



Non-Technical Summary of Sustainability Appraisal Incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment Report (Environmental Report) of Local Development Plan 2030 – Draft Plan Strategy

February 2019



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Non-Technical Summary of the Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (Environmental Report)

Introduction

The Environmental Report constitutes an integrated Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Mid Ulster District Council Local Development Plan – Draft Plan Strategy.

This document is the non-technical summary of the Environmental Report to accompany Mid Ulster District Council's Plan Strategy, published by Mid Ulster District Council for consultation in February 2019. The full Environmental Report is available on our website <https://www.midulstercouncil.org/>

• Content and main objectives of the Local Development Plan – draft Plan Strategy and its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes

The purpose of the Mid Ulster 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 and guide development decisions within Mid Ulster District Council up to 2030.

The Plan Strategy is the first stage of a two stage Local Development Plan for the district. The Local Development Plan will also consist of the Local Policies Plan (LPP), which is the second stage of the plan making process.

The draft Plan Strategy contains a Growth Strategy and Spatial Planning Framework which will inform the designation of settlements and their limits, land use zonings and policy designations. The draft PS also contains additional zonings for an interim supply of economic development land. Subject policies, including general principles planning policy are also contained within the draft Plan Strategy. Finally the draft Plan Strategy sets out in detail how we will monitor the plan objectives.

The Plan has been prepared taking account of the Regional Development Strategy, Strategic Planning Policy Statement and related documents and guidance. Account has also been taken of Mid Ulster's Community Plan.

The draft Plan Strategy sets out the objectives of Mid Ulster District Council in relation to development and the use of land and they are detailed in Table 1.

Social	Accommodating People and Creating Places
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) To build Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt as economic and transportation hubs and as the main service centres for shops, leisure activities, public administrative and community services including health and education. These are the most populated places and the town centres are the most accessible locations for people to travel to, including those without a car. (ii) To protect and consolidate the role of local towns and villages so that they act as local centres for shops and community services meeting the daily needs of their rural hinterlands. (iii) To protect and consolidate the role of local towns and villages so that they act as local centres for shops and community services meeting the daily needs of their rural hinterlands. (iv) To provide for vital and vibrant rural communities whilst protecting the countryside in which they live by accommodating sustainable growth within the countryside proportionate to the extent of existing rural communities. (v) To provide for 11,000 new homes by 2030 in a range of housing capable of meeting the needs of families, the elderly and disabled, and single people, at locations accessible to community services, leisure and recreational facilities, for those people with and without a car. (vi) To recognise the needs of both growing families and carers of the elderly and disabled by accommodating development which allows people to remain within their own communities and does not lead to significant harm to neighbours or the environment. (vii) To facilitate the development of new community facilities at locations accessible to the communities they serve, through a variety of modes of transportation in accordance with the community plan. (viii) To accommodate cultural differences in our communities whilst promoting “shared spaces” to bring people together with equality of opportunity.
Economic	Creating jobs and promoting prosperity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) To facilitate the creation of 8,500 new jobs by 2030 at a variety of locations where they are accessible to all members of the community, including those without a private car. (ii) To promote diversity in the range of jobs recognising the importance of employment in the primary sector (agriculture forestry and mining), secondary sector (industry and manufacturing) and tertiary sector (administration, commerce, retailing, leisure and tourism). (iii) To recognise and accommodate entrepreneurship, innovation for large, medium and small firms by attracting new firms and accommodating expanding businesses. (iv) To recognise the importance of self-employment and home working, particularly in rural locations. (v) To encourage energy efficiencies and promote use of renewable energy.
Environmental	Enhancing the environment and improving infrastructure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Enhancing the environment and improving infrastructure (ii) To reduce contributions and vulnerability to climate change and to reduce flood risk and the adverse consequences of flooding. (iii) To protect and enhance the natural and built environment as wise custodians of our landscape and to achieve biodiversity, quality design, enhanced leisure and economic opportunity and promote health and welling. (iv) To accommodate investment in power, water and sewerage infrastructure, and waste management particularly in the interests of public health. (v) To improve connectivity between and within settlements and their rural hinterland through accommodating investment in transportation to improve travel times, alleviate congestion and improve safety for both commercial and private vehicles as well as more sustainable modes of transport including buses, walking and cycling. (vi) To improve connectivity through telecommunication which both meets the needs of business and private households whilst reducing the need to travel.

Table 1

Plans and Programmes

There are a wide range of plans, policies, programmes and strategies (PPPSs) at international and national levels that are relevant to the emerging Mid Ulster Local Development Plan. The below table ([Table 2](#)) presents a summarised review of a small selection of these documents and how they relate to the LDP, the full detailed review is presented in Appendix 2 of the SA/SEA Environment Report.

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications of the LDP
Regional Development Strategy 2035	This document provides an overarching strategic planning framework influencing spatial development for the Region up to 2035, facilitating and guiding the public and private sectors. Taken into account are key drivers such as population growth and movement, demographic change, increasing number of households, transportation etc. It addresses economic, social and environmental issues aimed at achieving sustainable development and social cohesion.	The LDP will support the RDS as part of the wider Government policy framework and should therefore be closely aligned with its objectives.
Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)	It sets out the strategic direction for new councils to bring forward detailed operational policies within LDP's. It also provides the core planning principles to underpin delivery of the two tier planning system with the aim of furthering sustainable development, mitigating and adapting to climate change, and emphasising the importance of ecosystem services.	The LDP will take account of the SPPS including the core themes and strategic policy within it.
Mid Ulster Economic Development Strategy	This strategy sets out Mid Ulster District Council's key priorities for growing the local economy over the next five years and explains how we aim to achieve them.	This initiative will be supported directly by the plans focus on 'Creating Jobs and Promoting prosperity'. Objectives (b) (i)-(v) outline the intention to facilitate the creation of 8,500 jobs by 2030 across a range of employment sectors, including SME's and focusing also on self-employment and home working
Mid Ulster Community Plan	Community Planning is a process whereby councils, statutory bodies and communities themselves work together to develop and implement a shared vision for their area. It will involve integrating service and function delivery and producing a community plan that will set out the future direction for development within a council area which promotes community cohesion and improves the quality of life for all of its citizens.	The LDP will take account of the community plan as required by the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. The LDP will provide a spatial expression to the Community Plan and work towards achieving the aims of the community plan. The draft is due out in September 2016.

Table 2

SA/SEA Process

It is a statutory requirement that the LDP preparation process is subject to the following assessments;

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA),
- Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

Therefore, an SA/SEA Report is required to accompany the draft Plan Strategy. SEA and SA are separate processes but have similar aims and objectives. The Department for Infrastructure's strategic guidance shows how it is possible to satisfy both requirements by undertaking a joint SA/SEA process, and to present an SA/SEA Report that incorporates the requirements of the SEA Regulations.

SEA focuses on the likely environmental effects of a plan whilst SA includes a wider range of considerations, extending to social and economic impacts. Therefore the SA/SEA process ensures that the three pillars of sustainable development, environmental, social and economic effects are fully understood before arriving at the most appropriate LDP strategy, policies and proposals for the Mid Ulster District.

Scoping

The first stage of the SA/SEA process was 'Scoping'. A Scoping Report was prepared and published in June, 2016. The SA/SEA Scoping Report determined the level of detail and provided the scope of the SA/SEA of Mid Ulster LDP. The Report provided:

- A review of relevant policies, plans and programmes;
- The collection of Baseline data in order to understand the current state of the Council area;
- Identification of sustainability issues relevant to Mid Ulster;
- The development of the SA/SEA Framework.

Following publication and receipt of consultation responses from Central Government and the Environment Agency bodies, the Scoping Report was updated as required.

A statutory requirement and the first key stage of the SA/SEA scoping is to determine the key sustainability issues and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme. The gathering of data and evidence to understand the current state of the Council area provided a 'Baseline'.

As part of this process an SA/SEA Framework was established against which the sustainability effects of the LDP can be described, analysed and compared. The SA/SEA objectives for the Mid Ulster LDP as shown below in Table 3 address the full cross-section of sustainability issues including social, economic and environmental factors, reflecting the fact that an integrated approach is being taken to the SA and SEA of the Plan Strategy. All policies included in the draft Plan Strategy have been assessed against the SA/SEA Framework which is contained in the main SA/SEA Environmental Report.

Interim Report

Following on from the preparation of the Scoping Report the next stage of Mid Ulster's SA/SEA process was the production of the Interim Report. The SA/SEA Interim Report involved an appraisal of reasonable alternatives, i.e. the realistic options for delivering

the objectives of the Mid Ulster LDP against the agreed SA/SEA Framework. The appraisal was carried out in tandem with the preparation of the Council's Preferred Options Paper (POP). The Interim SA/SEA Report was published alongside the Council's POP in November 2018.

Preparation of SA/SEA Report

This stage of the SA/SEA process was undertaken alongside the preparation of the draft Plan Strategy. At this stage the SA/SEA information contained within the SA/SEA Scoping Report was reviewed and updated. This reviewed information, alongside the comments received from the consultation process.

The appraisal for the reasonable alternatives for the draft Plan Strategy followed the same methodology used for the appraisal of the options within the POP, although at this stage the Council is mindful of its preferred option. The assessment at this stage focused on the strategic options and policies drafted to meet the objectives of the draft Plan Strategy.

The purpose of this stage was to assess the likely significant effects upon sustainability issues as a result of implementing the draft Plan Strategy. This involved appraising the policies and proposals of the draft Plan Strategy against SA/SEA objectives as set out in the SA/SEA Scoping Report. As per the EAPP Regulations the appraisals include short, medium and long-term effects, permanent and temporary effects, positive and negative effects, and secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects. Wherever likely significant effects were identified the appraisal will attempt to identify measures to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset them.

The SA/SEA Report describes in detail the process that has been undertaken to date in carrying out the SA/SEA of Mid Ulster's Draft Plan Strategy. The purpose of the SA/SEA Report is to set out the findings of the appraisal of options, policies and development sites. The SA/SEA Report is required to highlight any likely significant effects (both positive and negative, and taking into account the likely secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long term and permanent and temporary effects). The SA/SEA Report also describes the reasons for selecting or rejecting certain options during the preparation of the LDP.

Table 3

SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Directive Topic(s)
1. To reduce poverty and social exclusion	<i>Population</i> <i>Cultural Heritage including Architectural and Archaeological Heritage</i>
2. To improve the health and wellbeing of the population	<i>Population</i> <i>Human Health</i> <i>Cultural Heritage including Architectural and Archaeological Heritage</i> <i>Climatic Factors</i>
3. To improve the education and skills of the population	<i>Population</i> <i>Cultural Heritage including Architectural and Archaeological Heritage</i>
4. To provide everybody with the opportunity to live in a decent home	<i>Population</i>
5. To reduce crime and anti-social activity	<i>Population</i>
6. To encourage a sense of community and promote a more equal and inclusive society	<i>Population</i> <i>Cultural Heritage including Architectural and Archaeological Heritage</i>
7. To improve accessibility to key services, especially for those most in need	<i>Population</i> <i>Human Health</i>
8. To reduce the effect of traffic on the environment	<i>Air</i> <i>Human Health</i> <i>Climatic Factors</i>
9. To improve water quality; conserve water resources and provide for sustainable sources of water supply	<i>Water</i> <i>Human Health</i>
10. To improve air quality	<i>Air</i>
11. To conserve and enhance biodiversity	<i>Biodiversity</i> <i>Flora</i> <i>Fauna</i> <i>Climatic Factors</i>
12. To maintain and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and townscapes	<i>Landscape</i> <i>Cultural Heritage including Architectural and Archaeological Heritage</i>
13. To protect, conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment and cultural assets	<i>Cultural Heritage including Architectural Heritage</i>
14. To reduce contributions to climate change and reduce vulnerability to climate change	<i>Climatic Factors</i>
15. To reduce flood risk and the adverse consequences of flooding	<i>Climatic Factors</i> <i>Water</i>
16. To minimise waste production and use of non-renewable materials	<i>Material Assets</i> <i>Climatic Factors</i>

17. To conserve and enhance land quality and soil resources	Soil Material Assets Cultural Heritage including Architectural Heritage Climatic Factors
18. To encourage sustainable economic growth	Population Climatic Factors
19. To offer everybody the opportunity for rewarding and satisfying employment	Population
20. To reduce disparities in economic performance and promote sustainable regeneration	Population Cultural Heritage including Architectural Heritage Climatic Factors
21. To encourage and accommodate both indigenous and inward investment	Population
22. To encourage efficient and sustainable patterns of movement in support of economic growth	Population

- **Current state of the environment and likely evolution thereof without implementation of the Plan.**
- **Environmental Characteristics of the areas likely to be significantly affected.**
- **Existing environmental problems which are relevant to the Plan.**

The following section of this non-technical summary document provides information on the current state of the environment and the likely evolution without the Plan and a summary of the environmental characteristics of the areas likely to be significantly affected. This section also includes information on existing environmental problems which are relevant to the Plan.

A core purpose of the SA/SEA process is identifying the current baseline environmental conditions together with fully understanding the issues, problems and trends of relevance to our Plan. Appendices 3 and 4 of the main SA/SEA Report identify the relevant datasets used to form the baseline for the assessment.

Biodiversity / Flora / Fauna

21 Northern Ireland Priority Habitats that have been identified within Mid Ulster. These priority habitats are vulnerable and susceptible to damage. Without the implementation of the Plan the protection and enhancement of biodiversity may be overlooked at the strategic level. The pursuit of economic and social objectives could potentially result

in losses. Pollution, climate change, disturbance from development and introduction of invasive species all have the potential to result in habitat damage and loss.

In the absence of the Plan the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and Planning Policy Statement 2 will continue to apply and therefore continue to offer protection to our habitats and protected species. The current Area Plans will also continue to afford protection to some by way of Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance and Local Landscape Policy Areas. Protection by way of separate statutory controls held by NIEA will also continue to apply.

Population & Human Health

Population growth and changes to its composition have implications for the provision of housing, employment opportunities and public services. In Mid Ulster we are the 6th most populous district in Northern Ireland (NI). We are also an aging population with a significant proportion of our population living in the rural area. Our health levels are good despite having poor access to emergency services and life expectancy is slightly higher than the NI average.

The potential main consequences to population in the absence of the plan could be a failure to bring forward sufficient land to be used for housing and economic development to address population growth. In the absence of the Plan we may also fail to recognise the role of our towns acting as hubs for services and thereby provide for more accessible facilities. Without the Plan there could also be a failure to facilitate the development of new community facilities resulting in a lack of accessibility to services for the most vulnerable in our society, such as the old and young.

Air & Climatic Factors

Overall the quality of NI Air has been improving since 1990. Sulphur dioxide has decreased substantially due to the wider availability of natural gas which has led to a reduction of coal and oil being used for domestic heating. GHG emissions however are not falling as quickly in NI as in the rest of the UK. Within Mid Ulster there are now only 3 Air Quality Management Sites designated. These are, Newell Road Dungannon, The Moy and Magherafelt. The pollutant source for all 3 of these AQMA's is road traffic (NO₂). The Church Street Dungannon AQMA and the Stewartstown Road, Coalisland AQMA were both revoked in November 2014.

Ammonia emissions into the air has become an increasing problem, particularly in NI as a result of many farming activities such as the housing of livestock, the storage and spreading of animal manures and slurries and the use of chemical fertiliser. Air pollution related to ammonia, and the associated nitrogen deposition, is known to have a damaging impact on sensitive habitats, wider biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, as well as human health.

In the absence of the Plan the opportunity to address ammonia emissions would be dealt with in relation to the Habitats Regulations Assessment. However there would be no policy in relation to requiring an assessment on the wider environment.

The Plan provides an opportunity to promote alternative modes of transport and encourage cycling and walking thereby seeking to reduce the number of AQMA's. Without the promotion of alternative modes of transport such as public transport and

use of bicycles and through appropriate siting of development, CO² emissions could continue to rise.

Cultural Heritage

The built heritage of NI includes archaeological sites and monuments, historic buildings, industrial and military remains, gardens, historic landscapes. Mid Ulster contains approximately 14% of NI's total number of listed buildings. The number of listed buildings at risk has increased significantly since 2003/04. At this time there were 378 buildings at risk and by 2016/17 this figure had increased to 500. Mid Ulster also contains 20% of NI's State Care Monuments and 9% of NI's Scheduled Monuments. While the number of historic parks, gardens and demesnes within Mid Ulster constitutes 12% of NI's total registered parks and 6% of the supplementary list. We are also home to 5 Conservation Areas and currently 118 Local Landscape Policy Areas.

In the absence of the Plan unchecked growth of towns and villages may put increased pressure on the existing historic built fabric of settlements and also the outlying rural areas which may contain a variety of archaeological sites and monuments and listed building and some could be damaged or lost through inappropriately sited development in the countryside in the absence of appropriate planning policies.

The Plan will help protect our historic environment for the benefit of our own and future generations. Furthermore, through its protection our cultural heritage has the potential to unlock greater economic benefits and is key to the people of Mid Ulster and visitors to our district understanding and enjoying the unique history of the area.

Material Assets

The proportion of Local Authority Collected (LAC) municipal waste recycled in NI has been increasing since 2002 (38.4%) and in 2016/2017 there was 44.0%. Mid Ulster has been performing relatively well and the 2016/17 figures show that 39.7 % of LAC municipal waste was sent to landfill sites. The amount of household waste in NI has more than doubled between 2004/05 and 2013/14 from 18.2% to 40.6%. Over the same period the amount of household waste recycled in Mid Ulster has more than doubled between from 23.9% to 51.6% in 2016/2017.

In both NI and Mid Ulster since 2002 the overall LAC municipal waste arisings have been decreasing, as has the amount of LAC municipal waste sent to landfill. Over the same period the rate of recycling within both NI and Mid Ulster has been increasing, although it is worthy of note that NI has the lowest recycling rates of LAC municipal waste in the UK.

Water

Increasing population growth, climate change and current lifestyle trends will place further pressures on the availability of potable water. Policies need to ensure that a wide range of water efficiency measures are promoted in all new and existing development. The significant increase in population growth and housing in the district is likely to lead to an increased demand for waste-water treatment. Identified trend demonstrates that compliance of the Waste Water Treatment Works has continually improved since 2007, reaching 92% in 2013.

Large improvements have been made in terms of chemical river quality since the first testing began in the 1990's however, the overall percentage of rivers in Northern Ireland that attained good or better chemical quality in 2015 was only 32%. There has been a regression in the length of rivers in Mid Ulster that are in the top overall national percentage in terms of phosphate levels.

There is a significant risk of increased flooding in certain locations across the district due to climate change and increased frequency of higher intensity rainfall events.

The plan has a role to play in identifying those settlements that have waste water treatment capacity and those that lack capacity. Lack of waste water treatment capacity could act as a significant restriction on future development.

In the absence of the Plan development would be reliant on the SPPS and Planning Policy Statement 15. The opportunity to exclude greenfield areas from development zonings at Local Policies Plan (LPP) would not be provided for.

Landscape

Landscape character in Mid Ulster provides a considerable contribution to local distinctiveness. The landscape in the district is one of national importance. The Sperrins Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty covers a substantial portion of the district. There is potential for development to impact on the distinctive character of AONB and close to the Lough shore in the absence of policy to control inappropriate development. The greatest threats come from high structures which have the potential to also harm the distinctive landscapes of Slieve Beagh and the Clogher Valley ridgeline.

Pressures to meet the districts housing needs for the projected population growth figures may create pressures on landscapes surrounding the towns of Cookstown, Magherafelt, Maghera, Dungannon and Coalisland. The key issue is how to reconcile the needs of sustainable development, meeting the social and economic needs of the countryside, whilst ensuring that the intrinsic qualities of the landscape are respected and preserved.

Mid Ulster benefits from a high level of national and local landscape designations and designations or policies within our Plan can ensure that these most sensitive areas are protected.

The prevalence of minerals sites in rural locations in Mid Ulster exacerbate the potential for impact upon the rural landscape, especially in the greater Cookstown area where the visual impact of sand and gravel workings can be quite pronounced. The Plan has a role to ensure that the location of mineral development and their operation is controlled and that there is a balance between the need for mineral development and the potential impact on the environment.

Soil

The Soil quality in Northern Ireland, has declined slightly in recent years. In 2012/13, there were more soils that were either under or over-enriched with phosphorus compared to previous years. The most significant threat facing our soils is from erosion by wind and water.

The Plan can conserve and enhance soil resources by minimising development on greenfield sites and by directing development to brownfield sites. Although there is an evidence gap in relation to contaminated land sites within the Mid Ulster District this issue is currently handled on a case by case basis and where necessary conditions can ensure contaminated land can be remediated as appropriate.

Soils have a role in the fight against climate change and in helping us to adapt to its impacts, through its natural ability of carbon storage and water attenuation. Mismanaged extraction activities can also result in pressures on water quality and peat cutting can be damaging to vegetation, hydrology and landscape as well as destroying vital carbon sinks. The plan can assist this process through policies to and protect peatland areas within the district.

• Environmental Protection Objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the Plan and the way those objectives and any environmental objectives have been taken into account during its preparation

European Union legislation has more than 130 targets and objectives to be met in the period 2010 - 2050 (European Environment Agency). These objectives include the promotion of a green economy based on reducing energy consumption promoting the use of renewables. The objectives and targets also focus on the protection of water quality, protected species, reduction in air pollution, reduction in waste generation and ensuring that no waste goes to landfill. These objectives and targets work alongside policies to mitigate climate changes. Appendix 2 of the SA/SEA Environmental Report sets out in detail all of the plans, policies, programmes and strategies (PPPSs) and considers the relevance of them to our Plan.

Our Plan shares these targets and objectives which seek to protect our environment and provide sustainable development in our district. For example two of the objectives of our Plan are to:

- To reduce contributions and vulnerability to climate change and to reduce flood risk and the adverse consequences of flooding; and,
- To protect and enhance the natural and built environment as wise custodians of our landscape and to achieve biodiversity, quality design, enhanced leisure and economic opportunity and promote health and welling.

- **Likely significant effects on the environment, including short, medium and long term effects, permanent and temporary effects, positive and negative effects, secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects.**
- **Measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the Plan.**
- **Outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties encountered in compiling the required information.**

Appraisal Methodology

Following on from the consultation period of the POP, preparation for the draft Plan Strategy required an appraisal of all strategic options and reasonable alternatives against the SA/SEA objectives. To assist in selecting options for policies, each reasonable alternative was assigned a score to indicate its likely effects on each SA/SEA objective in order.

An assessment of policy options and reasonable alternatives ensures the draft Plan Strategy to be fully informed of the sustainability implications and potential environmental effects that could occur and provides an early opportunity for mitigation or alternatives to be considered.

Many of the suggested reasonable alternatives are a reconfiguration of the current policy approach, without fundamental change to the policy itself. In others instances, a tailored policy approach is suggested taking into account regional policy, local evidential context and public/statutory consultations. In order to establish the potential environmental, social and economic effects of the proposed plan options, a matrix method has been used whereby each plan option is assessed and a colour-coding used to highlight the relationships – the colour coding is illustrated in the table below. The temporal scale of each potential effect was considered based on the implementation of each option, over various periods of time i.e. short, medium and long term. Detailed appraisal matrices for the preferred approaches and the reasonable alternatives can be found in Appendix 1 of the main SA/SEA Report.

Table 4

Positive +	Negative -	Neutral 0	Uncertain ?	Significant Positive ++	Significant Negative --	No Relationship
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Assessment

Before summarising the overall findings of the assessment of the Plan it is important to state that the SASEA has not identified any significant adverse effects from the draft Plan Strategy. This section provides a high level summary of the detailed SA/SEA findings.

The draft Plan Strategy has been formulated to avoid any significant adverse effects. The **Growth Strategy and Spatial Planning Framework** contained within the draft Plan Strategy provides for 11,000 houses over the plan period and ensure the availability of sufficient economic development land for the creation of 8500 new jobs. It is based on regional guidance and identifies our main towns and hubs as functioning within a cluster supported by our local towns. The role of villages and small settlements are maintained and consolidated and development in the countryside that supports the vitality and viability of rural communities is supported without compromising the heritage or the environment. A shortage of economic development land at Dungannon is recognised and interim zonings are proposed. Our Growth Strategy and Spatial Planning Framework also seeks to protect our vulnerable landscapes and conservation interests from inappropriate and over dominant development. The Growth Strategy and Spatial Framework are supported by the other subject policies within the draft Plan Strategy and in particular the General Principles Planning Policy.

The **General Principles Planning Policy** (GPPP) is considered to be the mitigation for the Growth Strategy and Spatial Planning Framework as it contains all of the material planning considerations that all development will be determined against to ensure sustainable development within our district. The GPPP is not a new policy but is in essence a bringing together of all those material planning considerations contained within the current planning policy. The GPPP can bring about significant positive social and environmental benefits allowing for balanced decision making.

For most of the subject policies within the draft PS the decision has been taken to retain them largely as they currently exist in current policy as there has been no evidence of a need to change them. Therefore for the subject policies within the draft Plan Strategy the broad alternatives assessed in the SA/SEA Report are to:

- retain the existing policy with some reconfiguration,
- making the existing policy more flexible, or,
- make the existing policy stricter.

Retailing, Office and Town Centres, and **Health Education and Community Uses** policies are primarily concerned with socio-economic development and need to be retained, albeit with reconfiguration, to ensure needs are met.

Policies currently offering policy protection in respect of **Flood Risk**, **Waste Management**, **Historic Environment** have also been retained, albeit with some reconfiguration, in order to ensure that those protections are carried forward in the Plan.

In relation to **Housing in Settlements** it was decided that the policy should have added flexibility to address the need for social housing if identified by NIHE which has important positive benefits in terms of poverty and social exclusion and opportunity of access to a decent home. Overall the assessment of the Housing in Settlement Policy has been assessed as being broadly a mix of minor positive and neutral effects economically and socially and broadly minor negatives or neutral environmentally. The other aspects of the policy are broadly in the line with the current policy.

In relation to **Housing in the Countryside** the policy within the draft Plan Strategy is more flexible than the current policy and this approach has been chosen to address the specific circumstances of the district. In addition to those opportunities that exist under the current policy we have introduced new opportunities for a single dwelling in the countryside for a carer or someone availing of care, a dwelling in a small gap site, in a farm cluster and for the holder of a commercial fishing licence. It is considered that the policy has been drafted in such a manner that to avail of these opportunities specific criteria must be met which acts as mitigation to ensure that they are availed of in only a limited number of scenarios. In relation to the opportunity for the holder of a commercial fishing licence the dwelling can only be located in a defined area thereby ensure that this flexibility is not at this expense of the environment or sustainable development. Overall the assessment of Housing in the Countryside has been assessed as being a mix of a combination of approach has both minor positive effects economically and socially and minor negative effects environmentally.

The **Urban Design** policy contained with the draft Plan Strategy is essentially a new policy in that it discussed and considered in planning guidance but not widely covered in current policy. This approach can bring about positive effects in relation to our townscapes and sense of community.

In relation to **Open Space, Recreation and Leisure** the policy approach chosen largely reflective of the current policy with added protection of open space where proposals seek to re-develop it, the introduction of policy to protect of main river corridors (Ballinderry, Moyola, Blackwater, Bann and Owenkillew) and flexibility to allow a sports facility close to settlement limit where no alternative site within limit. The approach to Open Space, Recreation and Leisure Policy has been chosen to ensure we cater for the specific needs of the district and has been assessed as having overall broadly minor positive economic environmental effects and broadly minor negative or neutral environmental effects.

The approach chosen for **Economic Development** is to make the existing policy more flexible in the knowledge that Mid Ulster is heavily reliant on the construction and manufacturing sectors. A new opportunity has been introduced for the provision of a small workshop in the countryside in recognition of the role of home grown industry in this district. The criteria set out in the policy acts as a control to ensure that such development only occurs within the existing curtilage of an existing dwelling inhabited by the operator. The approach to economic development policy can bring about broadly minor positive economic and social effects and also broadly minor negative effects in relation to the environment.

The approach to **Minerals** is broadly as set out in current policy and includes revised Areas of Constraint on Mineral Development (ACMD) and also revised Mineral Reserve

Policy Areas. The revised ACMD's are placed to ensure that our most sensitive environmental assets and landscapes are protected and therefore are broadly positive in relation to the environment. Overall the Minerals policy has been assessed as having a combination of minor positive, minor negative and neutral or no relationship effects.

Tourism policy has added flexibility in relation to tourism accommodation and facilities with Tourism Opportunity Zones identified along the lough shore and at Davagh Forest and the lower slopes of the Sperrins. Tourism Conservation Zones are also identified to the east and west of Davagh Forest. The approach to tourism policy has been assessed as having broadly minor positive effects in relation to the economy and a combination of minor negative, neutral or minor positive or neutral socially and environmentally.

Flexibility has been introduced in the policy for **Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing**. In relation to new agricultural buildings the applicant no longer has to demonstrate they are necessary. The policy also introduces the opportunity for an ancillary shed for the holder of a commercial fishing licence. Overall this policy has broadly major positive economic effects and minor negative, minor positive or neutral environmental effects and minor positive or neutral socially.

Where flexibility has been introduced in a number of the subject policies this is in the context of a draft Plan Strategy that has introduced new and additional constraints in order to protect our most sensitive landscapes and environmental assets. While the **Natural Heritage** policy remains largely as set out in the current policy it has been made stricter as it includes policy for a Special Countryside Area in the high Sperrins, Slieve Gallion, Slieve Beagh and along the Lough Shore where there is a presumption against development. This has approach has major positive effects in relation to the environment and is broadly positive in general.

Policy in relation to **Telecommunications, Overhead Cables, High Structures and other Utilities** has been made stricter through the introduction of an Area of Constraint on Wind Turbines and High Structures. Within this constraint area development will not be permitted above 15 metres apart from a limited number of exceptions. The effects of this policy are assessed as being broadly minor positive.

In relation to **Renewable Energy** the policy has been made stricter through the introduction of an Area of Constraint on Wind Turbines and High Structures Within this constraint area development will not be permitted above 15 metres. This policy has been assessed as having a mix of broadly minor positive or neutral effects with some major positive effects in relation to the environment.

The policy on **Transportation** while broadly similar to the current policy it has introduced stricter controls on development on disused transport routes. The effect of this overall policy has been scored a being broadly minor positive with some neutral or minor negative effects in relation to the environment.

In the main designations and zonings will be dealt with in the Local Policies Plan. These will be subject to SA/SEA appraisal/assessment to consider potential strategic environmental impacts.

The full detailed assessment and appraisal of the draft Plan Strategy is contained in Appendix 1 of the SA/SEA Report and also within Section of 5.0 of the main report.

Measures envisaged concerning monitoring

Whilst the formal framework for monitoring will not be addressed until the Plan Strategy is fully adopted, the SA/SEA allows us to prepare a preliminary framework which may then may evolve in response to the results of consultation or changes to the plan.

A monitoring framework helps us to measure the plan's performance, and to monitor any uncertainties noted within the appraisal, although in this case no significant adverse effects were identified,

A list of the proposed monitoring indicators, and the sources of information for each are provided in the SA/SEA report focussing on the SA/SEA objectives and they draw on the monitoring framework contained within the draft Plan Strategy.

The data used for monitoring in many cases will be provided by outside bodies. Information collected by other organisations (e.g. Northern Ireland Environment Agency) can also be used as a source of indicators. It is therefore recommended that the Council continues the dialogue with statutory environmental consultees and other stakeholders that has already been commenced, and works with them to agree the relevant sustainability effects to be monitored and to obtain information that is appropriate, up to date and reliable.