

Michael McGibbon

From: Planning@Midulstercouncil.org
Sent: 19 April 2019 16:23
To: developmentplan@midulstercouncil.org.; Development Plan Team (Planning);
DevelopmentPlan@midulstercouncil.org
Subject: FW: UAH Response to Mid Ulster Draft Local Development Plan
Attachments: UAH Response to Mid Ulster Draft Local Development Plan_190419.pdf

Importance: High

Draft Plan comments from UAH
Received at 15:59.

Claire

From: Nikki McVeigh <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 19 April 2019 15:59
To: DevelopmentPlan@midulstercouncil.org; Planning@Midulstercouncil.org
Subject: UAH Response to Mid Ulster Draft Local Development Plan
Importance: High

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please see attached UAH Response to Mid Ulster Draft Local Development Plan. Please confirm receipt by reply.

Yours sincerely,

Nikki

Nicola McVeigh MArch MSc

Chief Executive

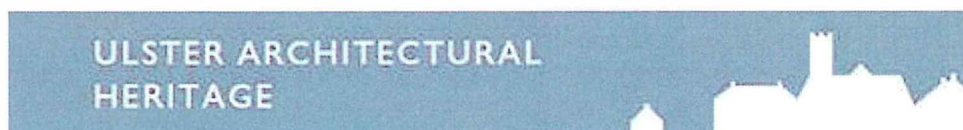
Ulster Architectural Heritage
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W: www.ulsterarchitecturalheritage.org.uk

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Promoting the value of our historic built environment; encouraging its protection, conservation and regeneration for the benefit of people and their communities.

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Development Plan Team,
Planning Department,
Mid Ulster District Council,
50 Ballyronan Road,
Magherafelt,
BT45 6EN

By email: DevelopmentPlan@midulstercouncil.org

Friday 20th April, 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: UAH Response to Mid Ulster Draft Local Development Plan

Ulster Architectural Heritage welcomes the opportunity to respond to Mid Ulster Draft Local Development Plan.

The strength, or indeed weakness, of a local development plan may be assessed by two things. The individual initiatives that it puts forward, and the way in which the exact policy to support these plans is explained. The latter being of equal, if not more importance and is of particular relevance, when considering the quality and the practical future effectiveness of a local development plan. What happens in reality, the future of our historic buildings, streets and cities is dictated by how exacting and robust an LDP is in its detail. Down to the last word.

With regard to the Mid Ulster Draft Local Plan, there appears to be fundamental lack of understanding of or particular regard for planning and the historic environment, both generally and with regard to particular policies relating to its protection. This plan sets to dilute central policy, without replacement by equally strong local policy, thus rendering the plan ineffectual, and unfit for purpose. In addition to this, within the new policy various points are set that may conflict and therefore further weaken the effectiveness of policy set out.

Significant, but not exhaustive list to demonstrate, is as follows:

In introduction to 'Section 17: The Historic Environment' Section 17.3, Page 173, '*excellent*' examples of *promoting historic features to attract tourism and economic development*' include the *Linen Green in Dungannon*, the '*Seamus Heaney centre in Bellaghy and the Glenavon and Greenvale Hotels in Cookstown*'. While each of these buildings/groups of buildings perhaps have merits in other regards, for example cultural centres, hospitality and associated strength in economy, we contend that due to extreme alteration or in fact being substantially new build, consideration of their merit should not lie in the context of good practice for the historic built environment.

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This is further emphasised by the fact that none of the 4 buildings are listed, or in a conservation area. In the case of Greenvale and Glenavon Hotels this is compounded by the fact that these buildings have been delisted (HB09/15/007), likely to indicate a failure in the application of existing policy and enforcement. To use these buildings as ‘excellent’ heritage exemplars sets a framework for failure to protect, promote and reuse built heritage. Indeed it may serve to endorse poor planning and conflict with and undermine any policy set. The Mid Ulster area has many appropriate examples that could have been used for example, Bellaghy Bawn, Lissan House, Artara Hotel and Wellbrook Beetling Mill.

In addition, UAH contends that the draft policy in terms of its detail, justification and amplification is insufficient and therefore unsound. Mid Ulster has the option to adopt the Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6) in its entirety in the LDP. Principles for the protection of built heritage that have been established since 1999. Policy that is robust in itself, when it is applied in full.

UAH notes that some diversions from RDS, SPPS, and PPS6 have been made, deviations that we believe have the serious potential weaken to the protection of Mid Ulster’s important heritage assets. The way in which the draft policy is set out for listed buildings, conservation areas may be seen to degrade the guiding SPPS and the existing PPS 6. We argue that PPS6 and the SPPS, and their associated supplementary guidance are sufficient resource upon which to base planning decisions for the historic environment. We stress that these need to be adopted by Mid Ulster, **in full**.

Significant, but not exhaustive list of diversion from SPPS and PPS6, is as follows:

Particularly we question the adequacy of the wording throughout the document that says ‘will only accord with the Plan’ in place of the wording ‘be permitted’. Either applications or development proposals are permitted or not permitted. This wording sets to confuse this definition.

We note the omission of policy relating to change of use of a historic building, **PPS 6, BH7: Change of Use of a Listed Building**. As stated by PPS 6, *‘the range and acceptability of possible uses is therefore one of the most important considerations for all those involved in considering the future of a listed building. There should be an assessment of the building and how best to plan a new use which respects the features and characteristics of that building’*. A similar policy should be included in this LDP.

We note that **POLICY HE 9 - CHANGE OF USE, ALTERATION OR EXTENSION OF A LISTED BUILDING** consolidates and joins **PPS 6 BH8 Extension or Alteration of a Listed Building** with **BH11 Development affecting the Setting of a Listed Building**. The issue of setting and setting are very specific and different types of development, often setting of a listed building can affect more than one owner, and therefore should be considered separately in planning policy.

We note in 17.46, amplification and justification *‘our planning policy is to protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance listed buildings or structures identified and protected by the appropriate central government department’*. The responsibilities for the protection of listed buildings and planning policy set by Mid Ulster is the key means by which listed buildings may now be protected. Government Departments have indeed

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provided the identification of listed buildings, act as statutory consultees, and have some powers to intervene. This statement should be clarified to show that Mid Ulster, as a local authority takes the lead.

We note **POLICY HE 12 - DESIGNATED CONSERVATION AREAS AND THEIR HISTORIC SETTINGS**, consolidates and joins PPS 6 BH12 New Development in a Conservation Area and BH14 Demolition in a Conservation Area. Again, the issue of new development in a conservation area and demolition in a conservation area include very different planning considerations. One existing policy relates clearly to the potential loss of historic fabric and the other new build in historic contexts. This should be separate in the final Local Development Plan.

We cannot find reference to Repair Notices or Urgent Works Notices within this document. Detailed reference for this is currently included in Annex D of PPS 6. These are powers which Mid Ulster now have and the Council's full powers and responsibility with regard to the Historic Built Environment should be included in full.

We note that there is no commitment to local listing or to develop policy to give local listing legal standing.

UAH notes that there is no reference in the LDP to the Heritage at Risk NI Register. The Heritage at Risk (formerly Built Heritage at Risk, BHARNI) register is developed by Ulster Architectural Heritage with the Department for Communities. Trends identified by the Heritage at Risk register can help to direct individuals, groups, funders, and central and local government to target re-use, regeneration and repair works towards heritage need. It also serves to inform wider heritage policy and identify issues affecting heritage, which need to be addressed and prioritised.

In recognition of the importance of targeted action for the historic environment and buildings at risk, a measurable objective was included in the Northern Ireland Programme for Government, (PfG) 2008-11. This set a target of 200 removals from the HARNI register, between 2006-16. Almost achieving the target set, 192 buildings were removed from the HARNI register.

UAH strongly recommends that a standalone target for saves or removals from the heritage at risk register, an indicator of achievement for restoration and reuse is established by Mid Ulster, and indeed all 11 councils within Local Development Plans.

Should Mid Ulster require advice on developing such a target, please do not hesitate to contact UAH, or the Department for Communities. A full list of current heritage at risk for the Mid Ulster area has been issued by post and email to the council. Please refer to this list in relation to the revision of this plan.

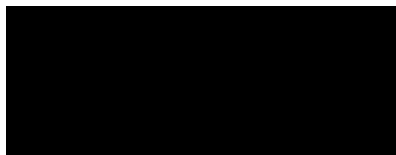
The historic built environment does not simply represent Mid Ulster's important past, it is the foundation for its future. Without proper management of heritage through the Local Development Plan, Mid Ulster's irreplaceable heritage asset and associated tourism draw will be lost. Most strikingly, this draft is seen to diminish and cut across the guidance of RDS, SPPS, and existing policy PPS6, for the protection of built heritage.

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In summary, this plan proposes a framework that sets misleading examples and inadequate policies that may be set to fail Mid Ulster's important heritage assets and their potential value for the next 15 years. Ulster Architectural Heritage asks that significant changes are made to this draft Local Development Plan in response to the above concerns raised.

Yours sincerely,



Nicola McVeigh
Chief Executive



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