

Local Development Plan 2032 Draft Plan Strategy

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

Non - Technical Summary



**Ards and
North Down**
Borough Council

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Local Development Plan 2032

Draft Plan Strategy

September 2025

Sustainability Appraisal Non-Technical Summary

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Consultation Arrangements

Pre-consultation

The Council is launching the draft Plan Strategy (DPS) four weeks in advance of a formal eight-week period of consultation. This pre-consultation period shall run from 18 September 2025 to 16 October 2025.

Formal Consultation

The formal consultation on the DPS shall commence for an eight-week period on the 17 October 2025, closing at 4.30pm on 15 December 2025.

Representations can also be submitted during the consultation period regarding the associated appraisal documents, namely the draft Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating the Strategic Environmental Assessment), the draft Habitats Regulations Assessment, draft Equality Impact Assessment and draft Rural Needs Impact Assessment.

Representations received after the closing date will not be considered.

During the formal consultation period, the Council's LDP team will host a series of drop-in public consultation events and information sessions. Further information on these events will be publicised via the Council's website, social media channels and local newspapers.

Availability of the Draft Plan Strategy

The DPS document together with its supporting documents, including the Sustainability Appraisal, is available to view on the Council's website
<https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/resident/planning>

These documents are also available to view at the following Council offices during office hours:

- City Hall, The Castle, Bangor, BT20 4BT
- 2 Church Street, Newtownards, BT23 4AP

The DPS and supporting documents can be supplied in alternative formats; please submit your request and requirements to the above postal addresses or by emailing the LDP team at LDP@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

How to Respond

Representations are welcomed to the DPS and supporting documents as follows:

Online (preferred)

<https://ards-northdown.govocal.com/en-GB/>

Email

planning@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

Post

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1. Purpose and Context of the Sustainability Appraisal Report

The Planning Act¹ requires anyone involved in making or managing Local Development Plans to do so with the aim of ‘furthering sustainable development’. It also requires them to check how sustainable their Local Development Plan is.

A Sustainability Appraisal looks at how a Local Development Plan might affect people, the environment and the economy. It includes a ‘Strategic Environmental Assessment’, which the law also requires². Strategic Environmental Assessment is a way to check how new plans or policies might affect the environment, and to make sure those impacts are considered before any big decisions are made.

The purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal report is to:

- Look at and explain the main likely impacts of the Local Development Plan and any reasonable alternatives that were also considered
- Give consultees, organisations, community groups and the public a good chance early on to share their opinions on the Sustainability Appraisal carried out so far.

The Sustainability Appraisal is documented in the following reports:

1. The Sustainability Appraisal scoping report
This looks at the current environmental conditions in the area and highlights the main sustainability challenges – ‘key sustainability issues’. It sets up a framework to measure how the development plan might perform and explains how the plan will be assessed.
2. The Sustainability Appraisal report.
This introduces the plan and the area it covers, shows how it connects with other policies, and outlines the method used to assess it. The report looks at different plan options, highlights key impacts, and explains how these findings shaped the final plan strategy. It also reviews the combined effects of the plan and describes how progress will be tracked. Supporting details are included in the appendices.

2. The Ards and North Down Borough Council Local Development Plan

The Local Development Plan is principally a land use planning policy document that will guide the future use of land in the Borough. It will allocate appropriate land for differing types of land use and will set out the main planning requirements to be met in respect of particular zoned sites and designations.

The purpose of the Local Development Plan is to:

- Apply regional planning policies at the local level
- Inform the general public, communities, statutory authorities, public bodies, developers, representative organisations and other interested parties of the policy framework and land use proposals that will be used to guide development decisions and determine proposals in the Borough up to 2032,
- Be the primary consideration in the determination of planning applications for the development or use of land.

This allows people to know what to expect in terms of change, and the locations where development will be encouraged.

¹ Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (Sections 5, 8(6) and 9(7))

² The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004

The Local Development Plan comprises of two development plan documents:

1. The Plan Strategy
2. The Local Policies Plan

The purpose of the Ards and Down LDP is to provide the overall strategic and spatial vision for the future of the Borough through to 2032. It will help shape the future of our Council area and plays an important role in assisting other plans and strategies to achieve their outcomes. The Local Development Plan sets out how the Council will respond to local priorities; how it will meet the social, economic and environmental challenges.

The LDP:

- Sets out a vision and objectives for the development and growth of Borough up to 2032;
- Identifies broad locations for development.
- Sets clear policies that guide decisions on planning applications.
- Indicates how the Plan will be implemented and shows how progress will be monitored.

The Local Policies Plan forms the second stage of the plan making process. The Local Policies Plan will provide site specific policies and proposals, including settlement limits, land use zonings and environmental designations. The Local Policies Plan will not be brought forward until the Plan Strategy has been adopted.

In addition to the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan, the Council may publish other documents such as planning guidance, advice notes and information to assist developers and applicants in the planning process.

The Local Development Plan must also take account of the regional policy context set by the NI Executive and central government Departments. The following regional or local strategies and plans are overarching and form a backdrop to the Local Development Plan. These were also considered in the preparation of the Sustainability Appraisal.

- Programme for Government (PfG)
- Regional Development Strategy
- Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland
- Sustainable Development Strategy
- Regional Transportation Strategy - Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future
- Regional Water Strategy - Sustainable Water – A Long- Term Water Strategy for Northern Ireland 2015-2040
- UK Marine Policy Statement
- Draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland 2018
- Planning Policy Statements
- A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland
- Supplementary Planning Guidance
- The EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030
- The Biodiversity Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020 (July 2015)
- Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy 'Delivering Resource Efficiency' (Oct 2013)
- 'Lifetime Opportunities - Government's Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy for Northern Ireland' (Nov 2006)
- A Guide to the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 for Public Authorities (Revised)
- Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment 2000 (NILCA) (1999)
- Northern Ireland Regional Landscape Character Assessment (2016)
- Northern Ireland Regional Seascape Character Assessment (Jan 2014)
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI) (Jan 2022)
- Energy Strategy – path to Net Zero Energy – Action Plan

- Belfast Region City Deal

Council Plans:

- Corporate Plan 2024-2028 - 'A Sustainable Borough'
- Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development 2018-2030
- Integrated Arts and Heritage Development Strategy 2018-2023
- Food Destination Development Plan 2023 - 2027
- Estates Strategy
- Tree and Woodland Strategy 2021-2032
- Roadmap to Sustainability 2021-2028
- The Big Plan for Ards and North Down
- Climate Adaptation Plan

A wide range of other plans, programmes, policies and strategies were also reviewed in the Sustainability Appraisal. These are documented in the Sustainability Appraisal scoping report.

Ards and North Down Borough Council shares a land or water boundary with three neighbouring Councils:

- Belfast City Council,
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, and
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

Ards and North Down Borough has a coastline that connects it to the sea, and its watercourses and rivers systems also lead to the sea. Therefore, the Local Development Plan must also take into account how it might affect the marine area.

To deal with issues that affect more than one Council area, Ards and North Down Borough Council will keep working with its neighbouring Councils, other nearby Councils and the DAERA Marine Division. Together, they will discuss shared challenges and agree the best ways to include them in the Local Development Plan. This teamwork is especially important for meeting goals in the Regional Development Strategy and making sure neighbouring Councils' policies work well together.

3. Sustainability Appraisal Scoping

The Council first shared the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for public and consultee feedback in 2019, along with its Preferred Options Paper.

Before beginning the Sustainability Appraisal of the draft Plan Strategy in early 2024, the Scoping Report was reviewed and updated to include more recent evidence and to reflect the comments and feedback received during that earlier consultation.

Characteristics of the Area

The social, economic and environmental features of the Plan area have been presented across 14 sustainability topics.

For each topic, the report explains the wider context (such as international and national influences) then provides the latest evidence available. It also looks at what might happen if a new Local Development Plan isn't put in place.

The main sustainability challenges for the Borough are presented as 'Key Sustainability Issues' for each topic. Table 1 below shows some examples of these.

Table 1. Examples of Key Sustainability Issues

Topic	Examples of Key Sustainability Issues
1. Health and Well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population trends indicate an ageing population in the Borough. There will be an increasing need to create accessible means for older people to engage in physical activity to prolong their healthy lives. The Borough has an accessible natural environment, particularly to the coast and sea, with numerous open spaces, walking and cycling trails. Baseline information, recorded for BMAP, however points to a deficit of open space, sport and outdoor recreation provision. In general, when compared to the overall population of NI, measures of health are better in the Borough across most of the indicators used for measuring population health. There are however inequalities in health and well-being, with most measures of health and life expectancy being significantly worse in the most deprived areas.
2. Strengthening Society (Community)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80% of our residents live in the northern 25% of the Borough and the remaining population is quite dispersed with a quarter of the population in rural areas. This can result in some individuals and communities experiencing rural isolation. There is a need to promote social inclusion through appropriate and accessible shared space and applying place making to make areas inclusive for all backgrounds, abilities and income levels. Local representatives and groups can help to identify the needs and experience of different parts of our society which can be recognised through Community Planning. The LDP can help to deliver measures identified through Community Planning.
3. Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The increasingly ageing population, combined with decreasing average household sizes may increase demand for smaller housing units. Affordable housing is required for a variety of housing types and sizes. Housing need is greatest in the settlements of Bangor, Newtownards, Holywood and Comber, however a substantial proportion of waiting list applicants are in rural areas. 20% of households within Ards and North Down experience fuel poverty. New housing should be low carbon and energy efficient to help reduce the problems of fuel poverty.
4. Education and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite the declining birth rate, there is projected growth in the need for special school places and a potential need for additional specialist accommodation. Although the Borough has, in general, a high level of educational achievement in comparison to the NI average, achievement is not consistent across the Borough. In some areas, more than 40% of working age adults have no qualifications, or low levels of qualification. To respond to changing opportunities in the context of COVID-19 and the UK exit from the EU, there is a need to upskill / reskill people in employment and to support people that are unemployed, underemployed or economically inactive to upskill / reskill.
5. Economic Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and zoning appropriate land for development is a vital part of creating the right conditions to create and sustain economic activity that meets local employment needs whilst considering opportunities for regeneration. There is a need to support and enhance the diversity, vibrancy and vitality of town centres and the wider area, particularly in respect of

	<p>effects initiated by the Covid-19 pandemic. This approach is needed to also attract investment and higher-skilled people to the Borough.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed new employment locations should be readily accessible by active travel and/or public transport. Ards and North Down has a number of natural assets which are particularly suited to activity tourism (golf, angling, sailing and watersports, beaches and other water-based activity). It also has a strong built and cultural heritage foundation for cultural tourism. However, growth must be balanced with preserving the characteristics that make these sites so attractive.
6. Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Onshore wind has historically been the dominant renewable energy source, but a diversity of technologies will be needed for a sustainable energy mix. Support for enabling renewables and diversification within the market is required to help meet commitments of the Climate Change Act. Grid reinforcement is required to facilitate the growth of renewable energy generation. Growing a circular economy and implementing the waste hierarchy that advocates prevention, and reuse of waste before recycling are key elements within DAERA's draft Green Growth and draft Environment Strategies Derelict/contaminated land sites may be available for appropriate reuse, but it is important that any risks associated with contamination are considered and addressed as part of the planning and redevelopment process.
7. Physical Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minerals, including valuable minerals, are an important natural resource and their responsible exploitation is supported by Government. The minerals industry makes an essential contribution to the Northern Ireland economy and to quality of life, providing primary minerals for construction and as a valued provider of jobs and employment, particularly in rural areas. Available, workable mineral resources which are of economic or conservation value should be safeguarded and not be allowed to become constrained by other forms of development. High quality agricultural land is a valuable and finite resource. Within the Plan area, there are areas of agricultural land comprising some of the best and most versatile in NI. Soil quality across the Council should be protected using effective conservation measures, due to a lack of specific legislation protecting soils at a regional or local level.
8. Transport and Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliance on the car is high, but a significant number of households do not have access to a private vehicle and are reliant upon public transport, taxis or walking and cycling. Although there are bus and rail services in the Borough, the number of people using public transport or active travel to get to work or school is below the NI average. For journeys to work of less than 2km, the car is the dominant mode of transport. Measures are needed to help encourage active travel or more sustainable modes of transport and to reduce reliance on the car. Measures may be needed that focus on the issues faced by people living in the rural areas and more remote parts of the Borough.

9. Air	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Air quality in the Borough is generally good and the Borough is below the NI average for deaths related to respiratory illnesses. However, maintaining local air quality should be a consideration when zoning land for potential use or development so that inappropriate adjacent land uses are avoided. ▪ The A2 is an area of concern for air quality because of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀) emissions from road transport. ▪ Support for appropriate renewables will help further reduce reliance on traditional energy sources that cause air pollution, ▪ Ammonia is emitted from agricultural practices and in NI it has been identified as one of the main air pollutants because of the significant contribution that the agricultural sector makes to the regional economy. There is a need to reduce ammonia emissions from the agricultural sector.
10. Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CO₂ accounts for the largest proportion of total GHG emissions in NI. The LDP should support a low-carbon future in anticipation of new energy and climate change policies, as well as evolving and emerging energy technologies, including planning for electric charge up points. ▪ The LDP should promote and support the reuse and retrofit of existing buildings as a sustainable approach in the context of carbon cost and should encourage the integration of measures to enable adaptation to the effects of climate change into new development. ▪ It is likely that sea level rise, coastal erosion and storm surges will become significant problems for the Borough Council to manage. ▪ It is important to protect habitats, coastal areas, floodplains and peatlands, which act as natural adaptation measures for climate change, as well as providing habitat for local biodiversity.
11. Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ River water quality in the Borough is significantly lower than the NI average and no surface water catchments or groundwater bodies have achieved 'good' ecological status. There is a need to improve the water quality of all river waterbodies to achieve 'good' status (or better). ▪ Water quality in Belfast Lough and Strangford Lough is not achieving 'good' status and not all shellfish areas are meeting the guideline standards for microbiological and other contaminants. There is a need to reduce pollutants and contaminants entering the marine area. ▪ It is predicted that the risk and extent of flooding, particularly coastal flooding, will be increased by climate change. Development should be planned to avoid areas at significant risk from flooding, now or in the future, or where development may increase the flood risk elsewhere. ▪ NI Water has identified wastewater treatment works and wastewater network capacity constraints in several areas within the Borough. These may influence the potential for development in some settlements, or parts of settlements.
12. Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a statutory requirement for the Council to further the conservation of biodiversity in its functions. ▪ The Borough has a hierarchy of designated sites to protect its natural heritage resource. These designations range from International and European through to National level and include marine designations in the adjacent marine area. Local level sites are also identified in extant Area plans. ▪ Development pressure and inappropriate land use must be managed near all designated sites but also any priority habitat. This is particularly

	<p>important in and around Strangford Lough and the rest of the coastline, as it is a valuable natural resource providing ecosystem services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marine planning and its associated obligations need to be appropriately considered within the Local Development Plan, particularly as previous plans and frameworks may not have referred to coastal or marine matters.
13. Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Borough's landscape and seascape quality is regionally important for tourism and is attractive to investors for housing, recreation and commercial / business development. It is important to protect, conserve and enhance landscape character, even when areas may have been degraded. Strategic and local level approaches to landscape protection are required. Sustainable landscape management is likely to require new working partnerships, as many of the Landscape Character Areas are shared with neighbouring Councils. The Borough has 115 miles of coastline which contribute significantly to its character. With much of the coastline included within the AONB designation and contributing to various landscape and seascape character areas, protection of the seascape resource must be given careful consideration when considering projects or plans that may impact upon it.
14. Historic Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The historic environment and cultural heritage have a role in maintaining and enhancing the sense of place in our settlements and rural locations. This can be supported by building design that recognises local character in both urban and rural locations. Heritage assets are at risk from vacancy, neglect, decay, and development pressures. The innovative and conservation-led reuse of existing historic building stock should be promoted. There is recognition of the economic role of the historic environment in heritage-based tourism and promoting awareness, involvement and understanding of the historic environment. Its value in providing authentic and attractive locations for film and television production should be protected and expanded on. Traffic pollution, poor air quality and noise pollution may adversely affect the historic environment.

What Might Happen Without the Local Development Plan

The Sustainability Appraisal looks at what could happen if no new Local Development Plan is made, to help understand the possible future without the plan. The existing development plans that apply to the Borough are:

- Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 – for the legacy Ards Borough Council area;
- North Down and Ards Area Plan 1984-1995 - for the legacy North Down Borough Council area;
- Belfast Urban Area Plan for a part of Knocknagoney which is now with Ards and North Down Borough area;
- draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP)³ – for the legacy North Down Borough Council area; and
- Bangor Town Centre Plan 1995.

These Plans were prepared a long time ago and do not reflect the new Council, nor do they take in to account the Community Plan '*The Big Plan*'.

³ 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.

In the absence of a new Local Development Plan, there is a risk that development will not reflect today's needs or support delivery of the Community Plan, the Council's Corporate Plan and other relevant Plans, Policies, Programmes and Strategies. There may be a higher risk of inappropriate development occurring in parts of the Borough. Opportunities may be missed to deliver more sustainable development and protect, conserve or enhance local sites of particular importance.

Sustainability Objectives

The sustainability objectives were created during the scoping stage and provide the framework for the Sustainability Appraisal.

The Sustainability Objectives are:

1. To improve health and well-being;
2. To strengthen society;
3. To provide good quality, sustainable housing ;
4. To enable access to high quality education;
5. To enable sustainable economic growth;
6. To manage material assets sustainably;
7. To protect physical resources and use sustainably;
8. To encourage active and sustainable travel;
9. To improve air quality;
10. To reduce causes of and adapt to climate change;
11. To protect, manage and use water resources sustainably;
12. To protect natural resources and enhance biodiversity;
13. To maintain and enhance landscape character; and
14. To protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage.

4. Appraisal of Preferred Options Paper

The first phase of the Local Development Plan took place in 2019 when the Council published its Preferred Options Paper. The purpose of the Preferred Options Paper was to stimulate debate and encourage feedback to inform the development of the Local Development Plan.

A Sustainability Appraisal was carried out for the options in the Preferred Options Paper, and an interim report was published for public feedback at the same time. The Council has used comments received on the preferred options paper and the Sustainability Appraisal interim report to update the evidence that helped shape the Sustainability Appraisal of the draft Plan Strategy

The Appraisal of Strategic Alternatives

'Reasonable Alternatives' are the different realistic options available to a Council for delivering the Objectives of its Local Development Plan. They should also be consistent with other aspects of the plan as well higher-level plans and policies.

Several of the strategic options and alternatives for policy were appraised in the Sustainability Appraisal Interim Report at the Preferred Options Paper stage. Therefore, for many of the strategic policies in the draft Plan Strategy, it was not necessary to look at reasonable alternatives. Strategic alternatives that were appraised for the draft Plan Strategy included the strategic housing allocation (two options), and the policy approach for Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (Local Designations), Statements of Significance and Non-Designated Heritage Assets (each two options).

5. Appraisal of Draft Plan Strategy

Assessment of Alternative Options

The Local Development Plan Vision and Plan Objectives, the Spatial Growth Strategy and the Strategic and Operational Policies in the draft Plan Strategy were appraised for their significant effects. Other than the four alternatives noted above, no reasonable alternative was identified for most of the preferred options. This most common reasons for this were:

- The option is required to uphold the aims of current legislation, regulations, or directives;
- The option is required to uphold the aims or policy approach of regional planning policy or the regional development strategy, or other regional or local plans or strategies;
- The Interim Sustainability Appraisal had already established that the option was the most sustainable option or the only realistic option.

Each option was assessed against the sustainability framework to ensure consistency in the approach. Where options work together to deliver the same overall objective, they were appraised collectively as a group.

A summary of the potential effects of the draft Plan Strategy, for each Sustainability Objective, is provided in Section 4 of the SA Report. An overview of the total effects of the draft Plan Strategy is presented in Table 2 below. This table includes 'potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects' which describes how the objectives may support each other, for example providing good quality housing contributes to good health and well-being and will help support the Community Plan.

Table 2. Cumulative Impacts of the Plan

SA Objective	Effect of draft Plan preferred options (total effects)	Potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects
1. Improve health and well-being	<p>The provision of high quality, attractive, energy-efficient residential development in sustainable locations supported by design which focuses on amenity, safety and internal permeability will help establish attractive living and working environments that benefit the health and well-being of the Borough's population.</p> <p>Enabling a diversity of employment in appropriate locations whilst preserving the important amenity value of the Borough's landscapes and coastline will also deliver positive effects on quality of life. The total effect is significant positive.</p>	<p>The approach to ensuring that cycling and walking are viable and attractive travel choices where new development in settlements is proposed may provide wider benefits to people's health from increased physical activity and reducing transport emissions. This may be enhanced through the emerging Eastern Transport Plan that is expected to identify and deliver improvements in walking/cycling infrastructure.</p> <p>Options that promote a transition to renewable/low carbon technologies for heating and transport may help reduce emissions of aerial pollutants in built-up areas, leading to improved health and wellbeing outcomes.</p> <p>The cumulative effect of the relevant policies working together, along with the Community Plan is to strengthen the significant positive effect.</p>
2. Strengthen society	<p>Establishing defined settlement limits (rather than encouraging dispersed development throughout the Borough) creates focal points for communities.</p> <p>Allocating the greatest proportion of housing growth to the principal settlements and small towns will help to strengthen and consolidate them, and will support sustainable, balanced communities with positive outcomes for society. The diversity and quality of villages and small settlements will be sustained and maintained by enabling local development at an appropriate scale and character and maintaining the local facilities and services that are needed to support rural communities.</p> <p>Policy that seeks high-quality design and maximum surveillance of public areas will help</p>	<p>The Housing Strategy and operational policy HOU 3 make provision for affordable housing and a more diverse housing mix. This approach will enable people from different community and income backgrounds to live together and should help to support balanced, sustainable communities.</p> <p>The cumulative effect of all the relevant policies working together, along with the Council's Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy and the Community Plan 'The Big Plan', is to strengthen the significant positive effect.</p>

SA Objective	Effect of draft Plan preferred options (total effects)	Potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects
	<p>provide a feeling of security in built up areas and open spaces.</p> <p>Policy requirements for accessibility and pedestrian priority in the design of all new development will benefit everyone in society and reduce inequality.</p> <p>Protecting community facilities, and providing for publicly accessible areas of open space, play areas and sports facilities create shared spaces for community interaction. The total effect is significant positive.</p>	
3. Provide good quality sustainable housing	<p>The preferred options implementing the Housing Strategy for new housing and accommodation aim to deliver a variety of household types and sizes in the Borough, including a minimum proportion of affordable housing. They are aimed at delivering the current and projected future household requirements in the Borough.</p> <p>The preferred options aim to provide high quality, attractive and sustainable residential areas and accommodation units which meet the specific and locally-identified needs of the population and that are built to inclusive principles. These aspects will help support people of all ages and stages of life.</p> <p>The SA identifies factors in the current baseline that may constrain the delivery of new housing, therefore the overall effect is minor positive.</p>	<p>The principles of placemaking and good design help to enhance the quality of housing on a wider basis. Over time this approach may reduce instances of residents having to leave an area due to lack of suitable accommodation. This will become increasingly important in the context of an ageing population.</p> <p>These policies have a synergistic effect on health and well-being and strengthening society and will help strengthen the effect of those positive effects.</p> <p>There are also synergies with economic development, and accessibility to a local workforce as envisaged in the Council's Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy.</p> <p>More detailed analysis will take place at Local Policies Plan stage including a review of existing zonings, urban capacity sites, and an up-to-date assessment of infrastructure capacity, in particular relating to wastewater treatment works upgrades and network capacity. This may require some adjustments be made to the allocation.</p> <p>The cumulative effect is to remove the uncertainty and strengthen the minor positive effect to significant positive.</p>
4. Enable access to high quality education	<p>The Spatial Growth Strategy aims to maintain sustainable populations in urban and rural areas and corresponding patterns of appropriate service provision.</p> <p>The approach aims to avoid population change impacting access to school places.</p> <p>While the LDP is not the main mechanism for delivering access to education, many of the policies make a positive contribution to this objective. Effects are indirect and arise through the spatial strategy which is evidenced through the settlement evaluation and is informed by the range of available services (including schools) and transport links. The Economic Development Strategy has a strong and co-dependent relationship with 3rd level education and skills training provision.</p> <p>The total effect is minor positive.</p>	<p>The LDP will support the delivery of education facilities identified through EA Area Plans, and community facilities. It may also help to support the Council's Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy in strengthening the links between education providers and industry. Synergistic effects may also emerge through funding and specific projects delivered through the Belfast Region City Deal.</p> <p>There are synergies between sustainable economic growth, health, transport and accessibility and a stronger society. These cumulative effects work together to reinforce the minor positive effect.</p>

SA Objective	Effect of draft Plan preferred options (total effects)	Potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects
5. Enable sustainable economic growth	<p>Providing the conditions for the creation of a range of job types that are accessible across the Borough, including to rural areas, has significant positive effects on enabling sustainable economic growth.</p> <p>The 'town centre first' approach maintains the vitality and viability of the Borough's centres and identifying SELs will protect economically significant sites from incompatible uses that could undermine their strategic function to attract investment and economic development.</p> <p>The Spatial Growth Strategy, Economic Development Strategy and Tourism Strategy have been informed by an evidence base that evaluates the character, role and function of the Borough's settlements in order to maintain or enhance their potential.</p> <p>The approach also recognises the Borough's distinctive and attractive landscapes and cultural and environmental assets and the importance that these have in the Borough's economy. The total effect is significant positive.</p>	<p>The adoption of a LDP which directs certain types of development to centres or zonings which are located in areas with favourable infrastructure and access to the Regional Strategic Transport Network, is a key aspect of delivering on the RDS.</p> <p>The policies can also help to deliver on the aims and objectives of the Council's Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy and DFE's emerging Regional Sustainable Regenerative Tourism Strategy to strengthen the economic and tourism base.</p> <p>The preferred options should also help support the delivery of the emerging Green Growth Strategy and Circular Economy Strategic Framework and can be strengthened by projects delivered through the Belfast Region City Deal, including the Bangor Waterfront strategic regeneration project.</p> <p>The approach recognises the importance of the Borough's ports, harbours and marinas and can help to deliver expansion and diversification of marine activities and industries, in conjunction with the emerging Marine Plan.</p> <p>All policies in the draft Plan Strategy work together and cumulatively with wider regional plans and strategies to strengthen the effect of the significant positive effect.</p>
6. Manage material assets sustainably	<p>Sustainable economic and housing growth has positive effects through facilitating efficient provision of material assets (e.g. waste collection and recycling services, energy generation and energy transmission, telecommunications and other public utilities, etc.).</p> <p>Introducing policy requiring the incorporation of energy efficiency measures and decentralised, renewable and zero or low-carbon energy systems into new development will help achieve greater energy efficiency and a more diverse and geographically distributed renewable energy base.</p> <p>Policy to protect the Borough's natural environment, species, landscape and seascape may present challenges in the delivery of some types of renewable energy, or above-ground telecommunications and electricity infrastructure. However, it would not preclude the delivery of regionally significant infrastructure.</p> <p>The total effect is minor positive.</p>	<p>The adoption of a LDP which will identify the areas where growth is projected and which manages growth sustainably will help to coordinate the provision of new/upgraded infrastructure. The approach will also help facilitate the provision of waste facilities that support the NI Waste Management Strategy: 'Delivering Resource Efficiency'. It will support wider regional strategies such as the emerging Circular Economy Strategic Framework and 'Zero Waste' ambitions.</p> <p>The incorporation of decentralised, renewable and zero or low-carbon energy systems in new development will help support the 'do more with less' approach of the emerging Energy Strategy. The LDP would be able to facilitate essential infrastructure required to support regional targets for decarbonisation, as promoted by the Energy Strategy and emerging Green Growth Strategy.</p> <p>Forward planning and coordination between service providers will help to reduce capital costs.</p> <p>These cumulative effects work together to reinforce the minor positive effect.</p>
7. Protect physical resources and use sustainably	<p>The purpose of the LDP is to provide a framework for growth; new development will lead to inevitable changes in land use and incremental loss of land resource.</p> <p>However, the Spatial Growth Strategy aims to consolidate and strengthen existing settlements and to prevent sprawl into the wider countryside. This approach makes efficient use of the land resource through more sustainable patterns of development.</p> <p>The preferred options seek to safeguard the Borough's natural environment, species, landscape and seascape and are protective. While policy may create additional challenges in the exploration and extraction of minerals in areas designated, it will also benefit the objective by protecting the semi-natural land resource.</p> <p>The total effect is mixed/uncertain.</p>	<p>While the purpose SGS 6: Management of Housing Land Release is not to protect land as a resource, it will indirectly serve to do so. Strategic and operational policy encourages the reuse of existing buildings and the redevelopment of brownfield sites to reduce the uptake of greenfield land. Likewise, the purpose of the Countryside Strategy is primarily to protect landscape and rural character, but it also helps maintain the greenfield land resource by controlling sprawl.</p> <p>The Council's exceptional soil and climate are a key asset for agriculture. The Council's Food Destination Development Plan has been developed to develop and capitalised on the links between agriculture, food, culture and tourism.</p> <p>Policies which support sustainable minerals extraction can have an indirect positive effect on jobs and economic growth, including through the supply chain and equipment sectors.</p> <p>A review of existing land use zonings and identification of potential new zonings will be</p>

SA Objective	Effect of draft Plan preferred options (total effects)	Potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects
		undertaken at the LPP stage. This will be supported by other studies / evidence to update the baseline, including urban capacity studies, employment land monitoring and the presence of any valuable mineral reserves. These cumulative effects will move the balance of the mixed/uncertain effect to a minor positive effect.
8. Encourage active and sustainable travel	<p>The principle of spatial planning which establishes focal points or areas for similar land uses creates the conditions to allow walking and cycling, or public transport routes to be established between residential areas, employment areas and open space areas for leisure/recreation.</p> <p>Specific policy to promote active travel and sustainable transport focuses on improving permeability and establishing walking and cycling links, and layouts that afford priority to pedestrians, cyclists, and other wheeled users as part of a wider approach to place-making incorporating safety and amenity. This strategic approach acts positively for achieving the objective.</p> <p>However, many of the parts of the Borough are not well served or accessible by public transport and, although the preferred options will control development in the countryside, new development will continue to occur in rural areas where these opportunities will not be present.</p> <p>The total effect is minor positive.</p>	<p>The adoption of a new LDP which will identify the areas where housing and employment growth is projected helps to inform the DFI's emerging Eastern Transport Plan and Active Travel Delivery Plan and will allow service providers to plan routes and investment more effectively.</p> <p>National policy for transitioning to electric vehicles will not alleviate congestion. The approach to ensuring that new development in settlements is accessible by active travel will work in conjunction with the measures identified in DFI's future Plans to encourage active travel and discourage car use. Such measures include improved provision of routes/options and the implementation of parking strategies to reduce reliance on cars, particularly for short, local journeys and edge-of-settlement to town centre journeys. It will also support the aims of current Regional plans such as 'Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future' to enhance regional public transport connectivity. Positive secondary effects may occur on health and well-being.</p> <p>These cumulative effects work together to reinforce the minor positive effect.</p>
9. Improve air quality	<p>Growth and new development, particularly housing and economic development, is likely to generate emissions directly as well as indirectly from associated transport. While baseline air quality is generally good in the Borough, with no AQMAs currently declared, the Borough's population has a high reliance on cars / private transport. Vehicle emissions at congested points on commuter routes are an identified issue.</p> <p>Policy for residential and economic development in settlements encourages and supports accessing active and sustainable travel, potentially reducing reliance on the car. This is much less feasible outside settlements.</p> <p>The preferred options promote and encourage energy efficiency measures and decentralised, renewable and zero or low-carbon energy systems which may reduce the emissions associated with new development.</p> <p>Behavioural change will be a key influence in reducing emissions.</p> <p>The total effect is uncertain.</p>	<p>All policies work together to cumulatively reduce the scale of negative effects and enhance positive effects. The preferred options promote the establishment of a sustainable movement pattern that seeks to reduce reliance on the private car, and fosters and supports active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling). This may help to initiate behavioural change to reduce reliance on cars as the preferred mode of transport in settlements, especially for short journeys under 2km.</p> <p>While the preferred options require incorporation of energy efficiency measures and decentralised, renewable and zero or low-carbon energy systems in new development where feasible, financial incentives to improve the performance of existing development delivered through Regional policy, such as the Energy Strategy and 'Net Zero' commitments are more likely to make perceptible reductions in the use of fossil fuels for heat and energy, and transport.</p> <p>Positive secondary effects may occur on health and well-being, biodiversity and climate change.</p> <p>While the LDP may help to create conditions which could reduce aerial emissions and improve air quality, the greatest influences on reducing emissions are beyond the scope of the LDP, and consequently the long-term effect remains uncertain.</p>
10. Reduce causes of and adapt to climate change	<p>The purpose of the LDP is to provide a framework for growth and the preferred options facilitate new development - housing, transport, facilities/services, industry/business, and agriculture – which are current sources of greenhouse gas emissions. Operating emissions from new development can be reduced or offset through the incorporation of energy efficiency measures and decentralised, renewable and zero or low-carbon energy systems as required under RE 2, however the</p>	<p>All the preferred options in the draft Plan Strategy work together to cumulatively reduce the scale of negative effects and enhance positive effects.</p> <p>Policies that protect areas of high landscape quality and sites or habitats of nature conservation importance will indirectly protect land and natural assets that have a role in mitigating and/or adapting to the effects of climate change, such as beaches and dunes, raised and blanket bogs, wetlands and flood plains. There is an overlap with</p>

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	<p>embodied carbon cost of new development is unlikely to be fully compensated for.</p> <p>Strategic Policy CC 1 provides explanation and direction to the operational policies that have been included in the LDP to help mitigate and adapt to climate change and increase local environmental resilience.</p> <p>These policies will help deliver sustainable patterns of development, will promote active travel and sustainable transport, will maximise carbon storage through protection of the natural environment, and will ensure that development in areas known to be vulnerable to the effects of climate change is avoided. The approach is also flexible and can respond to an evolving baseline.</p> <p>The total effect is minor positive.</p>	<p>some of the aims/objectives of DFI's FRMP and DAERA's RBMP, DAERA's draft Marine Plan and the draft NICCAP 3.</p> <p>While the preferred options require incorporation of energy efficiency measures and decentralised, renewable and zero or low-carbon energy systems in new development where feasible, improvement in the performance of existing development is also required. Increasing the extent of habitats that remove carbon from the atmosphere will also be required. These aspects are largely outside the scope of the LDP and will be led by Regional policy such as the Energy Strategy and 'Net Zero' commitments, the Environmental Improvement Plan and forthcoming Nature Recovery Strategy and relevant future Action Plans. The Council's Climate Adaptation Plan, Local Biodiversity Action Plan and Tree and Woodland Strategy may also make positive contributions.</p> <p>The greatest influences on reducing greenhouse gas emissions are beyond the scope of the LDP, and consequently the long-term effect remains minor positive.</p>
11. Protect, manage and use water resources sustainably	<p>Growth may place pressure on water resources through wastewater and storm water discharges. Impermeable surfaces such as roofs and parking areas can contribute to increased runoff rates and influence flooding which is a key issue in many parts of the Borough. Foul wastewater requires treatment prior to discharge.</p> <p>Directing new residential and economic development in accordance with the Spatial Growth Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy will encourage new development to be located in settlements, where water and wastewater infrastructure is already present and is generally able to accommodate the new development, while meeting the required treatment standards. However, there are currently constraints in NIW's wastewater network and treatment capacity in some settlements, or parts of settlements.</p> <p>The incorporation of SuDS, where possible, in all new development will help control and manage runoff and surface water at source.</p> <p>Housing and non-residential development in the countryside commonly requires private drainage arrangements. While new development will not be permitted to proceed to proceed where it would create or add to a pollution problem, the long-term operation / maintenance of private wastewater treatment systems such as septic tanks is outside the scope of the LDP.</p> <p>The total effect is mixed/uncertain.</p>	<p>The adoption of a LDP which will identify the areas where growth is projected and which manages spatial growth sustainably will help to inform the investment in and co-ordination of water supply and wastewater infrastructure upgrades (where necessary). The NI Water PC21 business plan indicates that several price controls will be required to rectify the problem of development constraints and it is not known when investment will be made available to address 'serious development restriction' in the Borough's affected areas.</p> <p>The requirement to carry out drainage assessments for applicable development will help to ensure that source control is given greater consideration from the earliest stages of design and accords with the actions identified in Sustainable Water - A Long-Term Water Strategy for NI. It may encourage 'soft' SuDS (which delivers multiple benefits) to be more widely employed,</p> <p>The preferred options also accord with the aims of DFI's FRMP and DAERA's RBMP and may help alleviate pressure on drainage networks. Cumulatively these actions may help to address some of the water quality issues in receiving waters, including the marine waterbodies of Belfast Lough and Strangford Lough, which are not achieving 'good' ecological status under the WFD Regulations.</p> <p>More detailed analysis will take place at Local Policies Plan stage including a review of existing zonings and an up-to-date assessment of infrastructure capacity, in particular relating to wastewater treatment works upgrades and network capacity. This may require some adjustments be made to the strategic housing allocation.</p> <p>The cumulative effects will move the balance of the mixed/uncertain effect to a minor positive effect.</p>
12. Protect natural resources and enhance biodiversity	<p>Development and growth is likely to result in pressure on greenfield sites and a degree of local biodiversity loss. Strategically directing the majority of new development to within settlements and encouraging the re-use of existing buildings in preference to new</p>	<p>The Borough's entire coastline overlaps or adjoins a European or International site. Policy and legislation protecting these coastal and inshore sites from significant effects will also indirectly protect the wider marine area. Where there is the potential for impacts on the marine area, consultation and liaison with DAERA will inform</p>

SA Objective	Effect of draft Plan preferred options (total effects)	Potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects
	<p>development will help to reduce the rate at which this loss occurs.</p> <p>However, much of the undeveloped zoned land is greenfield land and its eventual use is likely to result in loss of biodiversity. General policy for all development requiring the maximum retention of existing vegetation and trees will help to reduce this impact.</p> <p>Many of the Borough's areas designated for their nature conservation importance are aquatic, marine or otherwise water-dependent and effects from development may occur at a distance via downstream hydrological linkages.</p> <p>The preferred options to safeguard natural heritage have been developed in accordance with regional planning policy and statutory legislative requirements. The total effect is mixed/uncertain.</p>	<p>whether there is a requirement for a Marine License or other permitting that requires a joint authority approach.</p> <p>A review of the evidence base and identification of Key Site Requirements in the identification/review of zonings at LPP stage may help to identify and avoid the loss of habitat that takes a long time to be established and which is therefore more difficult to mitigate or compensate for. This may complement or help to deliver objectives of the Council's Local Biodiversity Action Plan and its Tree and Woodland Strategy in addition to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and the forthcoming [Regional] Nature Recovery Strategy. These elements will work cumulatively to support the preservation and enhancement of local biodiversity.</p> <p>The preferred options also include policy on open space and on green and blue infrastructure which may enhance and connect areas for wildlife. The policies to protect the landscape and to prevent pollution will also work to support this objective. This approach can help to deliver multiple synergistic benefits including to health and well-being, strengthening society, active and sustainable travel and water resources.</p> <p>These cumulative effects will help strengthen the minor positive effect.</p>
13. Maintain and enhance landscape character	<p>The strategic approach to confine the greatest proportion of growth to the principal settlements will help to safeguard landscape character. However, there will be a certain proportion of new development in the countryside and at smaller settlements including those on the coast.</p> <p>Strategic designations for landscape accompanied by policy provides direction on what can be accommodated in areas of particular landscape sensitivity. Areas of high landscape quality and the undeveloped coast will receive the strongest policy protection.</p> <p>General policy requiring design quality and respecting local character and distinctiveness for all development proposals will support the objective. More specific rural design policy for new development in the countryside will ensure that new development in the countryside is sited and appropriately designed to be visually integrated with its surroundings and does not cause a detrimental change to or further erode the rural character of an area.</p> <p>The total effect is minor positive.</p>	<p>Policies and legislation to protect natural resources and the historic environment also work cumulatively to support this objective.</p> <p>The quality of the landscape in the Borough is affirmed by the AONB status of Strangford and Lecale, which encompasses much of Strangford Lough and its surrounding area and covers 43% of the Borough. The AONB designation extends into the neighbouring Council area, in which it forms part of the Mourne Gullion Strangford UNESCO Global Geopark. The Strangford & Lecale AONB Management Plan is a key mechanism for coordinating effective management of AONB landscapes. Liaison with neighbouring Councils and aligning policy where there is potential for cross-boundary effects delivers secondary effects in respect of attracting tourism/visitors.</p> <p>The Council's Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy highlights the value and influence of natural and built heritage and promotes economic growth in sectors that can avail of - or complement - these assets. There are also synergistic positive effects on health and wellbeing from maintaining attractive landscapes.</p> <p>These cumulative effects help strengthen the minor positive effect.</p>
14. Protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage	<p>Development has the potential to conflict with the historic environment - including damage to, or destruction of, undiscovered buried archaeology. Settlement growth attracts a risk of incremental change contributing to cumulative effects on the setting of heritage assets.</p> <p>The preferred options in the draft Plan Strategy are protective towards identified / designated assets, in accordance with statutory requirements and legislation. Policy will also help to ensure that where there is a risk of buried archaeology being damaged or disturbed by new development, this can be</p>	<p>Policies which protect the natural environment, the landscape / countryside and the undeveloped coast work together to strengthen the protection towards the historic environment and the setting of historic features.</p> <p>The Council's Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy highlights the links between creativity and culture and the value and influence of natural and built heritage. It promotes economic growth in sectors that can avail of - or complement - the Borough's assets. Cultural heritage is also supported in the Council's Integrated Arts and Heritage Development Strategy and Food Destination Development Plan.</p>

SA Objective	Effect of draft Plan preferred options (total effects)	Potential Secondary, Synergistic or Cumulative Effects
	<p>avoided through archaeological assessment and evaluation.</p> <p>General policy on high quality design and the Countryside Strategy aim to deliver new development that not only respects and is appropriate to the site and surrounding context but contributes positively to the character of the area and creates or reinforces local identity and distinctiveness. The re-use of existing buildings is promoted and encouraged in preference to new development. The preferred options are protective of non-listed vernacular and locally important assets of heritage value and provide direction on the sensitive conversion and reuse of these assets.</p> <p>The total effect is minor positive.</p>	<p>Investment in tourism and industries such as film and television could help to enhance access to and understanding of heritage assets and stimulate heritage-led regeneration.</p> <p>The draft Plan Strategy can also facilitate the delivery of regeneration through Masterplans and Development Frameworks which could enable the restoration of old buildings, enhance access and deliver new shared spaces for culture, arts and creative industries. There are synergistic positive effects on strengthening society and sustainable economic growth through this approach.</p> <p>These cumulative effects will help to strengthen the minor positive effects to significant positive effects.</p>

The Council has prepared the draft Plan Strategy with the legislative and policy context of the Planning Act, the Regional Development Strategy 2035 and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement in mind and has therefore embedded sustainability in its approach from the outset.

Many potential negative effects have been avoided or minimised through the cross-referencing of strategies and policies. As a result, no potentially significant negative effects have been identified for any of the preferred options and no significant adverse effects are expected to arise as a result of the draft Plan Strategy.

Many of the minor negative effects that have contributed to a mixed/uncertain total effect will be reduced in scale through the application of other policies within the draft Plan Strategy at the project level, or can be addressed at the Local Policies Plan stage.

Limitations and Assumptions

During the appraisal of each Option, where possible, effects were predicted. In some cases, it was found that the effect will depend upon the type and scale of development and its location. Many of the proposals affect multiple locations, or locations for which boundaries have not been defined. This can make it difficult to determine at this stage whether overall effects are likely to be negative or positive. These effects may remain uncertain until detailed supplementary planning guidance and/or specific site proposals are known.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

A Habitats Regulations Assessment reports on the assessment of the proposals and policies in the draft Plan Strategy and its potential impacts on European sites and Ramsar sites. A draft Habitats Regulations Assessment has been published for consultation with the draft Plan Strategy.

European sites are Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas which were originally designated under the 'Habitats Directive' and 'Birds Directive' but which are now protected by local legislation following the UK's exit from the EU. Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance identified under the provisions of the Ramsar Convention and are protected by regional planning policy. In this report and in the Habitats Regulations Assessment, the term 'European sites' includes Ramsar sites.

A total of 31 European sites that have the potential to be connected to the Plan area were identified and examined in the draft Habitats Regulations Assessment.

The Habitats Regulations Assessment looked at threats to each European site, its condition and the potential impacts of the draft Plan Strategy proposals.

It was found that the draft Plan Strategy could have the potential to affect European sites through one or more of the following impacts:

- Habitat loss;
- Direct and indirect disturbance;
- Introduced species;
- Aerial emissions;
- Water pollution; and
- Hydrological change.

Significant effects could not be entirely ruled out for 27 of the European sites identified, therefore potential impacts on those sites were further assessed through a process called 'appropriate assessment'.

The appropriate assessment found that measures which are considered as mitigation have been included in the draft Plan Strategy. These measures will ensure that adverse effects on the integrity of European sites are avoided.

The appropriate assessment has concluded that the draft Plan Strategy will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

The Habitats Regulations Assessment remains in draft until the Local Development Plan is adopted. Following public consultation and independent examination of the draft Plan Strategy the Habitats Regulations Assessment will be updated and finalised as required, and published alongside the adopted Plan Strategy.

6. Outcome of Appraisal and Next Stages

Outcome of Appraisal

The Sustainability Appraisal process has helped influence the content of the draft Plan Strategy by contributing to the critical review of the policies and policy options including their reasonable alternatives. Through the Sustainability Appraisal process, preferred options for implementing strategic and operational policies were identified. In all cases the preferred option represented the most sustainable option.

Overall, significant positive sustainability effects are predicted to result from the draft Plan Strategy throughout the plan term and beyond, in relation to the sustainability objectives to:

- improve health and well-being.
- strengthen society.
- provide good quality, sustainable housing.
- enable sustainable economic growth.
- protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment.

It should be noted that in the case of the sustainable housing and historic environment Sustainability Objectives, the total effects have been raised from minor positive to significant positive through the cumulative impact of the plan.

Minor positive effects are identified for the Sustainability Objectives to:

- 4. enable access to high quality education.
- 6. manage material assets sustainably.
- 7. protect physical resources and use sustainably.
- 8. encourage active and sustainable travel.
- 10. reduce causes of and adapt to climate change.
- 11. protect, manage and use water resources sustainably.
- 12. protect natural resources and enhance biodiversity.
- 13. maintain and enhance landscape character.

Again, the total effects on these Sustainability Objectives have been enhanced in a positive way through the cumulative impacts brought about by the plan, and cumulative or synergistic effects with other Plans, Programs and Strategies.

The overall effect is uncertain for one of the Sustainability Objectives, the Objective to:

- 9. improve air quality.

The cumulative impact of the plan on the sustainability objectives is to reduce the range and scale of the minor negative impacts and enhance some of the minor positive effects, but some uncertainties remain. This reflects that a plan for growth is unlikely to reduce emissions from development and transport, however it does aim to provide conditions to encourage efficiency, transitioning to cleaner fuel sources and it helps support wider initiatives to encourage behavioural change.

No significant negative effects have been identified for any of the preferred options. As discussed in section 3.8, the draft Plan Strategy has been developed in recognition of Regional policy (the RDS and SPPS) which have sustainable development at their heart. The Council has been mindful of this legislative and policy context and therefore has embedded sustainability in the draft Plan Strategy preparation.

The overall impact of the draft Plan Strategy is a finding of **no likely significant effects on the environment**.

Measures which will help to reduce negative effects and enhance positive effects of the Local Development Plan include:

- Reviewing sites and zonings using up to date evidence and establishing key site requirements at the local policies plan stage;
- Environmental Impact Assessment or more specific Impact Assessments for qualifying projects will help to identify impacts and will propose mitigation, where it is required; Where necessary, Habitats Regulations Assessment at the project level will ensure that new development does not, on its own or in combination with other development, have a significant effect on the conservation objectives of European and International sites.
- Supplementary design guidance; and
- Supplementary planning guidance.
- Use of appropriate conditions / planning agreements

How has the Sustainability Appraisal influenced Plan Making

The entire plan-making process is one of decisions, change and fine-tuning in response to many factors, including the Sustainability Appraisal. Identifying and clarifying these changes is therefore a key element of the Sustainability Appraisal process as it shows how the plan-making process has been influenced, in particular how the plan has changed and what mitigation measures have been incorporated into the plan.

In summary, the Sustainability Appraisal has influenced the draft Plan Strategy by helped to draw out the interrelationships and cross overs between draft policies and identifying word changes to address potential policy gaps or to provide points of clarification.

Next Steps

The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and Sustainability Appraisal Report have been published alongside the draft Plan Strategy for consultation. Responses to the consultation may lead to changes to the draft Plan Strategy. If these changes are significant, they may need further appraisal against the Sustainability Appraisal framework.

Monitoring

Preliminary indicators for monitoring effects of the Local Development Plan have been identified for the most appropriate Key Sustainability Issues identified through the Sustainability Appraisal. These are aligned where possible with Local Development Plan and Community Plan monitoring.