to be held indicating that representations and counter representations are available for inspection.
- Notify all persons who have submitted representations and counter representations to the draft Plan Strategy of the arrangements for the independent examination indicating that representations and counter representations are available for inspection.
- Request key consultees to provide comment on the representations and counter representations for consideration at the independent examination.

#### Adoption of Plan Strategy

- Issue a Public Notice, local advertisement and place on the Council's website details of:
  - (i) adoption of the Plan Strategy;
  - (ii) where to get copies of the Plan Strategy and accompanying documents, Central Government's Direction and the accompanying Independent Examiner's Report.
- Make the Plan Strategy and any supporting documents, Central Government's Direction and Independent Examiner's Report available at the Council's Civic Headquarters and on the Council's website with hard copy available on request for a specified price.
- Write to key consultees and those submitting representations and counter representations advising them of the adopted Plan Strategy, and where to obtain copies together with Central Government's Direction and the Independent Examiner's Report. Also advise them of the commencement of work on the Local Policies Plan.

### **Stage 3 - Preparation and Adoption of Local Policies Plan**

- 2.14 The Local Policies Plan is the second part of the Local Development Plan document. It will be consistent with the adopted Plan Strategy and will be the Council's detailed policies and proposals regarding the future development of the area. The draft Local Policies Plan will be a public consultation document and will form a key part of the public participation process.
- 2.15 The process for the Local Policies Plan will follow the same steps as those carried out for the Plan Strategy. This will include preparing the draft Local Policies Plan, updating the Sustainability Report and accompanying statutory assessments, publishing it for consultation, and making all representations/counter-representations available for inspection prior to independent examination.

### **Actions**

#### *Publication of Draft Local Policies Plan*

- Publish a draft Local Policies Plan for an 8 week consultation period setting out the detailed policies and proposals for the Council area (and make available at the Council's Civic Headquarters and on the Council's website).
- Issue a public notice, local advertisement, press release and hold a launch/exhibition to announce publication of the draft Local Policies Plan, with public meetings, exhibitions or drop-in sessions as appropriate in various locations across the Council area.
- Make any relevant supporting documents including the draft Sustainability Appraisal Report, draft Equality Impact Assessment and Public consultation report available at the Council's Civic Headquarters and on the Council's website and provide hard copies on request at a specified price.



- Invite key consultees, elected members, local community groups and under-represented (Section 75) groups to the public events and provide them with a copy of the draft Local Policies Plan and ask for comments within 8 weeks.
- Write to all who submitted a representation and counter representation to the draft Plan Strategy informing them of the publication of the Local Policies Plan and accompanying documents; advising how they can view or obtain copies; the dates of the public events; the 8 week period and closing date for representations.

#### *Local Policies Plan – Representations*

- Make copies of representations available for inspection at the Council's Civic Headquarters and on the Council's website.
- Write to key consultees and elected members informing them that representations are available for inspection and the places and times at which they can be inspected.
- Issue a Public Notice, local advertisement, and make available on the Council's website details of representations for inspection and the 8 week consultation period, including closing date for counter-representations.
- Make copies of counter-representations available for inspection at the Council's Civic Headquarters and on the Council's website.
- Report counter-representations to elected members.
- Fully consider representations and counter-representations before submitting the draft Local Policies Plan and all supporting documents required in the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 to Central Government for independent examination.

### Local Policies Plan - Independent Examination

- Publicise and notify the consultation bodies on the draft Local Policies Plan and all supporting documents submitted to Central Government for Independent Examination; make these submitted documents available for inspection at the Council's Civic Headquarters and on the Council's website.
- Continue to make the draft Local Policies Plan and any accompanying documentation available at the Council's Civic Headquarters and on the Council's website.
- Issue a Public Notice, local advertisement and place on the Council's website dates, times and venues for the independent examination at least 4 weeks before the independent examination is to be held indicating that representations and counter representations are available for inspection.
- Notify all persons who have submitted representations and counter representations to the draft Local Policies Plan of the arrangements for the independent examination indicating that representations and counter representations are available for inspection.
- Request key consultees to provide comment on the representations and counter representations for consideration at the independent examination.

### Adoption of Local Policies Plan

- Issue a Public Notice, local advertisement and place on the Council's website details of:
  - (i) adoption of the Local Policies Plan;
  - (ii) where to get copies of the Local Policies Plan and accompanying documents, Central Government's Direction and the Independent Examiner's Report.
- Make the Local Policies Plan and any supporting documents, Central Government's Direction and Independent Examiner's Report available at the Council's Civic Headquarters and on the

Council's website with hard copy available on request for a specified price.

- Write to key consultees and those submitting representations and counter representations advising them of the adopted Local Policies Plan and where to obtain copies together with Central Government's Direction and the Independent Examiner's Report.

#### **Stage 4 - Monitoring and Review**

- 2.16 The final stage in the Local Development Plan process is monitoring and review which are essential in order to establish how the objectives of the plan have been achieved and whether any changes are necessary. The Council will provide regular reviews of the Local Development Plan, at least every 5 years from the date of adoption of the Local Policies Plan.

### **3.0 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE COUNCIL'S DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT FUNCTION**

- 3.1 Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council as the local planning authority for the area deals with all planning applications (with the exception of those for Regionally Significant Development which will be determined by the Central Government) and Listed Building applications in the Council area. It also deals with applications for works in conservation areas, works to protected trees, hazardous substance and advertising consent. Development Management is the process through which such applications are considered. An important part of the process is to provide information and advice to applicants and to seek and take into account the views of the general public and statutory consultees on all planning applications. The statutory requirements for consultation on planning applications are set out in legislation. These requirements vary according to the type of proposal but include notification to specified bodies and general publicity.
- 3.2 Applications will be determined in accordance with the Plan-led System<sup>7</sup> which gives primacy to the Local Development Plan as referred to in the previous section 2.0.
- 3.3 The Council receives a wide variety of planning applications and therefore needs to involve the community to differing degrees, according to the scale and complexity of the application. This section looks at:
- how the public can become involved at the various stages of the application process; and

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<sup>7</sup> See glossary.

- how the level of community involvement will depend on the scale of the application.

## **Pre-Application Stage**

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

- 3.4 Pre-application discussions are encouraged for a range of types of applications, both major and local. The objective of pre-application discussions should be to provide advice and information (as appropriate) without prejudice and to clarify the format, type and level of detail required to enable the Council to determine an application. For major applications, this process will enable the applicant to discuss with the Council details of how the community should be involved in the decision-making process.

### *Pre-Application Community Consultation*

- 3.5 The Council strives to inform and involve the wider community in helping to create better quality developments and place making. Applicants submitting **major** applications to the Council must undertake community consultation before submitting their application. The Council will require the following actions to be undertaken **before** the application is submitted:-
1. Notify the Council at least 12 weeks in advance that a major planning application is to be submitted.
  2. Hold at least one public event where the community will be afforded the opportunity to make comment.
  3. Publish details of the proposal in the local press, outlining where further details can be obtained and the date, time and location of a public event.
  4. Submit a pre-application community consultation report.

- 3.6 Pre-application community consultation is likely to be more successful if the applicant makes significant efforts to open lines of communication with, and provide feedback to, local communities and work with them to secure development proposals which are acceptable to everyone.
- 3.7 Applicants considering submitting development proposals that fall within the definition of major development are encouraged to engage in Pre-Application Discussions with planning officers prior to submitting such applications. Where applicants fail to fully meet the pre-application community consultation requirements the Council will decline to determine the application.

### **Application Stage**

- 3.8 When a planning application is submitted for determination the Council will involve the community in the development management process. If an individual considers that they will be affected by a development proposal they will have an opportunity to comment on what is being proposed and how it will affect them. Comments that raise material planning considerations will be considered by the Council as part of the decision making process.

### **Advertising and Neighbour Notification**

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

### Advertising

- 3.10 The Council will advertise all new applications on a weekly basis in at least one local newspaper in accordance with Section 41 of the Planning Act.

### EIA Development

- 3.11 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a method for ensuring that the likely significant environmental effects of a new development on the environment are fully understood and taken into account before consent is given for the development to proceed. The Environmental Statement (ES) produced following this Assessment should, bring together in a single document or series of documents information about a proposed development and its effects on the environment.
- 3.12 In most cases it will fall to the Council to determine if the application is an EIA application. It should be noted that if an application is an EIA application it cannot be processed until the ES is received. When a developer submits an ES in support of a planning application, the Council will publish a notice of its receipt in a local newspaper. The notice will indicate where the Statement may be purchased and the address of the Council Office where it may be inspected. The Council will also allow 4 weeks (from the date the notice is first published) for representation(s) to be made.

### Neighbour Notification

- 3.13 The Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 states that any identified occupier of land neighbouring the land to which the application relates shall be notified by serving a notice on them. Under the Council's Neighbour Notification Scheme, the Council will ensure that planning applications are brought to the

individual attention of the occupiers of buildings on neighbouring land which are within 90m of the boundary of the application site.

Neighbouring land is defined as *'land which directly adjoins the application site or which would adjoin it but for an entry or road less than 20m in width'*.

- 3.14 The Planning Officer when carrying out a site inspection will also check the accuracy of the neighbour notification details supplied on the application form and may add details as considered appropriate.
- 3.15 The period for responding following receipt of a neighbour notification letter is 14 days, though any late representations received before a decision is made will still be considered.

### **Obtaining further information and getting involved in planning applications**

- 3.16 The weekly lists of planning applications received within the Council area will be available to view on the Northern Ireland Planning Portal [www.planningni.gov.uk](http://www.planningni.gov.uk). Lists can also be accessed from the Council's website [www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk).
- 3.17 Planning applications including supporting documents and corresponding plans can be viewed via the Planning Portal. Planning applications can also be viewed online at the Council offices during normal office hours (9am – 5pm).
- 3.18 A duty Planning Officer will be available during normal office hours to give advice on current or proposed applications (individuals are



however advised to make an appointment to speak to a particular Officer).

#### Public Register

3.19 The Council will make the application, plans and any associated environmental statement available on a public register in accordance with Section 242 of the Planning Act. Each register will contain the following information:

- a copy (which may be photographic) of each application together with copies of plans and drawings submitted in relation thereto;
- the decision notice, if any, in respect of the application, including details of any conditions subject to which permission or consent was granted;
- the reference number, the date and effect of any decision of the Planning Appeals Commission in respect of the application; and
- brief details of any revocation or modification relating to any permission or consent, including date of issue.

#### File Inspection

3.20 The Council will make the application file available for inspection, by appointment only. The amount of information on the file, will depend on the status of the application and the extent to which the application has progressed through the system. Costs for copy documents will be charged in accordance with the Council's agreed charging structure.

#### Submitting Comments

3.21 Individuals, groups and organisations can comment on a planning application even if they have not been neighbour notified by the Council. All comments will be carefully considered. Care should be

taken when making comments to the Council to ensure that no personal data is included.

3.22 When a decision is made on a planning application only certain issues are taken into account, these are often referred to as 'material planning considerations'. Material considerations must be genuine planning considerations. The basic question is not whether owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties would experience financial or other loss from a particular development, but whether the proposal would unacceptably affect amenity and the existing use of land and buildings that ought to be protected in the public interest.

3.23 Generally greater weight is attached to issues which are supported by evidence rather than solely by assertion. It is important to note that if an identified problem/issue can be dealt with by way of a suitable condition the Council is required to consider this as an alternative to refusing an application.

3.24 Comments on a planning application may be made in a variety of ways, as follows:-

**By email to:** [planning@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:planning@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk) (Please quote the application reference number)

**By post to:** Planning Unit  
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council  
Civic Headquarters  
Lagan Valley Island  
Lisburn  
BT27 4RL

- 3.25 Oral, anonymous or defamatory comments cannot be taken into account. Individuals should therefore ensure that comments relate to relevant planning matters.
- 3.26 All written comments received in respect of a planning application will be acknowledged within five working days. The acknowledgement letter will provide confirmation that the representation has been received. It also includes a planning application reference number, description and location of the proposed development and a contact name of the planning officer dealing with the application.
- 3.27 It is important to note that whilst Planning Officers may not be able to respond to each comment made due to the large number of representations received, all comments will be summarised and fully considered within the Planning Officer's report.
- 3.28 The Council will not normally contact the respondent again until after a decision is made unless the application, is significantly altered or is withdrawn.
- 3.29 The Council may, if it considers it appropriate to do so, stage public exhibitions, issue press releases or arrange public meetings to provide information about major developments or proposals which it considers to be particularly significant or have wide-spread effects on communities.
- 3.30 Local councillors can request that a particular planning application is referred to the planning committee for determination in accordance with the Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee found at [www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk).

- 3.31 The Council will consult with a range of ‘statutory consultees’ (see Annex 3) to assist in the determination of an application. If a representation raises issues that are relevant to the responsibilities of a consultee (e.g. road safety) the representation will be copied to the appropriate consultee for consideration and comment.
- 3.32 The Council will carefully take any comments made into account before a decision is made. All representations received in respect of a planning application will be scanned and added to the Planning Portal website. Prior to uploading, representations will be redacted to remove email addresses and hand written signatures - typed names and addresses remain visible.
- 3.33 The Planning Officer may negotiate changes to applications where these are considered expedient. Re-consultation with neighbours and third parties (for 14 days) will take place on receipt of amendments if it is considered that they raise new issues that could lead to further comment. If any change is considered to be substantive, a new application may be invited.

### **Community Involvement at the Planning Committee Stage**

- 3.34 In accordance with the Council’s Planning Scheme of Delegation, decision making in respect of certain planning applications will be delegated to Planning Officers. Exceptions to delegation apply. The Council’s Scheme of Delegation can be viewed on its website.

### **Pre-determination hearings and speaking at the Planning Committee**

- 3.35 For those major applications that have been notified to Central Government but have been returned to the Council for determination

the applicant will be afforded the opportunity of appearing before and being heard by the Council.

- 3.36 If an application goes before the Planning Committee, Speaking Rights will apply to individual who have made representations. Requests to speak must be made in writing, (which includes emails) in accordance with the Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee. The Protocol is available to view on the Council's website.

**Community Involvement after a Planning Application has been determined (Post Application Stage)**

- 3.37 A notification of decision letter will be sent to the applicant/agent and all people who have responded to the consultation on the planning application, informing them of the decision and the reason for that decision. The decision will be recorded on the Council's website (in due course) and a copy will be placed in the statutory Planning Register.
- 3.38 If the application has been presented to the Planning Committee for determination, the Committee decision can be found by contacting the planning office.

**Involving the Community When an Appeal is made against a Planning Refusal/Granted Conditions/Enforcement Notice**

- 3.39 Only applicants and those upon whom notices have been served have the right of appeal. There are no third party rights of appeal. Where an applicant is unhappy with the Council's decision on an application or a condition attached to a permission, he/she may appeal to the Planning Appeals Commission. An applicant may also appeal to the Planning Appeals Commission where the Council has not determined an application within the relevant period prescribed by the Planning

(General Development Procedure) Order (NI) 2015. Where such an appeal is lodged, the application is deemed to have been refused. Appeals must be lodged with the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) within four months from the date of notification of the Council's decision, or expiry of the prescribed period as the case may be.

- 3.40 All those people who responded on the original planning application that is the subject of appeal will be advised that an appeal has been received, and provided with an opportunity to make their views known. Copies of letters already submitted will be forwarded to the PAC. For hearings and public inquiries, the interested parties have the opportunity to make their views known verbally to the PAC.

## **4.0 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING ENFORCEMENT**

- 4.1 The Community plays an important role in reporting cases where they believe there has been a breach of planning control. A breach of planning control occurs when development or other certain activities take place without the necessary planning permission or consent from the Council or Central Government. This may also include failure to carry out development in accordance with the approved plans or conditions.
- 4.2 All planning enforcement related complaints are treated confidentially. If the complaint results in a planning application being submitted, then this will be publicised in the normal manner and adjoining neighbours and complainants notified.
- 4.3 In cases where planning enforcement action is taken, complainants are informed once the case has been brought to a conclusion. In cases where enforcement action is not taken, a full explanation providing the Council's reasons will be sent to the complainants. Many initial complaints relate to non-enforcement issues in the Council area, such as householder permitted development type extensions or alterations to a dwelling house. In such cases, the Council will provide the complainant with the guidelines for 'permitted development' which is development which does not require planning permission.
- 4.4 The Council's priorities for enforcement action are contained within the Council's Planning Enforcement Strategy found at [www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk). The Enforcement Strategy will be subject to regular review.

## **5.0 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE**

- 5.1 The Council will also prepare non-statutory planning guidance to support its development plan. Supplementary planning guidance includes for example design guides and advice notes. These will be published for public consultation and comment (rather than formal objection) prior to the publication of the final draft. Comments received will be published on the Council's website.



## **6.0 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION**

- 6.1 A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance. The Council considers that consultation with, and the involvement of local people is important when undertaking work associated with Conservation Areas. This will help encourage greater ownership of the concept and greater co-operation and commitment to achieving the aims of the designation. The Council will involve the community in the designation, variation or cancellation of a Conservation Area. This will entail formal consultation with the Historic Buildings Council and Central Government, advertising by way of a public notice in the local press and public meetings to discuss and present proposals. Upon formal designation the Council will publish a public notice in the local press and hold a public launch and exhibition.

## **7.0 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN DESIGNATION OF A SIMPLIFIED PLANNING ZONE**

- 7.1 Where the Council proposes to commence work on a simplified planning zone it will undertake consultations with the neighbouring council, the land owner and occupier and the relevant Government department. Additionally the Council will consult Central Government in accordance with the Planning (Simplified Planning Zones) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.
- 7.2 Once details of a scheme have been prepared the Council will make copies available for inspection at the Council's office, give notice by way of an advertisement in the local press and on the Council's website, and will serve a notice on those it has consulted with.
- 7.3 Following advertising of the proposed planning zone(s) details there will be an eight week period when representations can be made to the Council. If the Council subsequently decides not to proceed with the proposed planning zone it will publish a further advertisement to that effect and will notify all those have made representations.
- 7.4 The Council may cause an independent examination to be held to consider the representations received. Where it is proposed to hold an independent examination details including the time and place of the examination will be published in the local press. Where it is decided not to hold an independent examination the Council will notify all those who have made representations.
- 7.5 Following the independent examination the Council will produce a report and statement detailing its decision and outlining reasons for its

decision. Notice of publication will be advertised in the local press and the report and statement will be available for public inspection in the Council offices.

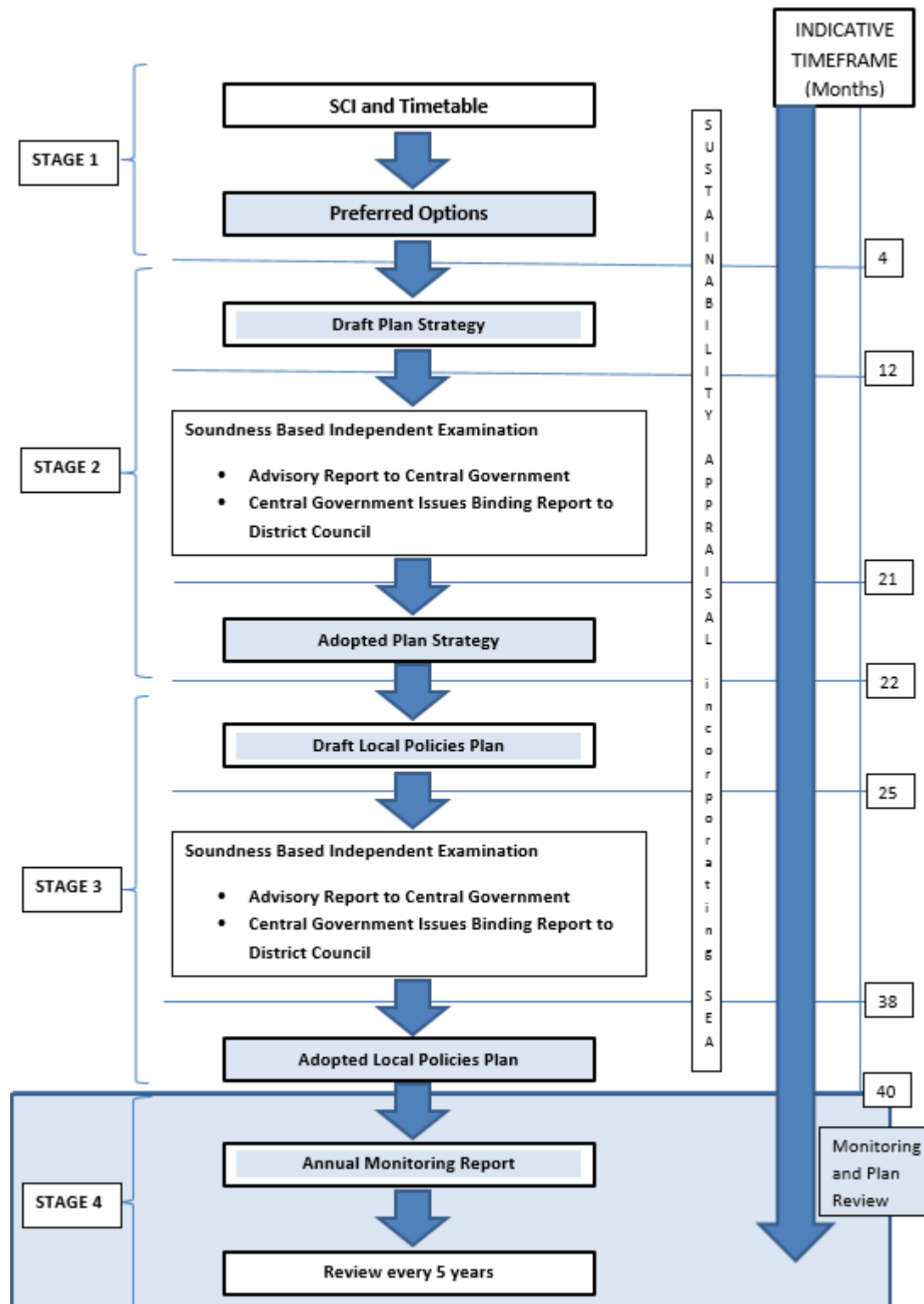
## **8.0 REVIEW OF THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

- 8.1 This Statement of Community Involvement will be reviewed as necessary to ensure that it remains current and relevant to the planning needs of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.
  
- 8.2 A provisional list of Community/Voluntary Groups in Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Area is set out in the attached Annex 4. If a group wishes to be added to this list, they are advised to make a submission in writing or by email to the Council's Local Development Plan team.

## **9.0 OTHER**

- 9.1 Should a member of the public have a complaint regarding the Planning Unit, the Council operates a separate Complaints Procedure which is clearly detailed on the Council's website at [www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk).

## Annex 1 - Local Development Plan Stages



## **Annex 2 – Statutory Consultees Development Plan**

The following consultation bodies are statutory consultees for the Local Development Plan process.

1. Northern Ireland Government departments;
2. The adjoining Council(s);
3. Water or sewerage undertakers;
4. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive;
5. The Civil Aviation Authority;
6. Any person to whom the electronic communications code applies;
7. Any person who has a licence granted under Article 10(1) of the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992;
8. Any person who has a licence granted under Article 8 the Gas (Northern Ireland) Order 1996.

### **Annex 3 - Consultees Development Management**

Where a Council undertakes consultations on a planning application the consultee will be required to respond within 21 days, or any other date as agreed in writing, after which time the Council may determine the application whether or not a response has been received. In the case of those developments which are subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) the Council will not make a determination until 28 days have passed.

The Council will undertake consultations with a number of key bodies and government departments including those responsible for:-

- proposals that may impact on natural habitats and built heritage, entail the redevelopment of contaminated land, developments which require storage and processing of controlled waste materials and/or proposals resulting in discharges to the natural environment.
- proposals which impact on road and rail infrastructure (Transport NI).
- proposals which impact on water and sewerage infrastructure (NI Water).
- proposals where it is considered that there is potential for flooding or increased surface water run-off and/or impact on existing watercourses or flood defences (Rivers Agency).
- all major energy infrastructure projects.

It should be noted that the above is not intended to be a definitive list of consultees nor cover all circumstances under which a consultation with a statutory consultee may be carried out. Due to the wide range of



development proposals submitted to the Council each application will be carefully considered and consultations will be undertaken in line with statutory requirements. The need for consultations will vary between applications depending on the on the nature and scale of the proposal.

Further information on the consultation process is contained within Central Government's Development Management Practice Note 18 'The Consultation Process and duty to respond'. This Practice Note can be viewed on the Planning Portal at the following link:

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

#### **Annex 4 – List of Community/Voluntary Groups in Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Area**

1. 1st Dundonald Guides
2. 1st Moneyreagh Scout Group
3. 29th Belfast Scout Group
4. Aghalee Village Hall Management Committee
5. Art of Living
6. ASCERT
7. Atlas Women's Centre
8. BAGIT
9. Ballinderry Residents' Association
10. Ballybeen Improvement Group
11. Ballybeen Men's Motivation Group
12. Ballybeen Women's Centre
13. Ballyoran Community & Arts Group
14. Ballyoran Old Tyme Dance
15. Beechland Community Group
16. Carryduff Connect
17. Carryduff GAC
18. Carryduff GAC - Music and Language
19. Carryduff Historical Society
20. Carryduff Playcare Centre
21. Carryduff Pre School
22. Carryduff Regeneration Forum
23. Carryduff Retirement Association
24. Carryduff Retirement Group
25. Carryduff Women's Institute
26. Castlereagh Community Cultural Forum
27. Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum
28. Christ Church Youth Council
29. Coronation Park
30. Crossover Basketball NI

31. Dales Community Association
32. Damask Community Outreach
33. Derriaghy Village Community Association
34. Diversiton
35. Dream Scheme
36. Dromara Community Group
37. Drumbeg & District Residents Association
38. Drumbo & District Community Association
39. Drumlough Community Association
40. Dundonald Arts
41. Dundonald Bowling Club
42. Dundonald Community Concert Band
43. Dundonald FC
44. Dundonald Filipino Association
45. Dundonald Green Belt Association
46. Dundonald High School PCTA
47. Dundonald Purple Vine
48. Dungoyne FC
49. Edgar Boyd Tennants Association
50. Enler Senior Mens
51. Friday Fun Club
52. Glenavy Development Partnership
53. Glenavy Youth Project
54. Glencclare Friendship Group (Formerly Feumore F G)
55. Greater Lisburn Seniors Together
56. Grove Community Playgroup
57. Halftown Residents' Association
58. Harmony Hill Community Group
59. Helping Hands Autism Support Group
60. Hilden Community Association
61. Hill Street Residents' Group
62. Hillhall Regeneration Group
63. Hillsborough & District Committee
64. Hillsborough Community Centre Ltd

65. Homestart Lisburn/Colin
66. Intercultural Friendship
67. Killynure Community Association
68. Kilmakee Senior Citizens & Ramblers Association
69. Knockmore Community Association
70. Laganview Enterprise Centre Ltd
71. Lambeg & District Ratepayers Association
72. LCC Community Trust
73. Lisburn Citizens Advice Bureau
74. Lisburn Downtown Centre
75. Lisburn LEO Talking Newspaper Association
76. Lisburn North Community Association
77. Lisburn SAFE
78. Lisburn Buildings Preservation Trust
79. Lisburn University of the Third Age
80. Lisburn YMCA
81. Logic
82. Lurganville & District Community Association
83. Maghaberry Community Association
84. Manor Park Community Association
85. Manor Park Residents' Association
86. Moat Park Rangers
87. Moira Friendship Group
88. Moneyreagh Community Association
89. Moneyreagh Community Church (COI)
90. Needlecraft
91. Newtownbreda Community Association
92. Newtownbreda WI
93. North Lisburn Community Investment
94. Old Mills Bowling Group
95. Old Warren Community Association
96. Parent and Toddlers (Carryduff Presbyterian Church)
97. Pension Wise
98. Pound Bridge & District Community Association

- 99. Ravara Productions
- 100. Ravernet Community Network
- 101. Resurgam Community & Development Trust
- 102. Sarah Crothers Centre
- 103. Senior Citizens Saturday Club
- 104. Seymour Hill & Conway Residents Association
- 105. Singing for Health
- 106. Stoneyford Community Association
- 107. Stoneyford Jubilee Committee
- 108. Surestart
- 109. TADA Rural Support Network
- 110. The Cedar Foundation Lisburn
- 111. The Compassionate Friends
- 112. Thursday Club Dromara
- 113. Timeout
- 114. Toddle In Pre School (Moneyrea)
- 115. Tonagh Neighbourhood Initiative
- 116. Tuesday Break
- 117. Whitemountain & District Community Association
- 118. Young At Heart Association

## **Annex 5 - Useful Links**

**Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)** – [www.drdni.gov.uk](http://www.drdni.gov.uk)

**Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)** - [www.planningni.gov.uk](http://www.planningni.gov.uk)

**Living Places – An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland-** [www.planningni.gov.uk](http://www.planningni.gov.uk)

**Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) Civic Stewardship Reports –**  
[www.dcalni.gov.uk](http://www.dcalni.gov.uk)

**Planning Committee Protocol** – [www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)

**Planning Scheme of Delegation** – [www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)

**Planning Enforcement Strategy** – [www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](http://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)

**For all planning related legislation, policy and advice, please refer to the Planning Portal -** [www.planningni.gov.uk](http://www.planningni.gov.uk)

## **Annex 6 – Glossary**

**Community Plan** – Community Planning involves integrating all the various streams of public life eg. health, education, community safety, the voluntary sector, arts and leisure etc. to produce a plan that will set out the future direction of the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area. The Council will work with statutory bodies and the wider community to develop a shared vision and a Community Plan. The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 introduces a statutory link between the Community Plan & the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) in that the preparation of the LDP must take account of the Community Plan.

**Consultee** – The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 refers to a consultee as 'a person or body which exercises functions for the purpose of any statutory provision'.

**Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)** – A legislative requirement for certain types of project to ensure that decisions are made in full knowledge of any likely significant effects on the environment.

**Environmental Statement** – This is a statement of the key findings of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

**Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)** – The primary function of the EQIA is to determine the extent of differential impact of a policy upon the Section 75 groups and in turn whether that impact is adverse, that is, whether it has a negative impact on one or more of the nine equality categories. If it is decided that the policy has an adverse impact, the public authority must consider measures which might mitigate the adverse impact, and alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity. [Extract from 'Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment' the Equality Commission for NI, February 2005]

**Independent Examination** – the independent examination conducted by the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) or a person appointed by Central Government to test the soundness of a development plan document.

**Local Development Plan (LDP)** – The plan for the future development of the area, drawn up by the Council in consultation with the community. This comprises 2 parts, the **Plan Strategy** & the **Local Policies Plan**.

**Plan Led System** – The Planning (Northern Ireland) 2011 Act transfers responsibility for the preparation of LDPs from Central Government to Councils and establishes a plan-led planning system which gives primacy to the plan in the determination of planning applications unless other material considerations indicate otherwise [Extract from the ‘Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)’, Department of the Environment, September 2015]

**Planning Appeals Commission (PAC)** – An independent body which deals with a wide range of land use planning issues and related matters including independent examination of a Local Development Plan. The PAC also makes decisions on appeals relating to planning applications, listed building consent, advertisement consent and enforcement.

**Planning Committee** – a Committee composed of Councillors which is responsible for determining planning applications and other matters in accordance with the Council’s Scheme of Delegation

**Pre-Application Community Consultation** – must be submitted with all applications for ‘major’ development. Applicants are required to submit a pre-application community consultation report along with their planning application. This report must provide details of the consultation that has been undertaken with the local community on the development proposal.

**Preferred Options Paper** – Sets out the key plan issues & the preferred options available to address them. This is published prior to the Plan Strategy & Local Plan Policies documents.

**Scoping** – A process to decide on the scope & level of detail of information which must be included in the EQIA or SEA.

**Screening** – A process to determine if a plan or programme requires an EQIA or SEA.



**Simplified Planning Zone** – The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 empowers the Council to make simplified planning zone (SPZ) schemes. Such a scheme provides planning permission for development without the need for specific applications.

**Soundness** – the LDP will be tested for ‘soundness’. Soundness involves testing the principles, content and preparation of the LDP against a list of key criteria set out under three headings consisting of procedural tests; consistency tests; and coherence and effectiveness tests. [Source: Development Plan Practice Note ‘Soundness’, Department of the Environment, April 2015].

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** – A legislative requirement of the LDP that contributes to the integration of environmental considerations in the preparation & adoption of plans & programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.

**Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)** – Supplementary Planning Guidance supports, clarifies and / or illustrates by example planning policies and plans. Supplementary Planning Guidance documents are not subject to independent examination.

**Sustainability Appraisal** – An appraisal of the economic, environmental & social effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development.