

Place and Economy Department
Planning and Building Control

Your Ref: DPS

Our Ref: ANDBC LDP/DPS
(Please quote at all times)



Ms Leona Maginn, Principal Planner
Ards & North Down Borough Council
LDP Team
2 Church Street
Newtownards
BT23 4AP

Belfast Planning Service
Cecil Ward Building
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BELFAST
BT2 8BP

Tel: 028 90 500510

Date: 20 January 2026

Dear Leona,

**Ards and North Down Local Development Plan
Re-Consultation on Draft Plan Strategy**

I refer to your current re-consultation on your new Local Development Plan Draft Plan Strategy (dPS) and thank you for affording the Council the opportunity to comment on the documents. As you will recall, we submitted comments on your Preferred Options Paper (POP) and we acknowledge that the dPS is clearly derived from the proposed approaches set out in the POP. We have reviewed the dPS and would make the following comments at this time.

The dPS sets out your vision for the Borough and a number of key objectives for the new LDP. These cover a range of issues, under the primary headings of 'social', 'economic', 'environmental' and 'infrastructure', also taking account of wider sustainable development objectives. These then lead into general principles and operational policies for planning decision-making purposes. The overall approach to the dPS structure is logical and is supported.

The proposed growth strategy seeks to guide the majority of development proportionately to locations within a four-tier hierarchy of settlements, with Bangor City and Newtownards as the principal settlements, followed by a number of small towns, villages and small settlements. The strategic housing allocation apportions over 60% of housing growth to the two principal settlements and it is noted that the LPP stage will include a review of existing zonings, growth needs and potential capacities for all settlements to align with the settlement hierarchy. The proposed approach to the phasing of residential development is noted and it is agreed that the majority of new development should be focussed within the urban footprint of designated settlements and at appropriate densities to support services and make the most beneficial use of the finite land resource. The overall approach to the

growth strategy, including the settlement hierarchy, is considered to be appropriate, having particular regard to the existing scale/function of settlements and regional planning policy, as well as furthering sustainable development.

Further to the above, it is also important that economic growth is appropriate in scale, function and location. The dPS identifies two strategic employment locations in Bangor and Newtownards that align with the settlement hierarchy, as well as a number of legacy employment zonings at other locations and an acknowledgement of further employment uses that may be unzoned. This hierarchical approach is appropriate and it is noted that such zonings will be reviewed at the LPP stage.

From an environmental protection perspective, we note and support the strong commitment to sustainable development and climate change mitigation & adaptation. Similarly, the overall approach to natural heritage, green & blue infrastructure and flood risk management & SuDS is supported. We particularly welcome the inclusion of polices that provide protections for specific environmental designations relating to areas of landscape and nature conservation importance and note that these will also be reviewed as part of the LPP stage. In this regard, we note that there may be areas of cross-boundary interest and we will continue to discuss our approach with you as both LDPs continue to progress.

In overall terms, we note the proposed policy approaches across all the various strategic and topic areas and we support the main objectives and policy provisions. The approach largely aligns with that taken in our Plan Strategy and does not appear to present any specific concerns for us.

Continued joint discussion is required throughout all stages of the LDP process in both our jurisdictions to support a coordinated and mutually beneficial approach to strategic and cross- boundary issues. We look forward to continuing working with you on our respective LDPs as they progress. The published dPS and supporting information provides a strong basis for our continued joint working, including through the Metropolitan Area Spatial Working Group and other groups and forums.

I hope that the above comments are helpful and wish you all success in taking the dPS forward.

Yours sincerely

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Kate Bentley
Director of Planning and Building Control



Your Ref: LDP/DPS

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(Please quote at all times)

Director of Planning and Building Control
Kate Bentley
Place and Economy Department,
Belfast City Council,
9 Adelaide
9-21 Adelaide Street
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BT2 8DJ

Date: 21st November 2025

Ms Leona Maginn, Principal Planner
Ards & North Down Borough Council
LDP Team
2 Church Street
Newtownards
BT23 4AP

Via email: leona.maginn@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

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Kate Bentley
Director of Planning and Building Control