

# Local Development Plan 2032 Technical Supplement Paper 16

## Public Utilities



**Ards and  
North Down**  
Borough Council

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of this document

- 1.1 This technical supplement is one of a suite of topic-based documents detailing the evidence base used to inform the preparation of the Ards and North Down Local Development Plan (LDP) Draft Plan Strategy 2032. This suite of documents should be read alongside the policies contained within the Draft Plan Strategy in order to understand the rationale and justification for each policy.
- 1.2 In May 2019, the Council launched the Preferred Options Paper (POP), the first of three public consultation documents which will be issued through the LDP process. The POP outlined the vision and strategic objectives of the plan based upon the baseline information detailed in a suite of position papers. The technical supplements which complement the draft Plan Strategy will build upon the baseline information gathered in the position papers and show how this has been progressed through the LDP process to formulate the draft Plan Strategy.
- 1.3 This technical supplement demonstrates how the evidence base gathered through Preferred Options Paper position paper 'Public Utilities and Energy' has been used to formulate the policies in the draft Plan Strategy including the public consultation processes and engagement with elected members. It should be noted that this is based upon the best information available at the time of compiling this position paper. Amendments may be required as new data becomes available or as a result of any changes in policy or guidance.
- 1.4 This technical supplement refers to 'Public Utilities' which include, telecommunications, recycling, water and sewerage services and cemeteries. These public utilities and their associated infrastructure are an essential element of everyday life for people of the developed world and are inextricably linked with social and economic well-being. However, they may also be associated with their potential negative impact on visual amenity and environmentally sensitive features and locations.

## 2.0 REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

### Programme for Government 2024-2027

- 2.1 The Programme for Government (PfG) Framework 2024-2027 was officially agreed on the 27 February 2025. It sets out nine core priorities aimed at addressing immediate needs and laying the groundwork for transformative progress. To grow a globally competitive and sustainable economy is one of the core priorities. The Planning (NI) Act 2011 specifically requires the Local Development Plan (LDP) to

take account of the PfG, and LDPs are a key delivery tool for the achievement of a number of outcomes of the programme.

#### [Everyone's Involved — NI Executive Sustainable Development Strategy \(2021\)](#)

2.2 The Northern Ireland (NI) Executive launched the Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) 'Everyone's Involved', on 27 May 2010, reissued on 20 July 2021.

2.3 This document is the current regional strategic framework guiding sustainable development. It encourages integration of economic, social, and environmental goals into policy across all Northern Ireland Government Departments and District Councils, primarily through the Programme for Government.

2.4 The Strategy has been designed to provide a framework that can support and inform the decisions and actions taken by individuals, groups and organisations in progressing the sustainability agenda.

#### [Regional Development Strategy \(RDS\) 2035](#)

2.5 The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) provides an overarching strategic planning framework to facilitate and guide the public and private sectors. It is not limited to land use but recognises that policies for physical development have far reaching implications. The RDS addresses economic, social and environmental issues aimed at achieving sustainable development and social cohesion. The Local Development Plan must take account of the RDS.

#### [Telecommunications](#)

2.6 The regional guidance in the RDS seeks to implement a balanced approach to telecommunications infrastructure that will give a competitive advantage<sup>1</sup>. The core telecommunications network in Northern Ireland is recognised as being “world class” with five fully-fibre networks. However, given the fast pace of the market, the importance of continued investment in infrastructure is highlighted if a competitive advantage is to be maintained. Other measures include improving services in smaller rural areas to minimise the urban/rural divide, increasing the usage of broadband and capitalising on direct international connectivity.

#### [Gas](#)

2.7 There is a substantial environmental benefit to gas given that it is the least polluting fossil fuel. Regional Guidance 5 (RG5) - ‘Deliver a sustainable and secure energy supply’ encourages and promotes a new gas infrastructure together with gas storage which would enhance the diversity of energy supply and have a positive impact on the security and reliability of future gas supply. Significant investment is needed in order to provide an outward-looking, dynamic and liveable region.

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<sup>1</sup> The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035, RG3, page 36

- 2.8 The broad evaluation framework (see Figure 1) is set out in the RDS to assist with judgements on the allocation of housing growth in a Local Development Plan<sup>2</sup>. As can be seen, the location and capacity of physical utilities and infrastructure in respect of water, sewage and waste is key to identifying future housing land.

**Figure 1: Housing Evaluation Framework**

Resource Test	Studies should be carried out to assess and detail the existence of community assets and physical infrastructure such as water, waste and sewage, including spare capacity.
Environmental Capacity Test	An assessment of the environmental assets of the settlement, the potential of flooding from rivers, the sea or surface water run-off and its potential to accommodate future outward growth without significant environmental degradations should be made.
Transport Test	Studies should be carried out to assess the potential for integrating land use and public transport and walking and cycling routes to help reduce reliance on the car.
Economic Development Test	The potential to facilitate an appropriate housing and jobs balance, and to unlock any major strategic development opportunities, should be assessed and detailed.
Urban and Rural Character Test	Assessment should be made of the potential to maintain a sense of place, and to integrate new development in way that does not detract from the character and identity of the settlement.
Community Services Test	The potential to underpin and, where necessary, reinforce the community service role and function of the settlement should be assessed and detailed.

Source: RDS 2035

<sup>2</sup> The Regional Development Strategy (RDS), RG8, page 40

## Sustainable Water: A Long- Term Water Strategy for Northern Ireland

- 2.9 This Strategy sets out a range of initiatives to deliver the Executive's long-term goal of a sustainable water sector in Northern Ireland which supports the Regional Development Strategy 2035 to promote economic growth, and which also ensures environmental protection and a reduction in the risk of flooding throughout Northern Ireland.
- 2.10 The Strategy presents a clear framework for action which will facilitate implementation of a range of initiatives aimed at delivering the long-term vision to have a sustainable water sector in Northern Ireland. To achieve this vision, the Strategy encourages a sustainable and integrated approach to managing all our different water needs in a way which promotes regional development, without compromising the environment or increasing flood risk.
- 2.11 The strategy recognises the importance of up-to-date information to continue to inform land use planning decisions. The Strategy sets out aims, policies and actions to achieve sustainable water in the four key sections identified:
- Drinking Water Supply and Demand;
  - Flood Risk Management and Drainage;
  - Environmental Protection and Improvement; and
  - Water and Sewerage Services.

## 3.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT (SPPS)

- 3.1 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) was published by the Department of the Environment (DOE) in September 2015. The provisions of the SPPS must be taken into account in the preparation of Local Development Plans and are also material to all decisions on individual planning applications and appeals.

### Telecommunications

- 3.2 The aim of the SPPS in relation to telecommunications and other utilities is to facilitate the development of such infrastructure in an efficient and effective manner whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. The regional strategic objectives of the SPPS in relation to telecommunications and other utilities are to:
- Ensure that where appropriate new telecommunications development is accommodated by mast and site sharing;
  - Ensure that the visual and environmental impact of telecommunications and other utility development is kept to a minimum;
  - Minimise, as far as practicable, undue interference that may be caused to radio spectrum users (for example mobile phone services, media broadcasting and wireless broadband services) by new telecommunications development; and
  - Encourage appropriate provision for telecommunications systems in the design of other forms of development.

- 3.3 The SPPS states that the Local Development Plan should bring forward policies and proposals to set out the detailed criteria for consideration of new telecommunications development in their local area which should address important planning considerations, such as, siting, design, and impact upon visual amenity. LDPs, may in certain circumstances, allocate specific sites for major new telecommunications development and it may set out requirements on operators, for example, to demonstrate the need for new development and existing network constraints.

#### Gas Consumption

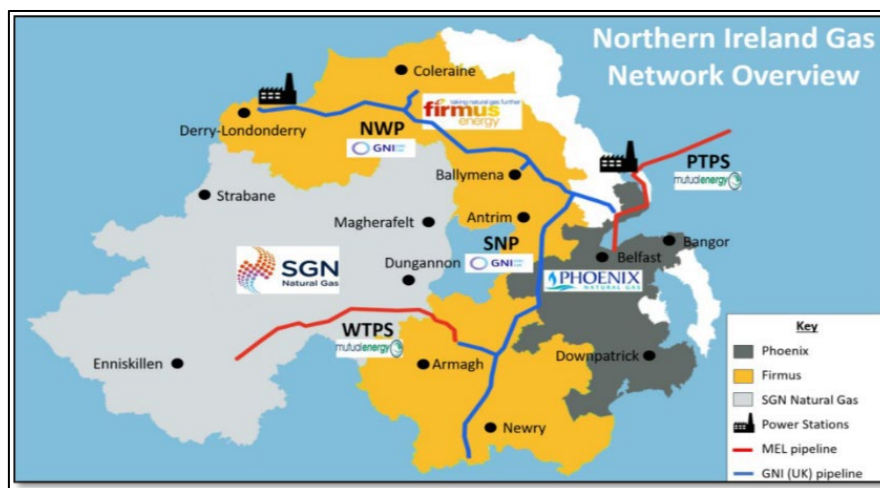
- 3.4 The SPPS emphasises that the Planning system plays an important role in addressing existing or potential barrier to sustainable development which include strategies, proposal and future investment in the energy infrastructure.

### 4.0 EVIDENCE UPDATE

#### Gas Network

- 4.1 Natural gas provides a significant proportion of the main energy source for heating homes and businesses in Northern Ireland (NI). The UK has four interconnector pipelines which can transport gas between neighbouring countries, Figure 2.
- 4.2 The Moffat interconnectors (IC1/IC2) connect between Scotland and Ireland from which the Scotland-NI Pipeline (SNIP) branches off and flows gas to Northern Ireland. The South-North Pipeline (SNP) flows gas from Ireland and Northern Ireland but is not in use at present. Interconnectors IC1 and IC2, which flow directly to Ireland from Great Britain, spur off to supply 100% of Northern Ireland's gas. There is currently therefore no demand for gas to flow through SNP from Northern Ireland to Ireland.

**Figure 2: Northern Ireland Gas Network Overview**



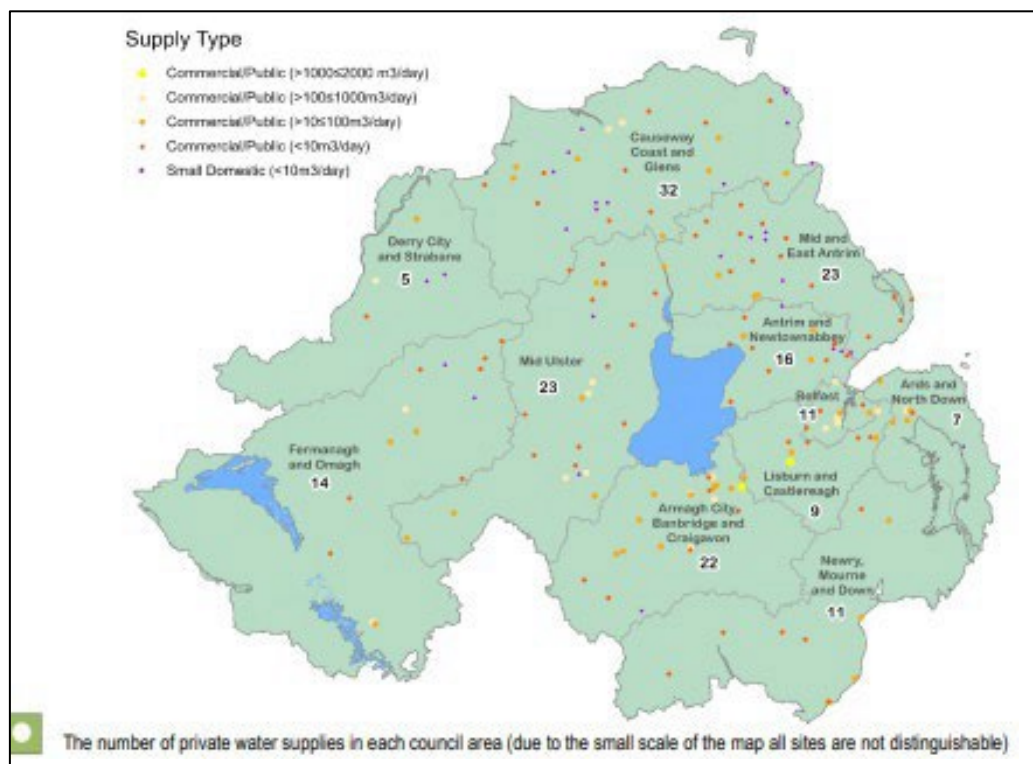
Source: Department for the Economy (DfE), Northern Ireland



## Water And Water Quality

- 4.3 The provision and use of clean water is a critical part of modern life. NI Water is responsible for the water you have in your home. Silent Valley Impounding Reservoir<sup>3</sup> is the source of the Borough's drinking water. Reservoirs are designed to store the rain that falls during the year, so that we can have a continuous supply of water within our homes, businesses, schools and hospitals. However, with population growth and changing weather patterns due to climate change we are now starting to experience prolonged spells of low rainfalls, NIW advise that the levels of reservoirs are constantly monitored.
- 4.4 'Drinking Water Quality in Northern Ireland (2023)', is a report by the Drinking Water Inspectorate<sup>4</sup> for Northern Ireland, it provides an independent assessment of drinking water quality of both public and private supplies. In 2023 in Northern Ireland over 99% of the population receive their drinking water from Northern Ireland Water Limited (NI Water). The remainder is served by private water supplies. Overall public drinking water quality for 2023 remained high with 99.92% compliance, a slight increase from 2022 (99.91%).

**Figure 3 Distribution of Registered Private Water Supplies by Council Area in 2023**

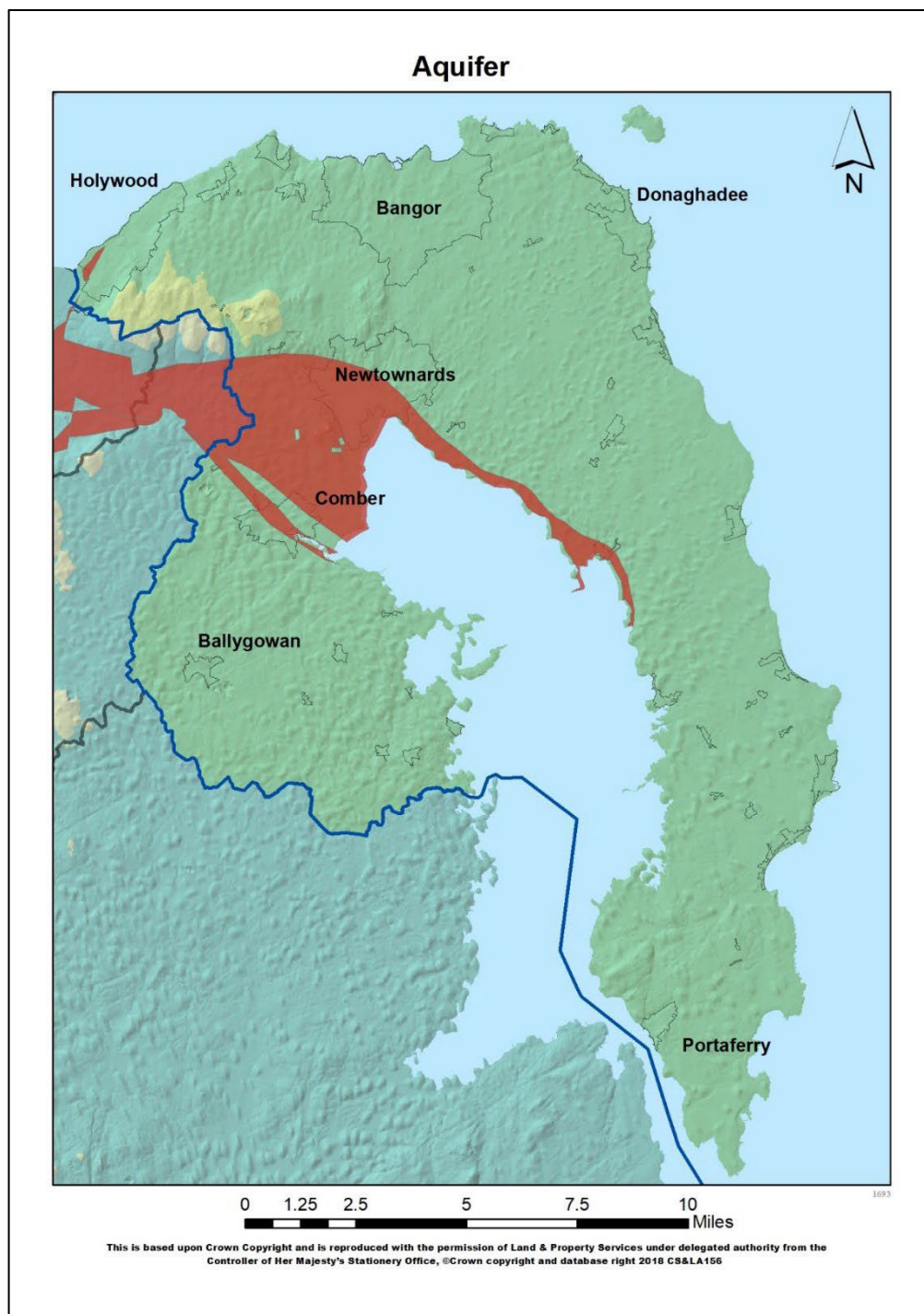


<sup>3</sup> [Reservoir Levels](#)

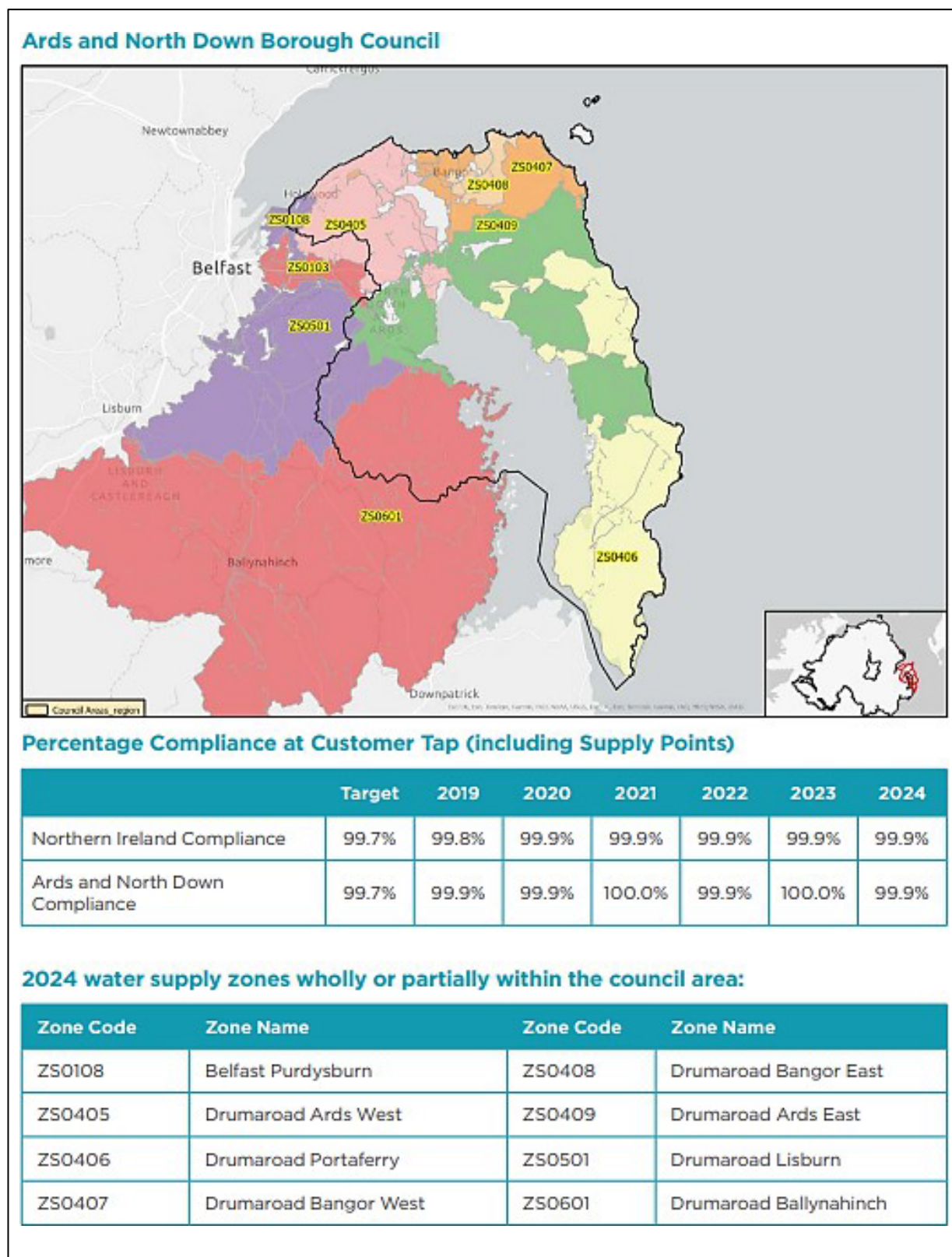
<sup>4</sup> [https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-02/Drinking%20Water%20Quality%20in%20Northern%20Ireland%2C%202023\\_0.PDF](https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-02/Drinking%20Water%20Quality%20in%20Northern%20Ireland%2C%202023_0.PDF)

- 4.5 Whilst there are low numbers of homes and businesses where water is supplied by private water sources, GSNI have advised that there is potential for water to be sourced from the Sherwood Aquifer, which extends across the north west of the Borough.

**Figure 4 Sherwood Aquifer**



**Figure 5 Water Quality in Ards and North Down**



Source - NI Water drinking water quality annual report 2024<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> [2024-ni-water-drinking-water-quality-annual-report.pdf](#)

## Wastewater

- 4.6 NIW are also responsible for the management of waste water infrastructure across Northern Ireland. The issues regarding funding needs for upgrading this vital infrastructure has been widely publicised. Ards and North Down receive updates on the capacity for the Borough. Similar to many areas in Northern Ireland there are areas where waste water infrastructure is at or reaching capacity.
- 4.7 The latest information on waste water capacity is that the Cloughey and Killinchy Waste Water Treatment Works within the Council area do not have any available capacity.
- 4.8 NI Water's sewerage network capacity mapping tool and sewer network modelling activities have identified capacity issues in parts of the Ballyhalbert Victoria, Ballyrickard, Ballywalter, Cloughey, Greyabbey, Killinchy, Kinnegar, Kircubbin, North Down, Portaferry and Seahill wastewater networks. As a result, negative planning responses may be provided by NI Water in parts of these catchments. The Annual headroom information table is appended to this report, Annex 1.
- 4.9 NIW has undertaken considerable works within Ards and North Down, with upgrades taking place including the £18m Ards North Wastewater Improvement Project, to upgrade the existing wastewater collection and treatment systems serving a large part of the Ards Peninsula. This is to bring about social, economic and environmental benefits.
- 4.10 This project involved the rationalisation of the Carrowdore, Ballywhiskin and Ballywalter catchments so that all wastewater flows from these areas are transferred to a new state-of-the-art Waste Water Treatment Works (WwTW) being constructed on the Ganaway Road in Ballywalter.
- 4.11 There was also an upgrade of Brompton Road and Stricklands Glen Waste Water pumping stations, with work completed on the construction of new wastewater pumping stations at Brompton Road and Stricklands Glen in March 2022. The new wastewater pumping stations and the upgrade of the associated sewerage network will deliver myriad environmental benefits to the local area.
- 4.12 NIW advised that, 'The introduction of stormwater storage at these key pumping stations will lead to enhanced water quality in Belfast Lough and neighbouring coastal waters. This extra capacity in the sewerage network will also help prevent out-of-sewer flooding in the Bangor West area. Both pumping stations will be furnished with the most advanced monitoring equipment available allowing NI Water to remotely monitor the performance of each pumping station and respond effectively to any problems. This technology will significantly reduce the number of visits to the pumping station by NI Water operatives. NI Water is pleased to be able to carry out this further phase of work as part of the Bangor Sewerage Improvement



Project and build on the significant investment to improve bathing water quality along the North Down coast.<sup>6</sup>

- 4.13 The addition of policy for development that is not reliant on mains waste water connection signposts applicants to the NIW website encourages early engagement by applicants and developers with NIW.

#### Telecommunication

- 4.14 Updated information on connectivity of Ards and North Down show that the Borough achieves 99.3% Superfast Broadband speeds i.e. over 30Mbps.

Broadband Speed	%
Over 30 Mbps	99.3
24-30 Mbps	0.0
15-24 Mbps	0.2
10-15 Mbps	0.4
2-10 Mbps	0.1
Under 2 Mbps	0.1

**Table 1 Broadband Coverage and Speed Test Statistics for Ards and North Down<sup>7</sup>**

#### Cemetery/Burial Spaces

- 4.15 Responsibility for provision and maintenance of cemeteries lies with the Council. Additional burial grounds are located within various church grounds within the Borough. The availability of grave space availability varies across the Borough.
- 4.16 Currently the only cemeteries with new graves available to pre purchase are:
- Greyabbey;
  - Loughview;
  - Kircubbin;
  - Kirkistown; and
  - Whitechurch.
- 4.17 There are no new graves available in the following cemeteries, but burials can still take place in existing graves:
- Bangor New;
  - Comber; and
  - Priory.

<sup>6</sup> [What's Happening In Your Area - Northern Ireland Water](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Broadband Coverage and Speed Test Statistics for Ards and North Down](#)

- 4.18 The following cemeteries have graves that can only be purchased at the time of an interment:
- Clandeboye;
  - Movilla;
  - Ballyvester; and
  - Redburn.

**Table 2 Grave space available across Ards and North Down**

<b>Cemetery</b>	<b>Number of graves available *</b>
Clandeboye	1606
Movilla	89
Redburn	66
Ballyvester	70
Loughview	1807
Kirkistown	519
Greyabbey	95
Whitechurch	56
Kircubbin	441
Bangor New	Closed
Priory	Closed
Comber	Closed

\*Number available is estimated, has not been verified by a ground condition check.

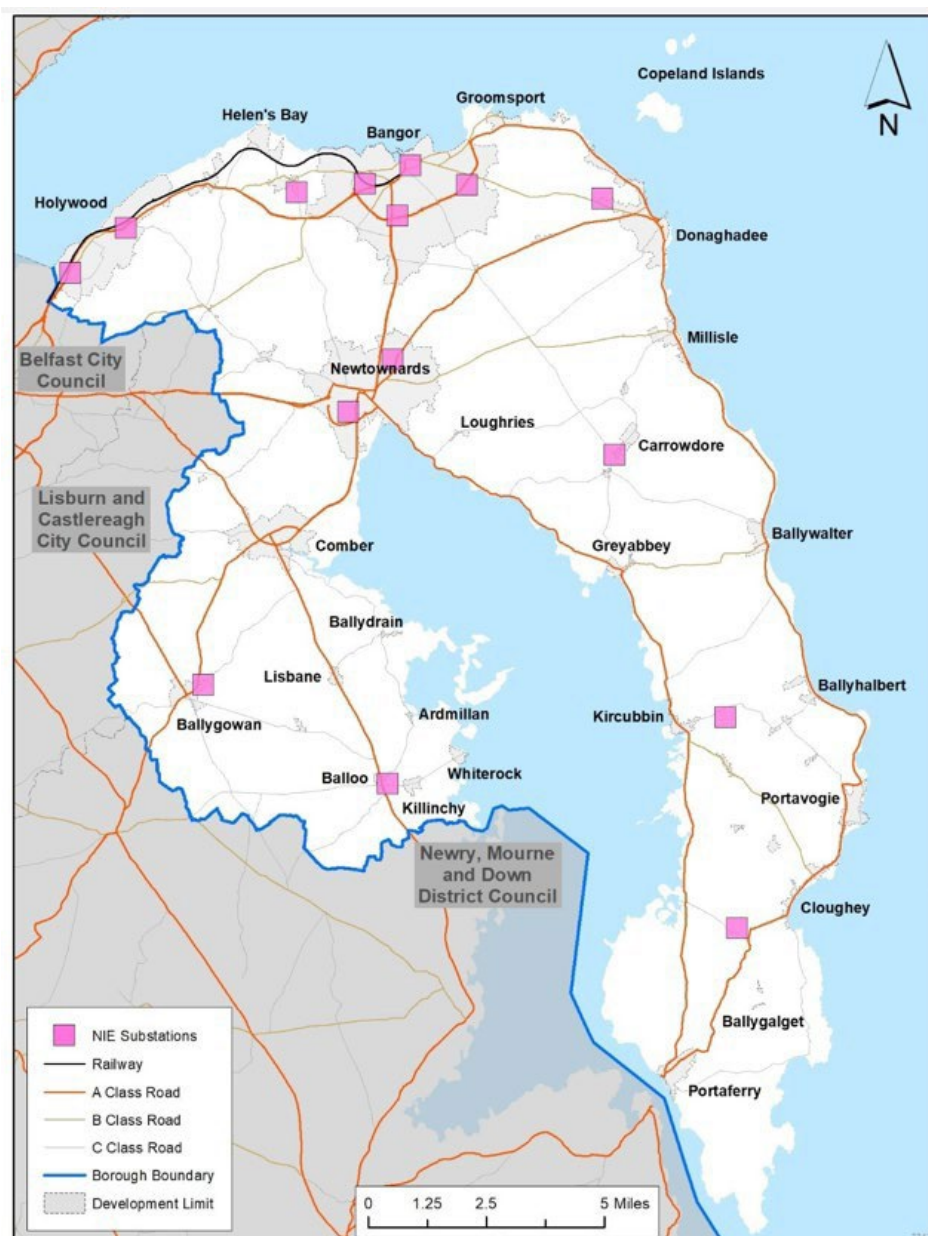
- 4.19 The Council is in the process of finding a suitable location for new cemetery provision within the Borough due to the lack of current available burial space. This work is ongoing and when a site has been selected it will be identified at Local Policies Plan Stage.

#### Electricity

- 4.20 There are several private sector electricity suppliers of domestic and non-domestic electricity, who buy and sell it to customers in Northern Ireland, these include Power NI SSE Airtricity, Electric Ireland and Budget Energy Ltd. Suppliers need a licence from the Utility Regulator to supply electricity to customers in Northern Ireland.

- 4.21 In order to support economic growth, the Borough needs a sustainable economic infrastructure including robust electricity connections that can deal with the modern world.
- 4.22 Electricity is generated either by power stations or by renewable energies, which is then transmitted at very high voltage to substations along the transmission network and then is distributed out at lower voltage.

**Figure 6 – NIE Substation**



## 5.0 PLANNING POLICY STATEMENTS AND SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE

### Planning Policy Statement 10: Telecommunications (PPS 10)

5.1 Planning Policy Statement 10: Telecommunications (PPS 10) sets out operational planning policy for telecommunications development. Until such time as a new Plan Strategy is adopted by the Council, the policy provisions of PPS 10 are retained along with the SPPS.

5.2 A key aim of PPS 10 is to ensure that new telecommunications infrastructure such as masts, antennas and associated equipment, can be developed in a way which continues to provide Northern Ireland with world class telecommunications services, while at the same time minimising the visual and environmental impact of new or replacement equipment. Policy TEL 2 of PPS 10, in relation to the development and interference with television broadcasting services, has been cancelled following the publication of the SPPS.

### Planning Policy Statement 21 (PPS 21) - Sustainable Development in the Countryside

5.3 PPS 21 sets out planning policies for development in the countryside, this is defined as land lying outside of settlement limits as identified in development plans.

5.4 Policy CTY 1 'Development in the Countryside' states that there are a range of types of development which in principle are considered to be acceptable in the countryside and that will contribute to the aims of sustainable development. These include renewable energy projects in accordance with Planning Policy 18 'Renewable Energy'. It also recognises that there are a range of other types of non-residential development that may be acceptable in principle in the countryside e.g. certain utilities or telecommunications development.

### Planning Policy Statement 18

5.5 PPS 18 'Renewable Energy' sets out the Department's planning policy for development that generates energy from renewable resources. The PPS also contains policy provisions on the application of the principles of 'Passive Solar Design' in new developments.

5.6 Supported by Best Practice Guidance, PPS 18 provides background information on the various renewable energy technologies that may come forward in Northern Ireland and is designed to contribute to the development management process. Additional detail on renewable energy is contained within the draft Plan Strategy chapter on Renewable Energy and the Renewable Energy Technical Supplement.

### A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (APSRNI)

5.7 Several policies within The Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (APSRNI) cover public utilities, in particular PSU 11 'Overhead Cables', which states the siting of electricity power lines and other overhead cables will be controlled in terms of



visual impact on the environment with particular reference being given to designated areas of landscape or townscape value.

#### [Development Control Advice Note \(DCAN\) 14](#)

- 5.8 Supplementary planning guidance is contained within Development Control Advice Note 14 (DCAN 14) Siting and Design of Radio Telecommunications Equipment.

#### [Creating Places](#)

- 5.9 Supplementary planning guidance is contained within Creating Places - Achieving Quality in Residential Developments: Utility Services (Chapter 21).

## 6.0 EXTANT AREA PLANS

- 6.1 The existing area plans that apply to Ards and North Down Borough Council area are:

- North Down and Ards Area Plan 1984-1995 (NDAAP);
- Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP); and
- draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (dBMAP).

- 6.2 It should be noted that BMAP was adopted in September 2014 but was subsequently quashed as a result of a judgment in the Court of Appeal delivered on 18 May 2017.

- 6.3 As a consequence of this, the North Down and Ards Area Plan 1984-1995, the Belfast Urban Area Plan, and Bangor Town Centre Plan 1995 are now the statutory Development Plans for the North Down area with draft BMAP remaining a material consideration. These plans remain extant until replaced by the new Local Development Plan (LDP) for the Borough. The existing plans are an important consideration in the LDP process, as they provide a starting point for the review of our spatial planning options.

#### [Belfast Urban Area Plan \(BUAP\) 2001](#)

- 6.4 The BMA Public Services and Utilities Strategy comprises the following elements:

- To facilitate the delivery of the infrastructure requirements of the Plan Area throughout the Plan Period; and
- To highlight infrastructure constraints and requirements as appropriate within key site requirements.

#### [Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan \(dBMAP\) 2015](#)

- 6.5 Draft BMAP 2015 does not contain specific provision for the development of telecommunications infrastructure or renewable energy generation and states that it will be considered against the prevailing regional planning policies.

#### [Ards and Down Area Plan \(ADAP\) 2015](#)

- 6.6 The ADAP recognises that although the provision of public services and utilities within the Plan areas is primarily the responsibility of a number of Government Departments and agencies, the council and statutory bodies, the role of the private sector is becoming more important. The Plan recognises the main services are water and sewerage, drainage, waste disposal, cemeteries, electricity, telecommunications and natural gas, but does not offer any specific provision for their development.

## 7.0 ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANS AND STRATEGIES

#### [Ards and North Down Corporate Plan 2020-2024](#)

- 7.1 The priorities of the Corporate Plan are closely aligned to those within the Big Plan, the Community Plan for Ards and North Down, which sets out a long-term vision for the Council, local organisations and communities to work towards. The delivery of the Corporate Plan seeks to achieve better outcomes for all the people of our Borough, towards the longer-term vision outlined in the Big Plan.
- 7.2 We want to see sustainable progress on our priorities, innovation in our services and greater partnership with our residents and other organisations. The plan is based upon five desired outcomes. Of particular relevance to the provision of public utilities are the outcomes that, 'All people in Ards and North Down will enjoy good health and wellbeing', 'fulfil their lifetime potential' and 'feel pride from having access to a well-managed sustainable environment'.
- 7.3 In February 2024, the Council launched a public consultation on the new Ards and North Down Borough Council Corporate Plan 2024-2028. The core of this new Corporate Plan is the vision of a sustainable Borough where environmental, social, and economic wellbeing and interdependent. The three priorities of the plan are increased economic growth attracting more businesses and jobs, reduced carbon emissions as we transition to net zero and improved wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality.

#### [The Big Plan for Ards and North Down 2017-2032 \(The Community Plan\)](#)

- 7.4 The Big Plan provides an overarching framework setting out a shared vision and ambition that Ards and North Down's Strategic Community Planning Partnership has agreed to work towards over the next 15 years. The vision outlined in the plan states the ambition of the Big Plan is 'To have empowered resilient individuals and communities; to reduce inequality; to promote good relations and sustainability; and to improve the accessibility of all public services.'
- 7.5 The Big Plan contains five outcomes; these are ambitious statements that the Council aspire to accurately reflect the situation of the people who live in Ards and

North Down by the year 2032. The two most relevant outcomes linked to Public Services are outcomes four and five:

- Outcome 4: A prosperous and inclusive economy.  
This outcome includes actions which will support the local economy through enhanced digital infrastructure and telecommunications.
- Outcome 5: An environment that is valued, well-managed and accessible.  
This outcome includes actions around the quality of the physical environment and infrastructure, such as, waste and water.

7.6 The Local Government Act 2014 through an amendment to Section 8 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 introduced a statutory requirement that the preparation of the LDP must take account of the Community Plan. The Big Plan will work in tandem with the LDP providing the spatial framework to achieve the shared vision for the Borough.

#### [The Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development 2018-2030](#)

7.7 The Integrated Strategy presents a vision for the pursuit of prosperity in the Borough of Ards and North Down and identifies thematic priorities with accompanying integrated actions. The vision of the strategy is translated into tangible actions, one of which is to 'nurture our assets.' This includes working to reduce the negative impact of our actions on the environment which has local, as well as global implications.

7.8 The Strategy proposes, 'An ambitious programme to reduce carbon emissions at the local level, contributing to wider regional and national efforts. This will involve the identification and implementation of measures that can demonstrably lower emissions within the Borough.' Target areas are likely to include switching to renewable energy sources, where possible.

7.9 The actions relevant to public utilities include:

- Digital Network – work to improve the coverage and speeds of digital connections across the Borough, especially in more remote rural locations and positioning Ards and North Down to receive the latest advances in communications technologies; and
- Carbon Reduction Strategy – pursuit of an ambitious programme to reduce carbon emissions including switching to renewable energy sources and taking further steps to conserve energy.

## [Ards and North Down Digital Strategy: Digitally Connected 2019-2022](#)

- 7.10 The Ards and North Down 'Digitally Connected' strategy aims to outline the wider strategic, economic and societal background as a basis for developing three integrated digital strands:
- Digital Sector;
  - Digital Infrastructure; and
  - Digital Skills.
- 7.11 The Strategy recognises the different facets of digital development and the specific needs of the Borough to establish a direction and approach to maintain and strengthen the unique characteristics and ambitions of the different areas of Ards and North Down.
- 7.12 Project Stratum was developed to improve connectivity for premises unable to access broadband services of 30 Megabits per second or greater, primarily across rural areas of Northern Ireland. Table 1 shows the resultant increased connectivity. The project, managed by the Department for the Economy (DfE), had public funding of £150m, originally allocated as a result of the Confidence and Supply agreement between the DUP and the Conservative Government, along with additional funding.
- [Belfast Region City Deal](#)
- 7.13 City Deals are bespoke packages of funding and decision-making powers negotiated between Central Government and local authorities. The deal secures a £15m secured through the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

## 8.0 OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

### [Telecommunications and Broadband](#)

- 8.1 The telecommunications market in Northern Ireland, as in the rest of the UK, is fully privatised and independently regulated on a national basis by the Office of Communications (Ofcom). The Conservative and DUP Agreement and UK Government financial support for Northern Ireland acknowledges the need to build on Northern Ireland's strong communications infrastructure in boosting the Northern Ireland economy.
- 8.2 City Deals are bespoke packages of investment from Central Government and the BRCD partners of more than £850 million. The ambitions for inclusive growth will be delivered through the following pillars of investment:
- Innovation and Digital - Achieving world leading competitive advantage in key sectors: building our innovation and digital capability - facilitating invention, commercialisation and widespread adoption as a driver of economic prosperity and increased well-being. (£30 million of investment will deliver a series of

Tourism and Regeneration - Boosting tourism and regenerating our region – creating world-class visitor attractions and investing in towns and cities to provide a year-round destination that will provide stand out in international markets;

Infrastructure- Connecting people to opportunity and services through enhanced and sustainable infrastructure; and

Employability and skills - Putting in place arrangements to enable a constant pipeline of talent to support the growth created by the BRCD investments and ensure that the right skills are available within the region to support the emerging job opportunities.

SONI is the electricity transmission system operator for Northern Ireland. The transmission grid safely brings power from generators and sends it to NIE Networks' distribution system. They then supply electricity to every home, farm, community and business in Northern Ireland.

8.4 SONI has a crucial role to play in the implementation of Northern Ireland's Energy Strategy and climate change legislation which sets a target of an average of at least 80% of the electricity coming from renewable sources by 2030.

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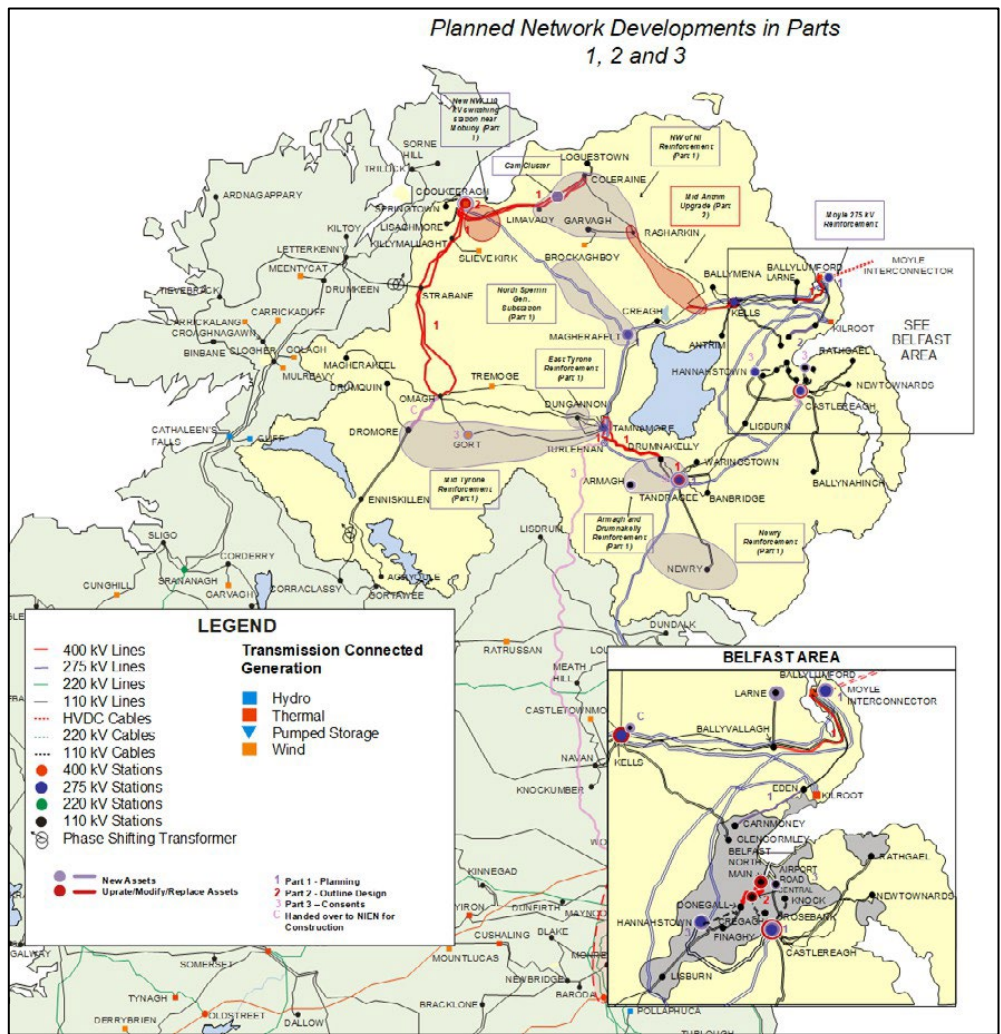
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- 8.5 SONI has set out a plan-led approach to achieving this ambition via the Shaping Our Electricity Future Roadmap. The original roadmap was updated to outline what further changes are required to the electricity system to ensure Northern Ireland can deliver 80% RES-E by 2030. The updated roadmap was published in July 2023 and is available on the SONI website. A key pillar of this Roadmap is the development of the transmission system and network.
- 8.6 The transmission grid and its infrastructure need to be made stronger and more flexible to transport the increases in clean energy generation which is expected to be seen this decade. It also needs to be secure so that consumers have the high quality and reliable electricity supply. This infrastructure upgrade is the most significant in its scale and impact since rural electrification and it is a mission-critical step on the journey to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. Delivering this transformation to enable a cleaner energy future is the plans defining mission.
- 8.7 The projects outlined in the plan will ensure the transmission grid is fit for the future, providing for Northern Ireland's environmental, societal and economic aspirations. They are critical to enabling infrastructure in the realisation of the Northern Ireland Energy Strategy and Climate Change Act.
- 8.8 The ten-year plan presents projects that are expected to meet the operational needs of the transmission network. The plan also outlines future needs that may drive future potential projects.
- 8.9 Of particular note for the Borough is the planned Rathgael 110 kV Structures Replacement. The existing 110 kV structures at Rathgael are to be replaced due to the condition of the existing assets.
- 8.10 Ards and North Down borough is situated within the South East Planning Area by SONI. The South-East planning area comprises all areas within the 275 kV double circuit ring around Lough Neagh, as well as Greater Belfast, South Antrim and County Down. This area is characterised by its relatively high demand, particularly in the Greater Belfast area. There are two large conventional power stations, Ballylumford near Larne and Kilroot near Carrickfergus. Wind generation makes up a small proportion of installed capacity.



**Figure 8 Planned network developments in Parts 1, 2 and 3**



Source: The Transmission Development Plan Northern Ireland 2023 -2032, Figure 6

# 9.0 CROSS BOUNDARY POLICY CONTEXT

- 9.1 In developing the public utilities policies account has been taken of the local policy context as it relates to the emerging LDP's of the three neighbouring Councils, each of which are at different stages in the formulation of their own LDP:
- Belfast City Council (BCC);
  - Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC); and
  - Newry Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC).

**Figure 7 - Neighbouring Councils position in relation to Public Utilities**

Neighbouring Council	Position
Belfast City Council (BCC)	The BCC draft Plan Strategy was formally adopted on 2 May 2023.

	<p>Policy ITU 1 – Telecommunications development This policy seeks to enable the telecommunications industry to operate in a way that meets the demands of modern technical connectivity whilst keeping the visual and environmental impact of telecommunications equipment to a minimum.</p> <p>Policy ITU 2 – Water and sewerage infrastructure This policy seeks to support the relevant statutory authorities in meeting the demands of planned growth and addressing existing constraints in the interests of sustainable development. It aims to encourage greater efficiencies in water demand and sustainable solutions to deal with waste water and surface water</p> <p>Policy ITU 3 – Electricity and gas infrastructure This policy therefore seeks to support the relevant statutory authorities in meeting the demands of planned growth and addressing existing constraints in the interests of sustainable development.</p>
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC)	<p>Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council adopted its Local Development Plan 2032 Plan Strategy on 26 September 2023.</p> <p>Strategic Policy 22: Telecommunications and Other Utilities - The Plan will support development proposals that: a) Facilitate the delivery of sustainable telecommunications and other utilities infrastructure requirements to meet need over the Plan period, encouraging future proofing to adapt to technological change; and b) Minimise any visual intrusion and environmental impacts to protect both the rural and urban landscape, and natural and historic environment.</p>
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC)	<p>Newry, Mourne and Down District Council launched their Draft Plan Strategy on 27 June 2025. The Policy approach for Policy TCU1 Control of Telecommunications Development, which continues the existing policy approach and Policy TCU2 Future Proofing of New Developments for Telecommunications Infrastructure, supports the inclusion of necessary infrastructure in new development. Policy TCU3 Public Services and Other Utilities contains the policy framework for new and extensions to public services, and other utilities.</p>



- 9.2 Throughout the LDP process, it has been important to take the position of other councils, and particularly our neighbouring councils, into account. The Council has engaged with each neighbouring council's POP consultation as well as the DPS consultations of Belfast City Council and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council.
- 9.3 Professional officers from the LDP team also take part in a number of cross council forums including the Metropolitan Spatial Working Group and the Development Plan Working Group.
- 9.4 Most recently, online engagement on the Council's draft Plan Strategy was held with the three neighbouring councils in March 2025. This included discussion around the proposed growth strategy, strategic housing and employment land allocation, settlement hierarchy, strategic approach to climate change and mitigation, alongside operational policies. This included the identification of specific cross-boundary issues.

## 10.0 PREFERRED OPTIONS PAPER

- 10.1 The Council's Preferred Options Paper, (POP) published in 2019 was the first formal stage in the preparation of the LDP for the Borough. It was designed to promote debate in relation to key strategic planning issues arising in the area. The POP identified 42 key planning issues and examined options for addressing these issues. In each case, a preferred option was highlighted and the rationale for selection of this option was given.
- 10.2 The POP also includes a review of the existing operational planning policies, largely contained within the suite of Planning Policy Statements. This review stimulated public debate on whether the existing policies are still suitable or whether a different approach would be more appropriate to meet local circumstances.
- 10.3 Following a minor revision to the online version of the POP, the 12-week consultation period was relaunched and therefore the total consultation period from the official launch was 19 weeks.

### POP Representations

#### **Key Issue 13: To facilitate development of utilities and telecommunications without compromising the natural environment**

- 10.4 Telecommunications – The preferred option is 13: Adopt approach to utilities and telecommunication development in line with regional policy - ensuring the applicant provides detailed information on mitigation measures to ensure the visual and environmental impact of development are minimised.
- 10.5 This approach will help to ensure that the Borough will benefit from improved connectivity and performance whilst keeping the impact of the related infrastructure

to a minimum. Applicants should provide details of mitigation measures relating to the design and siting of all proposals. Mast and site sharing should be encouraged to help to limit the visual intrusion, also the provision for telecommunications systems in the design of other forms of development will be required. In order to reduce any potential negative effects within sensitive areas the use of sympathetic design and colour will be encouraged.

- 10.6 69.57% of respondents to the POP consultation agreed that this was the correct approach. Statutory consultees were also supportive of this option.

#### **Key Issue 14: Cemetery provision**

- 10.7 Cemeteries – The preferred option is 14a: Identify and safeguard specific locations in the Borough for new or extended cemetery and other end of life development based on projected need and capacity over the Plan period with a complementary policy in relation to proposals on un-zoned sites.
- 10.8 Additional provision for cemeteries, crematoria etc., may also be proposed in other areas. Burial type will have an impact on the amount of space required, for example, less space will be required for the interment of ashes. It is therefore considered prudent to develop complementary policy to address proposals coming forward on sites which have not been formally designated through the LDP process.
- 10.9 For further details on the POP consultation, please see the Preferred Options Consultation Report, dated November 2021.

## **11.0 CONSULTEE AND COUNCILLOR ENGAGEMENT**

- 11.1 In order to meet the requirements of Planning Act relating to the need for the Plan Strategy to take account of the RDS, other policy and guidance issued by the Department and other relevant government strategies and plans, Council has engaged key consultees representing relevant Central Government departments and agencies.

#### **Consultee responses**

- 11.2 The DFI Planning response to the POP was largely positive, with the following key points raised:
- Approach to Key Issue 13 the Council should consider the interrelationship between public utilities, employment, industry, and economic development.
- 11.3 Other comments of note from statutory consultees are referenced below:

- DFI Rivers reiterates that utilities, cemetery and waste development should not be considered in areas which are at risk from flooding and any new development has the potential to increase flood risk;
- Vodafone and Telefonica (O2) have included suggested text for the LDP Plan strategy and policy in relation to telecommunications infrastructure and promotion of better mobile connectivity;
- NIE Networks welcomes and supports the Council's overall aim for Public Utilities to facilitate development of utility infrastructure whilst minimising impact on visual amenity and the environment however, there is a need for reasonable flexibility within policy. Regarding the necessary mitigation measures, NIE suggested that only those proposals likely to result in significant adverse effects or likely significant effects on the environment will require mitigation measures. Developer contributions need to be carefully considered to ensure that community benefit is not diluted;
- Belfast City Council welcomes the flexible approach to potential provision for cemeteries and crematoria in the context of cross boundary significance. This approach was also welcomed by Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council;
- SONI highlights that many of the existing transmission lines already travel through AONBs and any proposal for works for the purpose of repairing and renewing these lines in AONBs should be supported in policy to ensure the secure and reliable supply of electricity across the Borough and Northern Ireland. The approach to the development of utilities and telecommunications is welcomed;
- Department for the Economy- Energy recognises that it is important that planning approvals for new premises ensure that appropriate connectivity is provided for at the outset. This will be relevant to the Council, given the expectation in the POP that the number of households in the Borough will rise from 65,638 in 2015 to 70,100 by 2030; and
- Natural Environment Division suggest the consideration and location of Public Utility proposals should be informed by an up- to-date Landscape Character Assessment. The potential impact on designated natural heritage sites and wider biodiversity must also be considered.

11.4 No reasonable alternatives have been identified. The strategic approach to facilitating development of utilities and telecommunications was considered in Key Issue 14 in the POP, no alternative options were identified at that stage. Comment taken from SA engagement maintain the policy approach in SPPS and PPS 10 and the approach in 'A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland' (APSRNI), regarding community needs which may also be of relevance.

- 11.5 The Appraisal for cemetery provision took account of the Council obligation regarding burial space and a reasonable alternative was not appraised. An alternative was considered at the POP stage and appraised under Key Issue 14 in the Interim SA, which found that the preferred Option A, 'Identify and safeguard specific locations in the Borough for new or extended cemetery and other end of life development, based on projected need and capacity, over the Plan period, with complementary policy to be the most sustainable Option.

#### Council Engagement

- 11.6 Representatives from relevant Council departments have also been engaged to ensure that due account has been taken of Council's Community Plan, as well as other Council strategies and initiatives. Officers from the LDP team have taken part in a series of Community Plan Thematic Group meetings and engagement events. Furthermore, members of the Community Plan team have also attended LDP workshops and sustainability appraisal meetings.
- 11.7 The Planning Act requires the Plan Strategy to be adopted by resolution of the Council, following approval by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). Accordingly, Elected Members have also been engaged in the development of draft Plan Strategy, to ensure that the document is generally aligned with Council's strategic priorities. This engagement was facilitated through a meeting in October 2019, and the Members were broadly in agreement
- 11.8 Member engagement took place at workshops on 15 October 2019. There was broad agreement on the approach. There were questions posed such as - Can we insist on undergrounding cables? Can we ask developers to pay extra for cosmetic enhancements? There was appreciation of the importance of visual impact, archaeological impact of undergrounding cables and the importance of digital technologies.

#### Development Management Team

- 11.9 Development Management colleagues consider that existing policy is working well. It was suggested that domestic scale communication systems could on occasion cause difficulties in some residential areas so additional detail would be welcomed for that type of proposal.

## 12.0 SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

- 12.1 The formal Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process was undertaken by the LDP team and Shared Environmental Services (SES) in March and April 2024. The Councils preferred policies and proposals were appraised against reasonable

alternatives. The process proved useful in further refining policies in relation to sustainability objectives.

- 12.2 Post Sustainability Appraisal (SA), a number of amendments to policy were made and brought before Planning Committee for agreement in 2024, with final approval secured at a Special Planning Committee meeting held on 20 January 2025 and ratified at the full Council meeting on 29 January 2025.

## 13.0 DRAFT PLAN STRATEGY APPROACH

- 13.1 The fundamental approach of the draft Plan Strategy is to support the aims and objectives of the RDS and the SPPS by providing a strategic policy framework that focuses on the sustainable management of waste. In relation to telecommunications and other utilities the policy approach is to facilitate the development of such infrastructure, in an efficient and effective manner, whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum.
- 13.2 The draft Plan Strategy has been informed by the POP responses and all of the other methods of engagement that are described above. The following is a summary of the policy amendments and additions that are being put forward in consideration of all of the evidence gathered to date.

### Telecommunications and Utilities Infrastructure Strategy

- 13.3 The Telecommunication and Utilities Strategy facilitates the development of telecommunications, digital services and utilities infrastructure, including a sustainable approach to support sustainable economic growth, whilst minimising the visual and environmental impact of telecommunications and utilities infrastructure particularly within high sensitivity areas within the Borough. This will be achieved through;
- The use of up-to-date information on the availability of utilities infrastructure within the Local Development Plan (LDP) when allocating new development;
  - The application of appropriate key site requirements for digital and utilities infrastructure as required, within the Local Policies Plan (LPP); and
  - The application of operational planning policy.
- 13.4 Operational Policy includes:
- Policy AND OC1 – Overhead Cables;
  - Policy EI 1 - Electricity and Energy Infrastructure; and
  - Policy TEL 1 - Control of Telecommunication and Infrastructure Development.

## Cemetery and Burial Space Strategy

13.5 The Strategy for cemeteries and burial spaces is to safeguard existing cemeteries and facilitate new or extended cemeteries or burial spaces, to meet the needs of the Borough, over the Plan period. This will be achieved by:

- Protecting all existing cemeteries and burial spaces from inappropriate development;
- Identifying new cemetery provision at dLPP stage as required; and
- The application of operational planning policy.

13.6 Operational policy includes:

- Policy CEM 1 - Cemeteries and Burial Space.

## 14.0 SOUNDNESS

14.1 The LDP has been prepared to meet the tests of soundness as set out in the DFI Development Plan Practice Note 6: Soundness (Version 2, May 2017). The draft Plan Strategy, insofar as, it relates to public utilities and waste subject policies and other relevant policies in the document is regarded as sound, as it is considered to have met the various tests of soundness as summarised below (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Consideration of Soundness**

Procedural Tests	
<b>P2</b>	The public utilities and telecommunication policies have evolved from the POP, POP consultation Report and Consultee, Development Management and Councillor engagement as described in earlier sections of this document.
<b>P3</b>	The public utilities and telecommunication policies have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal. Further details are included in the Sustainability Appraisal Report.
Consistency Tests	
<b>C1</b>	The public utilities and telecommunication policies have taken account of the RDS in particular RG3, they implement a balanced approach to telecommunications infrastructure that will give a competitive advantage. Refer to paragraph 2.5 of this document.

<b>C2</b>	The public utilities and telecommunication policies have taken account of our Community Plan, particularly outcomes 4 and 5. Refer to paragraph 8.5 of this document.
<b>C3</b>	The public utilities and telecommunication policies have taken account of regional strategic objectives as contained within the SPPS, paragraph 6.239, relating to sustainable development.
<b>C4</b>	The public utilities and telecommunication policies have taken account of the existing development plans within Ards and North Down, ongoing Council initiatives and the neighbouring council context.
<b>Coherence and Effectiveness Tests</b>	
<b>CE1</b>	The public utilities and telecommunication policies have taken account of the emerging LDP's of our three neighbouring Councils, and it is not considered to be in conflict with them.
<b>CE2</b>	The public utilities and telecommunication policies are founded on a robust evidence base which includes the baseline information, the POP and responses to it and subsequent engagement with statutory consultees.
<b>CE3</b>	The monitoring framework within Chapter 26 illustrates how public utilities will be managed throughout the Borough. The effectiveness of the draft Plan Strategy public utilities and telecommunication policies will be monitored both in terms of the supply and demand.
<b>CE4</b>	The public utilities and telecommunication policies will be reviewed at Plan Review stage.

## Annex A

Ards and North Down District Council: Settlements served by Wastewater  
Treatment Works  
Version: June 2024

Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Works	WwTW Data				WwTW Network / Catchment	Comment
		WwTW Current Planning Status	Estimation of Capacity based on Growth Factor			Network Current Planning Status	
			3%	5%	10%		
Bangor	North Down						North Down catchment includes Bangor, Ballyfrenis, Cotton, Donaghadee, Groomsport, Millisle & Orlock. <b>See Network Issue Notes 1 &amp; 3 below.</b>
Newtownards	Ballyrickard						Ballyrickard catchment includes Ballybarnes, Ballystockard, Craigantlet, Comber & Newtownards. <b>See Network Issue Note 1 &amp; 3 below</b>
Ballygowan	Ballygowan						<b>See Network Issue Notes 1 &amp; 3 below.</b>
Comber	Ballyrickard						Ballyrickard catchment includes Ballybarnes, Ballystockard, Craigantlet, Comber & Newtownards. <b>See Network Issue Note 1 &amp; 3 below</b>
Donaghadee	North Down						North Down catchment includes Bangor, Ballyfrenis, Cotton, Donaghadee, Groomsport, Millisle & Orlock. <b>See Network Issue Notes 1 &amp; 3 below.</b>
Holywood	Kinnegar						<b>See Network Issue Notes 1, 3 &amp; 4 below.</b>
Portaferry	Portaferry						<b>See Network Issue Notes 1, 3 &amp; 4 below.</b>
Balloo	Killinchy						Killinchy catchment includes Balloo, Killinchy & Whiterock. <b>See Network Issue Notes 1, 3 &amp; 4 below.</b>
Ballyhalbert	Ballyhalbert Victoria						Ballyhalbert Victoria catchment includes Ballyhalbert, Glastry & Portavogie. <b>See Network Issue Notes 1 &amp; 3 below.</b>
Ballywalter	Ards North						Ballywalter, Ballywhisken and Carrowdore now served by Ards North WwTW <b>See Network Issue Notes 1 &amp; 3 below.</b>









Carrowdore	Ards North						Ballywalter, Ballywhisken and Carrowdore now served by Ards North WWTW <b>See Network Issue Notes 1 &amp; 3 below.</b>
Cloughey	Cloughey (Retention Tank)						<b>See Network Issue Notes 1 &amp; 3 below.</b>
Crawfordsburn	Seahill						Seahill catchment includes Crawfordsburn, Grays Park, Helens Bay & Seahill. <b>See Network Issue Notes 1 &amp; 3 below.</b>
Greyabbey	Greyabbey						<b>See Network Issue Notes 1 &amp; 3 below.</b>
Groomsport	North Down						North Down catchment includes Bangor, Ballyfrenis, Cotton, Donaghadee, Groomsport, Millisle & Orlock. <b>See Network Issue Notes 1 &amp; 3 below.</b>
Helen's Bay	Seahill						Seahill catchment includes Crawfordsburn, Grays Park, Helens Bay & Seahill. <b>See Network Issue Notes 1 &amp; 3 below.</b>
Killinchy	Killinchy						Killinchy catchment includes Balloo, Killinchy & Whiterock. <b>See Network Issue Notes 1 &amp; 3 below.</b>
Kircubbin	Kircubbin						<b>See Network Issue Notes 1 &amp; 3 below.</b>
Millisle	North Down						North Down catchment includes Bangor, Ballyfrenis, Cotton, Donaghadee, Groomsport, Millisle & Orlock. <b>See Network Issue Notes 1 &amp; 3 below.</b>

Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Works	WwTW Data				WwTW Network /	Comment
		WwTW Current Planning	Estimation of Capacity based on Growth Factor			Network Current Planning	
			3%	5%	10%		
Portavogie	Ballyhalbert Victoria						Ballyhalbert Victoria catchment includes Ballyhalbert, Glastry & Portavogie. <b>See Network Issue Notes 1 &amp; 3 below.</b>
Seahill	Seahill						Seahill catchment includes Crawfordsburn, Grays Park, Helens Bay & Seahill. <b>See Network Issue Notes 1 &amp; 3 below.</b>
Whiterock	Killinchy						Killinchy catchment includes Balloo, Killinchy & Whiterock. <b>See Network Issue Notes 1, 3 &amp; 4 below.</b>
Ardmillan	The Oyster Yard					*	The Oyster Yard catchment includes part of Ardmillan. <b>See Network Issue Note 3 below.</b>
Ardmillan	Tullynakill Road					*	Tullynakill Road catchment includes part of Ardmillan. <b>See Network Issue Note 3 below.</b>
Ballybarnes	Ballyrickard						Ballyrickard catchment includes Ballybarnes, Ballystockard, Craigantlet, Comber & Newtownards. <b>See Network Issue Note 1 &amp; 3 below</b>
Ballycranbeg	Ballycranbeg					*	Ballycranbeg catchment includes Ballycranbeg & Rubane. <b>See Network Issue Note 3 below.</b>
Ballydrain	Ringneil					*	Ringneil catchment includes Ballydrain & Lisbane. <b>See Network Issue Note 3 below.</b>
Ballyfrenis	North Down						North Down catchment includes Bangor, Ballyfrenis, Cotton, Donaghadee, Groomsport, Millisle & Orlock. <b>See Network Issue Notes 1 &amp; 3</b>

							below.
Ballygalget	Ballygarvigan					*	Ballygarvigan catchment includes part of Ballygalget. <b>See Network Issue Note 3 below.</b>
Ballystockart	Ballyrickard						Ballyrickard catchment includes Ballybarnes, Ballystockard, Craigantlet, Comber & Newtownards. <b>See Network Issue Note 1 &amp; 3 below</b>
Ballywhiskin	Ards North						Ballywalter, Ballywhiskin and Carrowdore now served by Ards North WwTW <b>See Network Issue Notes 1 &amp; 3 below.</b>
Cotton	North Down						North Down catchment includes Bangor, Ballyfrenis, Cotton, Donaghadee, Groomsport, Millisle & Orlock. <b>See Network Issue Notes 1 &amp; 3 below.</b>
Craigantlet	Ballyrickard						Ballyrickard catchment includes Ballybarnes, Ballystockard, Craigantlet, Comber & Newtownards. <b>See Network Issue Note 1 &amp; 3 below</b>
Glastry	Ballyhalbert Victoria						Ballyhalbert Victoria catchment includes Ballyhalbert, Glastry & Portavogie. <b>See Network Issue Notes 1 &amp; 3 below.</b>
Grays Park	Seahill						Seahill catchment includes Crawfordsburn, Grays Park, Helens Bay & Seahill. <b>See Network Issue Notes 1 &amp; 3 below.</b>
Kearney	Kearney (Retention Tank)					*	<b>See Network Issue Note 3 below.</b>
Kilmood	Kilmood					*	<b>See Network Issue Note 3 below.</b>
Lisbane	Ringneil					*	Ringneil catchment includes Ballydrain & Lisbane. <b>See Network Issue Note 3 below.</b>
Loughries	Loughries					*	<b>See Network Issue Note 3 below.</b>

Settlement	Wastewater Treatment Works	WwTW Data				WwTW Network /	Comment
		WwTW Current Planning	Estimation of Capacity based on Growth Factor			Network Current Planning	
			3%	5%	10%		
Orlock	North Down						North Down catchment includes Bangor, Ballyfrenis, Cotton, Donaghadee, Groomsport, Millisle & Orlock. See Network Issue Notes 1 & 3 below.
Rubane	Ballycranbeg					*	Ballycranbeg catchment includes Ballycranbeg & Rubane. See Network Issue Note 3 below.
Ardkeen	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	No public sewerage network available.
Ballyboley	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	No public sewerage network available.
Ballyeasborough	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	No public sewerage network available.
Kirkistown	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	No public sewerage network available.
Six Road Ends	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	No public sewerage network available.

Key to Current WWTW and Network Planning Status		Key to WWTW Status based on Local Development Planning Growth Factors	
	Development permitted - Capacity Available		Works has 'Reasonable Capacity'
			Works is 'At or reaching Capacity'
	Development on new connections -		Works has 'Insufficient Capacity'
* Drainage Area Plan Model does not exist for this small settlement. Status based on			

## Network Issue Notes

### Note 1

NI Water's sewerage network capacity mapping tool and sewer network modelling activities have identified capacity issues in parts of the wastewater networks.

Wastewater networks affected include Ballyhalbert Victoria, Ballyrickard, Ballywalter, Cloughey, Greyabbey, Killinchy, Kinnegar, Kircubbin, North Down, Portaferry and Seahill. As a result, negative planning responses may be provided by NI Water in parts of these catchments. NI Water has identified parts of the network where Storm Overflows (SOs) are classified as Unsatisfactory Intermittent Discharges (UIDs). These SOs act as safety valves to prevent out of sewer flooding during rainfall events which may cause internal flooding of houses and business and environmental pollution. When SOs are operating more frequently than they should they are classified as UIDs.

NI Water can consider the provision of positive planning responses where developers can demonstrate (including calculations):

1. Like for like development
2. Extant previously approved development (where NI Water has given a positive response)
3. Where the development will offer a reduced loading on the sewer network, which may include storm separation and/or attenuation (may be subject to Article 154). In areas where there are constraints within the wastewater network, but there is still capacity at the WwTW it may still be possible to find a bespoke drainage solution to accommodate development. This would be identified by NI Water's solution engineering team working with the developer through the Wastewater Impact Process, and any solutions identified would be developer led and funded.

### Note 2:

Drainage Area Plans (DAPs) are planned for delivery in the second half of PC21 and the outputs will be used to inform capital works solutions. The delivery of any capital works solutions will be considered for future business planning (i.e. for PC27), and will be subject to prioritisation. This prioritisation process is undertaken with NIEA and other key stakeholders, and the delivery of specific projects during PC27 is dependent on a successful outcome from this process, and funding availability.

DAPs planned for delivery in the second half of PC21 include Cloughey.

### Note 3:

Status based on analysis of existing Area Plan settlement boundaries. Should any the settlement boundaries change as a result of the Local Development Plan (currently under development), headroom capacity status will be re-assessed and could be subject to

change.

**Note 4:**

NI Water WwTW upgrades Scheduled for PC21 delivery.

Upgrades of the Kinnegar and Killinchy Wastewater Treatment Works are included within our PC21 investment programme.

Delivery of these projects is subject to all statutory approvals being in place, land acquisition (where appropriate) and the availability of funding. NI Water is working closely with the Department for Infrastructure on the funding required to facilitate the delivery of our capital investment programme for the remainder of the PC21 Price Control period (2024 – 2027).

**General Notes:**

Quality assurance/Quality control checks are conducted on NI Water corporate wastewater data sets to ensure accuracy. The Wastewater Headroom Capacity spreadsheet is compiled using information obtained from Annual Information Returns and is the best available information at this time, but it may change and will be revised annually. Changes may occur as the result of network modelling activities, planned WwTW and network upgrades or compliance issue arisals. Any significant changes occurring between the annual updates will be notified directly to the Council.

Developing a Drainage Area Plan involves two stages: the Drainage Area Study (DAS) and the Needs and Options stage.

- The DAS typically takes 2-3 years to complete and involves constructing a calibrated and validated sewer network model using CCTV survey work and flow monitoring surveys.
- The Needs and Options stage involves assessing various sewer upgrade options and running scenarios for different design rainfall events.

The sewer network model simulates a 25-year design horizon and takes into account growth, urban creep, and climate change.

The model outputs are reviewed by NI Water's environmental regulator, NIEA, and discharge consent standards must be met via capital works network upgrade solutions. Capital work identified through this process will be put forward to the prioritisation process for inclusion in NI Water's Business Plans for the PC27 period (2027/28 – 2032/33).

The DAS sewer model serves several essential purposes, including identifying areas where sewers are operating above their design capacity, developing appropriate solutions to address capacity issues, assessing the effectiveness of various options for informing capital works, as well as assessing the current capacity of the sewer network for serving new developments.

