



Report on the draft Plan Strategy and linkages to the draft Marine Plan

March 2021

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland has been produced by DAERA in order to inform and guide the regulation, management, use and protection of the Northern Ireland marine area. The marine area comprises all marine waters including seabed, subsoil, sea loughs and tidal rivers, so far as the tide flows at Mean High Water Spring Tide. The Marine Plan builds upon the UK Marine Policy Statement.
- 1.2 Whilst Mid Ulster District is not a coastal council, it does have hydrological linkages to the Northern Ireland marine area through its river network and is included in a River Basin Management Area that adjoins the sea. These rivers are also important for marine species, such as salmon and eels. The Lough Neagh eel fishery is worth approximately £3.2m to the NI rural economy, supports over 300 families along the Lough shore, and is recognised as the largest remaining commercial wild eel fishery in Europe.
- 1.3 A representation from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, reminds the Council that decisions it takes on planning matters are required, under legislation (Section 8 of the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 and Section 58 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009) to be in accordance with the appropriate Marine Plan / marine policy documents.
- 1.4 In the production of the draft Plan Strategy, Mid Ulster District Council has taken account of a range of considerations, which affect the whole or any part of the marine area. The table below explains how the objectives of the Marine Plan have been considered in the draft Plan Strategy.

| Marine Plan Objectives | How draft Plan strategy has taken into account the Marine Plan Objectives. |
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| To promote the sustainable development of productive activities, which support employment at all skill levels, while fully considering the requirements of other marine interests. | This objective was considered when producing the Draft Plan Strategy in particular Policy ECON2 – Economic Development in the Countryside, Policy CT2 – Dwellings in the Countryside, in particular CT2 (j) – Dwelling for holder of commercial fishing licence and also Policy AFR1 – Agriculture and Forestry Development, in particular AFR1 – Agriculture and Forestry Development and |

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| | Development Ancillary to commercial fishing. |
| To help realise the potential of energy resources and energy storage, within the marine area, while fully considering the requirements of other marine interests. | This objective was considered when producing the Draft Plan Strategy in particular Policy RNW1 – Renewable Energy. |
| To promote the development of vibrant, accessible and sustainable coastal communities. | Not relevant to Mid Ulster as there are no coastal communities in this district. |
| To promote the marine resources, its recreational value and its wider economic, environmental and social benefits to all. | <p>This objective was considered when producing the Draft Plan Strategy in particular Policy OS3 – Outdoor Sport and Recreation and TOU3 – Tourism Accommodation and TOU4 – Other Tourism Facilities/Amenities and Attractions. Tourist Opportunity zones (TOZ) have been identified and designated at key locations along the shoreline of Lough Neagh at Washingbay, Mountjoy, Traad Point and The Battery. (Maps 1.16 – 1.19).</p> <p>Complementing the DPS is also the strategy for Open Space and Recreation which includes provision for green ways and identifies the route of the Ulster Canal for recreational purposes which enhances the objectives of the Marine Plan.</p> <p>In addition Policy OS3 identifies how Mid Ulster District council proposes to develop facilities ancillary to water sports such as angling, sailing, canoeing, rowing and sail-boarding, and powered activities such as water-skiing, jet skiing and other power boat uses.</p> |

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| <p>To promote the preservation and enjoyment of marine related heritage assets.</p> | <p>This objective was considered when producing the Draft Plan Strategy in particular within Policies NH1- International Designations, NH3 – Natural Designations and SCA1 – Special Countryside Areas.</p> |
| <p>To promote a healthy, resilient and adaptable marine ecosystem and an ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas.</p> | <p>This objective was taken into account when producing the draft Plan Strategy, in particular Policy RNW1 – Renewable Energy</p> |
| <p>To contribute towards climate change mitigation and adaption measures.</p> | <p>This objective was taken into consideration during the creation of our Community Plan as it promotes creating a sustainable environment and public services. All of the strategic actions within the Community Plan incorporate these principles. The sustainable environment highlights the growing imperative of making a significant contribution to tackling global warming and climate change. It states that the delivery of the Plan must produce sustainable action that protect our environment and leave a legacy for future generations. The infrastructure theme of our Community Plan promotes the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems. Particular attention was given to Policy RNW1 when considering this objective. Mid Ulster District council has recognised within the draft Area Plan that waste disposal should only be used when no other option is available. In addition this objective was taken into account when producing the</p> |

draft Plan Strategy, in particular Policy **WM1** – Waste Management: General Policy.

Our DPS promotes creating a sustainable environment and as such all of the strategic actions within it incorporate these principles. The sustainable environment highlights the growing imperative of making a significant contribution to tackling global warming and climate change. The infrastructure theme of the Plan promotes the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems. More specifically one of the plan objectives is to reduce flood risk and the adverse consequences of flooding which all takes into consideration the Marine Plan objectives.

Policy **FLD 1** has been introduced limit the impacts of flooding on new development. This is an obvious means of mitigating the impacts of climate change, which is expected to increase flood risk, although there remains much uncertainty as to the degree of climate change that will occur and its precise implications. FLD 1 will also protect and maintain our existing naturally occurring flood plains and ensure they continue to act as areas of storage for water and prevent surges in times in flooding.

In addition particular attention was given to **OS2** – Protection of River Corridors, when considering this objective. Open spaces include inland bodies of water. Any proposals on sites adjacent to a main river must meet all the 5 requirements of criteria given otherwise the proposal would be considered as being in conflict with the plan. Open space provides 'green lungs' which assists in meeting air quality objectives.

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| <p>To continue to develop a sound marine evidence base in a co-ordinated manner to increase understanding and to support the development, monitoring and review of Marine Plans.</p> | <p>As a number of rivers within the Mid Ulster District area flow into Lough Neagh through the connection with the River Bann when producing the draft plan strategy the policy objectives of the Marine Plan and the relative legislation have been given full regard.</p> |
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2.0 Conclusion

- 2.1 Whilst Mid Ulster does not have a coastline, we are mindful that the Lough Neagh basin, which accounts for most of our drainage, flows into the North Atlantic Ocean. Due to the international designations which protect Lough Neagh, any proposal which is likely to result in significant pollutants will be subject to habitat assessment under the habitats assessment regulations. As a consequence, development impacting upon this drainage system will be subject to higher scrutiny than any other location.
- 2.2 In addition, the introduction of policy which will prohibit development within a flood plain will ensure that existing natural floodplains are retained to ensure existing flood plains are retained to help with the storage of water and prevent surges into the drainage system.