

**Roisin McAllister**

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**From:** DevelopmentPlan@midulstercouncil.org  
**Sent:** 22 September 2020 15:04  
**To:** McMillen, Elaine; DevelopmentPlan@midulstercouncil.org  
**Cc:** DfE Permanent Secretary Support; DfE CLU Mailbox  
**Subject:** RE: DfE response to re-consultation of Mid Ulster Council LDP 2030 Draft Plan - September 2020  
**Attachments:** MUDPS-31 (New submission Sept 2020) - Acknowledgement.pdf

Dear Sir / Madam,

Please find attached acknowledgement letter for your records.

Kind Regards,

**Roisin McAllister**  
**Local Development Plan Team**  
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Comhairle Ceantair  
**Lár Uladh**  
**Mid Ulster**  
District Council



**From:** McMillen, Elaine [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 21 September 2020 16:45  
**To:** DevelopmentPlan@midulstercouncil.org  
**Cc:** DfE Permanent Secretary Support <Permanent.SecretarySupport@economy-ni.gov.uk>; DfE CLU Mailbox <clumailbox@economy-ni.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** DfE response to re-consultation of Mid Ulster Council LDP 2030 Draft Plan - September 2020

Good afternoon

Please find attached the DfE's updated response to re-consultation of the Mid Ulster Local Development Plan 2030 - Draft Plan Strategy.

Many Thanks

Central Management Branch  
Department for the Economy  
Netherleigh  
Massey Avenue  
Belfast, BT4 2JP  
Web: [www.economy-ni.gov.uk](http://www.economy-ni.gov.uk)

## DEPARTMENT FOR THE ECONOMY COMMENTS ON MID ULSTER LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2030 - DRAFT PLAN STRATEGY

### ENERGY EFFICIENCY/RENEWABLE ENERGY

#### Issues to be welcomed

- Objective “to encourage energy efficiency and promote use of renewable energy” (para 3.15);
- General Principles Planning Policy “where appropriate the siting, design, and layout of all new development should have regards to the principles of passive solar design and the use of renewable energy technologies” (para 6.7 Box POLICY GP1 )
- Recognition of need to find a way to facilitate renewable energy development in order to meet regional targets, whilst protecting the environment and vulnerable landscapes (para 22.5)
- Aim to ensure that adequate opportunities exist for the further development of wind, solar, thermal, biomass and all other forms of renewable energy development...” (para 22.10)
- Favourable consideration will be given to the re-use, refurbishment, repair and repowering of existing sites (providing that there is no unacceptable impact on the environment or residential/visual amenity) – this is particularly helpful as existing plant nears the end of its shelf-life (as recognised at para 22.17).
- Page 30 deals with ‘Creating Jobs and Promoting Prosperity’ and references opportunities in encouraging energy efficiencies. The department recognises that job creation in this sector will play an important part of the green recovery, and steps to maximise opportunities are being considered under the new Energy Strategy
- Page 33 highlights development of the Council Draft Plan included a recognition of the need to reduce its carbon footprint. Improvements in building fabric, and more efficient use of energy will help deliver this objective.
- Page 81 explores design of new buildings, noting the importance of innovative solutions to create more environmentally friendly buildings. Setting standards for new builds, and retrofit methods to improve the fabric of existing premises, will be a key plank of the new Energy Strategy.

#### Issues of concern

- Introduction of Special Countryside Areas (SCAS) and Areas of Constraint on Wind Turbines and High Structures (AOCWTHSs). SCAs place restrictions on all renewable energy developments and AOCWTHSs will see developments of greater than 15m being resisted (para 22.11). The latter is particularly concerning in regard to technological development and greater efficiencies in wind turbines which command greater height and blade diameter.
- Wind farm developments requiring a separation distance of 10 times the rotor diameter of 4 times the tip height from an occupied property, with a minimum separation distance of 500m (POLICY RNW 1). This does not recognise technological development and will hamper re-use, refurbishment or repowering of sites where proposals are to use taller, more efficient turbines.
- Within AOCWTHSs, proposals for wind turbines with a hub height lower than 15m will be required to comply with policy tests and criteria of RNW1. How does this sit with permitted development?



## **Data upgrades/factual inaccuracies**

- References are made to data from Energy in Northern Ireland 2016 (paras 22.1 and 22.3). However, there is now a 2018 version of this report.
- At para 22.2, the SEF is incorrectly quoted as stating that by 2020, 40% of all energy generated in NI should be taken from renewable sources. What it actually says is that “Northern Ireland will seek to achieve 40% of its electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2020”.
- At para 22.2, it is stated that “In September 2017, this figure (all energy generated) had reached 32% (Department of Infrastructure figures) and it is anticipated that the 40% target will be achieved through the implementation of existing permissions”. The level of renewable electricity consumed in Northern Ireland is now 38.2% (at 31 December 2018) and the figures should actually be accredited to DfE.

## **GAS**

Mid Ulster District Council’s LDP acknowledges the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and places particular emphasis on the role of sustainable/renewable energy technologies. At the same time, in its Strategic Environmental Assessment, the Council reflects the role played by the wider availability of natural gas in reducing sulphur dioxide emissions since 2001.

The Gas to the West project, which is being taken forward by private sector developers under licences granted by the Utility Regulator, will extend the availability of natural gas to further towns in the West, including Dungannon, Coalisland, Cookstown and Magherafelt. The project is being supported by an NI Executive grant up to £31.6m. Construction of the main inter-town gas infrastructure has been completed, and local gas distribution networks are being provided in each town, to provide for connection of domestic and business gas consumers to the new networks. Natural gas can:

- Offer an additional fuel choice for business and domestic consumers;
- Offer environmental benefits as natural gas, a lower carbon fuel, displaces more polluting fossil fuels such as coal and oil;
- Contribute to reducing fuel poverty by offering domestic customers easier budgeting options (such as pay as you go meters); and
- Enabler for economic growth by assisting the competitiveness of businesses.

## **FURTHER EDUCATION**

**Para 9.10** - DfE Further Education officials note that there is a reference to the South West College’s plan to develop a Centre for Engineering/Manufacturing at its Dungannon campus. The Department understands the College is currently preparing a business case for this project and the Mid Ulster District Council will be donating the land on which it will be built.

The Department wishes to highlight that major Further Education capital funding priorities have largely been confirmed for the next four years and this will have an obvious impact on the project’s ability to proceed. We understand the College has been advised that it would still be prudent to proceed as far as possible until funding approval would be needed, in the event that one of current commitments incurs a delay.

### Opportunities for the Further Education sector:

- The potential creation of a hotel at Castledawson (**pg 159 Policy TOU Tourism Accommodation**) would require staff with hospitality and catering skills. As a consequence, Northern Regional College (NRC) would consider introducing appropriate hospitality and catering provision at their Magherafelt campus.
- **Para 4.4** - The expected growth in the population in Mid Ulster will be reflected in the number of students potentially wanting to access the services provided by the FE sector.
- **Para 12.5** - Within the Council there is a lower rate of public service jobs compared to the rest of NI, therefore creating opportunities for the FE sector to work closely with local businesses on the delivery of skills training in the Council area to support engineering and manufacturing.
- **Para 12.1** - The Council aims to support the creation of 8,500 new jobs in the area, the FE sector would anticipate working closely with their Economic Development team on the skills requirements of these additional roles to tailor the curriculum provision at each of the campuses to meet their needs.

### Challenges for the Further Education sector:

- **Para 9.4 and 9.60** - A new build for Holy Trinity College in Cookstown, refurbishment/extension of Rainey Endowed Grammar School and St. Mary's Grammar School in Magherafelt;
- **Para 9.11** – The College of Agriculture Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) new science centre and the creation of additional post primary places will all put pressure on the ability to recruit and sustain the current delivery model on the Northern Regional College (NRC), Magherafelt campus. As a consequence, NRC would work with the Council to understand the potential that Magherafelt campus can bring to the wider education sector. NRC would modify and change its delivery model as required, recognising the potential to focus on training and higher education and to also have a modern functional facility that can provide a user friendly experience.

## **TOURISM**

Tourism NI welcomes the publication of the Mid Ulster District Council Local Development Plan 2030 – Draft Plan Strategy and the opportunity to comment.

The Local Development Plan 2030 – Draft Plan Strategy establishes:

- A clear aspiration to grow the visitor economy through a sustainable approach that will balance the needs of the visitor and tourism industry, with careful protection of the built and natural environment.
- That the existing town hubs (Dungannon, Cookstown and Magherafelt) and rural settlements provide the best option for the growth of sustainable tourism accommodation. Settlements typically offer existing services and facilities that visitors enjoy and facilitate a gateway to natural assets.
- Two additional policies to complement the general tourism policy for settlements and countryside, Tourism Opportunity Zones and Tourism Conservation Zones.
- Tourism Opportunity Zones are suggested at four locations along Lough Neagh (Washingbay, Mountjoy, Traad Point and The Battery). Within these zones, development of tourism hotels and self-catering accommodation (of at least 3 units)



will be permissible when it is demonstrated that they are environmentally sensitive and result in the development of high design quality.

- Tourism Conservation Zones recognise those areas where conservation interests are paramount. These areas are located within the Sperrins Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and near Beaghmore Area of Significant Archaeological Interest (ASAI). Tourism accommodation is also permissible within these areas where specified criterion is satisfied.

‘Both the Department and Tourism NI are content that the approach outlined seeks to achieve sustainable tourism growth coupled with the preservation of our built and natural assets. The approach is sensitive to the preservation of the natural environment while seeking to enable communities to prosper sustainably. This approach is complementary to the strategic drive in respect to tourism in Northern Ireland and will form a key aspect to our overarching NI Tourism Strategy, going forward.’

Tourism NI encourages policies and initiatives that encourage balanced and sustainable growth of tourism facilities, services and tourism accommodation portfolios within the district councils existing towns and settlements.

In light of the significant impact which COVID-19 has had on our tourism industry DfE and TNI wish to work closely with local councils to maintain and rebuild the tourism industry. In recognition of the scale and complexity of the challenges faced by the industry, a Ministerial led Tourism Recovery Steering Group was established to lead the planning and preparation for recovery. Under the Tourism Recovery Steering Group a Tourism Recovery Action Plan is being developed.

## **MINERALS AND PETROLEUM**

DfE is responsible for a number of key Programme for Government objectives including ensuring that we build a strong and competitive, regionally balanced economy where we have more people in better jobs whilst ensuring that we live and work sustainably. It is within this context that the Department’s Minerals and Petroleum Branch and the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland (MAPB and GSNI) make the following response.

Mid Ulster has more jobs in the mining, quarrying and associated sectors than any other district council area by virtue of the availability of mineral resources. The Mid Ulster Development Plan acknowledges the importance of minerals within the district council area in terms of benefits to the economy and as a source of employment. The Department has considered the Minerals section within the Draft Plan Strategy and the Minerals Development paper and would make the following comments:

The Department welcomes the fact that many of its comments on the Planning Options Paper have been considered in the development of the Draft Plan.

### **MIN 1 – MINERAL RESERVE POLICY AREAS**

We welcome the Council’s proposed designation of mineral reserve policy areas which are in line with advice from GSNI.

### **MIN 2 – EXTRACTION AND PROCESSING OF HARD ROCK AND AGGREGATES**



MUDC is to be commended for addressing the issue of surface sterilisation, consulting with local operators and using the Department's assessment tool, to consider the impact of surface development on the availability of mineral resources, as part of the planning process particularly with respect to construction minerals.

To ensure that the assessment process is as robust as possible the Council should note that the maps produced by the British Geological Survey (para 4.2) indicate potential resource locations rather than providing definitive information on resource availability. Similarly the Department for the Economy's Annual Mineral Return data gives an indication of aggregate extracted over the period reported and calculations based on this information should be treated with caution.

The mineral policies within the Draft Plan do not appear to fully address the conclusions of MUDC's assessment of available resources. Information collected by the council from local operators indicates that the council area will not have an adequate supply of hard rock aggregate for the duration of the plan. The Plan should address this issue and indicate if the proposed Areas of Constraint on Mineral Development (ACMDs) impact on this position further and whether the ACMDs should be reviewed on a 5 –year basis as indicated in the conclusion of MUDC's Mineral Development Paper.

The Strategic Planning Policy statement (SPPS) directs that the Plan should ensure sufficient local supply of construction aggregate over the period of the plan and to give due consideration to the regional position. The council's Minerals Paper has established that, based on remaining reserves notified by operators, there will be inadequate supply of hard rock aggregate to meet the requirements for the plan period and adequate supply of sand and gravel. In light of these conclusions the Department would recommend that the definition of ACMD be reviewed to address the potential undersupply and also to consider the regional context as MUDC supplies aggregates to many other council areas. The council should also make provision in its assessment for increased demand for all aggregates to support future development needs. The plan is based on an assessment that does not allow for growth in the existing minerals sector despite ambitious housing and other infrastructure development within the Plan period.

### **MIN 3 VALUABLE MINERALS AND HYDROCARBONS**

We would consider reference to the adoption of the precautionary principle to be overly restrictive to potential development in this area. This does not comply with the SPPS requirement that there will not be a presumption against the exploitation of valuable minerals in any area, unless the site is within a statutory policy area when due weight will be given to the reason for the statutory zoning.

There are distinct differences between the exploration/prospecting process and extraction of high value mineral deposits. It should be noted that exploration for high value minerals is carried out under licence from the Department for the Economy for base metals or licence from the Crown Estate for precious metals. When exploration drilling or trenching is proposed such activity is designated as permitted development. The council's policies should therefore focus on exploitation of valuable minerals once found as referenced in the SPPS as opposed to exploration activity.

With regards to the use of chemicals in the extractive process and unconventional hydrocarbon extraction methods, the Department appreciates the objectives of ensuring environmental and human health protection. However, it is unreasonable to require any



sector to prove definitively that there is no environmental or human health impact – all activity by its very nature has some impact. The council's proposed policy also goes beyond the position in SPPS which includes a presumption against unconventional hydrocarbon extraction until there is sufficient and robust evidence on all environmental impacts but this does not cover all extraction using chemicals which in most other cases will be part of separate processing of the ore once extracted.

The council may wish to consider taking the same approach to valuable minerals as it is proposing in MIN 4 for commercial extraction of peat and treating it as an area where relevant expert opinion will be sought to assist with the decision making process.

## **MIN 5 – RESTORATION OF MINERAL SITES**

The Department welcomes the policy on restoration of mineral sites.

In conclusion Mid Ulster has a thriving geoscience sector which the Draft Plan acknowledges and indicates that it wishes to support. However, the policies and ACMDs within the Plan do not, as currently drafted, support the sector to continue to thrive as they do not appear to ensure that adequate supply of minerals will be available within the council area to meet existing needs and also allow for future growth. The Council will wish to reconsider how the restrictions set out in the Draft Plan could impact on its ambitions for housing and infrastructural growth both of which are reliant on availability of locally sourced aggregates. The Department also considers the Plan's reference to the adoption of the precautionary principle in respect of valuable mineral development to be overly restrictive and counter to the principles of the SPPS. Lorraine Fleming is the key DfE contact on these matters and can be contacted via email at [REDACTED] or by telephone [REDACTED] [REDACTED] should the Council have any queries relating to Minerals and Petroleum matters.

## **TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

### **Strategic Context for Telecommunications**

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

The Digital Economy Act 2017 sets out the UKG's role in defining the strategic priorities and outcomes in relation to telecoms through a Statement of Strategic Priorities (SSP), which Ofcom must have regard to when carrying out its regulatory functions.

Relevant UKG strategies can be found on the DCMS website including: [Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review](#) – DCMS (published July 2018). DCMS is expected to issue a new Digital Strategy for the UK later in 2020. DfE is liaising with DCMS on the implications for Northern Ireland.

In NI, the Department's focus is to improve access to a broadband service of at least 30Mbps (superfast). In the draft Programme for Government 2016-2021, Outcomes 5 and 11<sup>1</sup> are the primary areas where delivery on telecoms infrastructure is captured.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/topics/making-government-work/programme-government-and-budget>



Through the Communications Act 2003, the Department has limited powers to intervene in the market, and can do so only to encourage private sector investment in geographical areas that would not be commercially attractive to the industry. Any public intervention has to be undertaken with caution to avoid distortion of the market and to comply with EU broadband and competition regulations/guidance.

There are future proposals for the development of a Digital Infrastructure Strategy as outlined in the Draft Industrial Strategy for NI, however, this is at a preliminary stage in development.

### **Project Stratum**

The overarching objective for Project Stratum is simply stated; to provide universal, or near universal, high speed broadband coverage in Northern Ireland by increasing provision (broadband access infrastructure such as: cables, ducts, and other electronic systems) in areas which are currently poorly served and not capable of attracting wholly commercial investment - in other words, the remaining 11% of premises in Northern Ireland currently unable to access broadband services delivering speeds in excess of 30Mbps. The Project Stratum intervention area is predominantly rural and covers a broad swathe of Northern Ireland, targeting just under 79,000 premises.

The project has been developed in response to the opportunity presented by the Confidence and Supply Agreement between the Conservative Party and the Democratic Unionist Party following the General Election in June 2017, which promises £150m to help improve the availability of high speed broadband in Northern Ireland.

The Department, in agreement with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), has confirmed that an additional £15m of funding will be made available and applied to eligible expenditure for Project Stratum. The total identifiable public funding for Project Stratum is, therefore, £165m.

A public State aid consultation (which closed on 14 January 2019) followed an earlier industry consultation stage which ran from 19 June 2018 to 27 July 2018. This was undertaken to establish existing and planned (within the next 3 years) coverage of broadband infrastructure across Northern Ireland.

The public consultation set out the proposed intervention area, to enable all interested stakeholders (including the public, businesses, internet service providers and broadband infrastructure operators) to comment on the proposals. The Department published the result of these consultations in December 2019.

Project Stratum continues on schedule, with the evaluation of bids preceding the final phase of corporate governance, ahead of contract award, which is anticipated in mid October 2020. The project is currently planned, to roll-out over the period 2021 – 2024, in line with requirements set out in the ITT documentation.

### **Baseline data – fixed and mobile networks**

Ofcom's [Connected Nations 2019](#) report, and its associated NI regional supplement and data downloads, provide the most recent coverage figures, including those at Council level. This analysis continues to demonstrate that rural premises have poorer access to coverage



than urban premises and the Department encourages actions that will assist in reducing this deficit. Ofcom's most recent report is Connected Nations 2019 as referenced above. The associated data shows that Mid Ulster has 12% of premises unable to access broadband speeds of at least 10 Mbit/s.

### **Planning for new builds and shared access to infrastructure**

As noted above, the UKG strategic framework to 2033 has been articulated in the Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review. One aspect of this framework is work to address deployment barriers and reducing cost for efficient delivery of infrastructure, including an approach to ensuring fibre connectivity in new builds.

DCMS has published a suite of guidance for local authorities on a range of related matters through the Digital Connectivity Portal: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/digital-connectivity-portal>

The Department wishes to draw your attention to this, in particular in relation to supporting the DPS ambitions of 11,000 new homes by 2030 in MUJDC region, both in multi-unit dwellings and in single dwellings and by permitted rural development. Whilst the current publicly supported telecoms infrastructure projects, such as Project Stratum, will go a long way to correcting the deficit in access for premises currently identified as below 30Mbps, it is important that approvals for new premises ensure that appropriate connectivity is provided for at the outset.

Local authorities can help to create incentives for future investment in digital infrastructure in their area by ensuring Local Plans effectively support it. To do this, Local Plans can outline how planning policies will support the rollout of both fixed and mobile infrastructure. This could include policies that will support the future of mobile connectivity and the rollout of small cells for 5G which is most likely to be needed in dense, urban areas. This is important as all formal planning applications will be assessed against the Local Plan.

For example, a Local Plan could ensure that all new developments have sufficient ducting space for full fibre connectivity; and/or support the effective use of rooftops and street furniture to accommodate mobile digital infrastructure, including small cells for 5G.

We would therefore recommend that:

- consideration be given to extending the list of utilities to include access to telecommunications infrastructure;
- consideration be given to ensuring that no new homes are built without access to appropriate telecommunications infrastructure;
- not only larger (25 home +) developments but legacy issues are considered regarding single dwellings in relation to telecoms access.

In support of the economic aim to create 8,500 new jobs in the region, we would highlight the current lower access to telecoms infrastructure in rural areas and the limits that this places on rural entrepreneurship. We would recommend that consideration be given to ensuring that telecoms infrastructure access is available to rural businesses.

## UK-wide Initiatives

The following section outlines a number of telecoms-related support schemes operated on a UK-wide basis that may be relevant to the Council in the development of strategies or options at this time.

### Rural Gigabit Connectivity Scheme

The RGC programme launched in May 2019 and will run until the end of March 2021. £200 million has been allocated to the programme, from the National Productivity Investment Fund.

This is a UK Government scheme operating in Northern Ireland. It offers vouchers to obtain gigabit connectivity for rural premises with broadband speeds of less than 100Mbps. Premises can use vouchers worth £1,500 per home and up to £3,500 for each small to medium-sized business (SME) to support the cost of installing new fast and reliable connections.

<https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/>

### Universal Service Obligation (USO)

The USO is a UK-wide measure, intended to fill the gap left by the UKG's existing broadband roll-out programmes, as part of the commitment in the UK Digital Strategy<sup>2</sup> (March 2017), to ensure that the UK has world-class digital connectivity and inclusion. This has been implemented by a regulatory approach.

The USO provides for premise users (both businesses and residents) a legal right to request a broadband connection of at least 10Mbps download speed, up to a reasonable cost threshold (£3,400). In Northern Ireland the USO provider is BT and the link to the relevant page is:

<https://www.bt.com/broadband/USO>

Responsibility falls to Ofcom to implement the USO.

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/broadband-uso-need-to-know>

### Shared Rural Network

The **Shared Rural Network** agreement, recently announced between the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the four largest UK Mobile Network Operators (MNO), will improve coverage in rural Northern Ireland in the coming years. MNOs will share existing mobile infrastructure to eliminate almost all partial not-spots in NI (areas where one or more operators are present but all four are not). New infrastructure will be built and shared by all four MNOs in areas where no operators are currently present. The agreement means

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<sup>2</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-digital-strategy>



the MNOs have committed to investing £532m across the UK, to eliminate partial non-spots, with DCMS investing a further £500m towards eliminating total not-spots in rural areas. By 2026, coverage in NI will reach 98% from at least one operator, and 85% from all four operators. This compares to 97% and 75% today.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/shared-rural-network>

The Department encourages all relevant parties to maximise the benefits from all such schemes to their respective regions.

## **THE CONSUMER COUNCIL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND (CCNI)**

The Consumer Council for Northern Ireland (CCNI) responded to the Mid and East Antrim Draft Community Plan consultation in January 2017 and stated that CCNI sees its role as being a supportive one to Mid and East Antrim Borough Council in achieving the vision and the outcomes of the plan. CCNI's statutory role is to safeguard and protect the interests of consumers in Northern Ireland and in doing this CCNI offers its support to the Council in achieving its goals within its Local Development plan.

In particular, CCNI would be pleased to engage with Mid Ulster District Council across CCNI's statutory remit of General Consumer Issues, Energy, Transport, Post, Water and Sewage and Financial Services as the consumer representative body for Northern Ireland.

## **ECONOMIC STRATEGY**

### **Outcomes Delivery Plan**

- The Department welcomes the linkages set out within the Council's Plan to the draft Industrial Strategy/ Programme for Government, including the three DfE - led economic outcomes (1, 5 and 6). Local Government will be an important partner in delivery of these overarching outcomes and it is good to see the need to align the work of the Council with the strategic direction set by the outcomes framework.

- The Department has noted the specific links to the DfE-led outcomes as set out below:

#### Outcome one

- creation of 8,500 new jobs by 2030 to cater for a growing population
- embrace the need to facilitate job creation in sectors such as IT, professional and administration sectors
- support industrial and manufacturing development within the area.
- to recognise the importance of self-employment and home working, particularly in rural locations

#### Outcome five

- to continue facilitating infrastructure to enable an increase in the use of broadband and mobile data in order to address the urban / rural imbalance which exists in relation to such services.

#### Outcome six

- to have good quality education for everyone and have a skilled labour force to meet the needs of industry and for children and young people, to have the best start in life and to have successful learners who are well skilled to maximise employment and other opportunities.

## **Entrepreneurship**

- The Department recognises the importance of encouraging and supporting entrepreneurship in achieving our economic goals. We therefore welcome the Plan's recognition of the need to accommodate entrepreneurship, innovation for large, medium and small firms by attracting new firms and accommodating expanding businesses.
- Local Government are key support providers of entrepreneurship. This Plan recognises that the Council's economic policy must allow them to facilitate and support the areas entrepreneurial spirit where it can be done in a sustainable manner.