



Derry City & Strabane
District Council

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DERRY CITY & STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) 2032



DRAFT PLAN STRATEGY

Evidence Base Paper EVB 4: LDP dPS Vision and Objectives, December 2019

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DERRY CITY AND STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) 2032



EVIDENCE BASE PAPER EVB 4: LDP dPS Vision and Objectives

This Document is one in a series which comprises the evidence base that informs the preparation of the Derry City and Strabane District Local Development Plan (LDP 2032) Plan Strategy.

It builds upon the suite of thematic Topic Papers prepared and published alongside the LDP Preferred Options Paper (POP), which established the May 2017 baseline position and identified the key issues that needed to be addressed by the LDP.

This Vision & Objectives Evidence Base paper updates the baseline POP position and sets out the evidence base that has informed the strategy, designations and policies within the draft LDP Plan Strategy. Evidence has been informed by feedback from public consultation, discussions with Elected Members, input from statutory consultees, stakeholder groups, from other Departments within the Council, liaison with adjoining Councils and through the iterative Sustainability Appraisal process.

The Evidence Base is published as a 'supporting document' in accordance with Article 15(a) of the Planning (LDP) Regulations (NI) 2015.

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1.0 Introduction to Paper

1.1 This Paper provides background and supporting evidence on the evolution and final content of both the LDP dPS Vision and the Objectives. Specifically, the Paper:

- Considers the purpose and requirement for the Vision and Objectives, based upon the legislation, regulations and guidance;
- Re-visits the Vision & Objectives set out in the LDP Preferred Options Paper (POP), considers any comments received and how they have been considered;
- Sets out the Vision & Objectives in the LDP draft Plan Strategy (dPS); and
- Briefly considers the various appraisals in relation to those dPS Vision & Objectives.

2.0 Legislative and Policy Context

- 2.1 Article 8 of Part 2 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires that the Council must prepare a plan for the District, to be known as a Plan Strategy. The Plan Strategy must set out
- (a) the Council's objectives in relation to the development and use of land in its district; and
 - (b) its strategic policies for the implementation of those objectives...
- 2.2 Regulation 12 of the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (NI) 2015 deals with the form and content of a development plan document. However, it does not clarify or refer to the requirements of a vision or objectives.
- 2.3 Para 5.3 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for NI (SPPS) states that 'The preparation of Local Development Plans (LDPs)... are key to furthering sustainable development, implementing the SPPS, and realising the vision and aspirations of local communities.' Para 5.4 goes on to refer to 'focus on delivering spatial planning. This requires a positive and proactive approach to planning, and a coherent long-term policy framework to guide and influence future development across the region... It should also be visionary in setting out a clear expression for how areas should look and function into the future.
- 2.4 Development Plan Practice Note No. 7 (DPPN 7, paras 5.3 – 5.8) gives guidance on the content of the LDP Plan Strategy, stating that a 'council should clearly set out its vision for the plan area which may draw upon objectives set out in its current community plan. A council's objectives should be informed by an analysis of the characteristics of the area and its constituent parts and the key issues and challenges facing them. A council must also take account of the Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS 2035) and any policy or advice issued by the Department.'
- 2.5 In particular, para 5.4 of DPPN 7 states that the objectives of the PS should aim to:
- *reflect longer term local aspirations, based on a vision, objectives and strategic policies agreed to by the community and stakeholders;*
 - *provide a plan-led strategy specific to the area covered, to act as a basis for rational and consistent decisions about the use and development of land and identify interdependencies and relationships between places both within and across administrative boundaries;*
 - *provide a settlement hierarchy which identifies settlements and their role within the hierarchy in accordance with the RDS 2035 Spatial Framework*

Guidance and any policy or advice issued by the Department such as the SPPS and the current community plan;

- *allocate land for housing whilst taking account of the strategic objectives and guidelines contained in the RDS and any policy or advice issued by the Department such as the SPPS and the current community plan;*
- *facilitate economic development and the creation of employment whilst taking account of the RDS 2035 Spatial Framework Guidance and any policy or advice issued by the Department such as the SPPS, and the current community plan;*
- *facilitate sustainable patterns of growth and regeneration whilst promoting compact urban forms and protecting and maintaining distinctive local character and viability. This may include strategic zonings and/or policy areas where considered necessary;*
- *identify and define, as appropriate, transportation related proposals, whilst taking account of the RDS and regional transportation proposals contained in Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future (ESTF);*
- *conserve, sustain and enhance the area's environmental qualities, local distinctiveness and sites of environmental importance in terms of landscape character and diversity, wildlife and habitats, townscape and archaeology;*
- *promote the development of sustainable tourism, recreational and other community facilities that will positively contribute to the amenity and well-being of the population; and*
- *facilitate the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.*

2.6 Paras 5.5 and 5.6 go on to explain the purpose and role of the LDP PS objectives in the plan-led process:

'A PS should show how the objectives for a council area may be delivered and by whom, and when. This includes making it clear how infrastructure which is needed to support a PS will be provided and ensuring that it is consistent with other relevant plans and strategies relating to adjoining areas. A council should also aim to ensure that its PS is both realistic and deliverable taking into account the resources available and any potential constraints which may arise during the plan period. Furthermore, in order to allow for unforeseen circumstances e.g. withdrawal of funding or infrastructure proposals, a council should aim to incorporate a degree of flexibility within its PS to ensure that its objectives and strategic policies for its area can still be delivered.

- 2.7 *As the community plan should set out proposals for meeting local needs and services, it may also help a council to ascertain the implementation and delivery of particular proposals in the area and thereby help to justify certain policies and proposals contained in the PS. Furthermore a council must undertake comprehensive and reliable monitoring in order to establish how the objectives of the PS are being achieved and determine whether any changes are required to ensure the continued delivery of the PS. A council's considerations of its community plan as well as monitoring of the PS form part of the tests of soundness.*
- 2.8 Therefore, the LDP dPS Vision and Objectives have been prepared, based upon the research and analysis of the District's characteristics – established through the preparation of the District's Community Plan (SGP 2017) and the LDP POP / dPS (see its Chapter 2 / EVB 2), as well as taking account of the government policies / guidance and the Planning priorities identified by the elected Councillors. The Vision and Objectives have evolved – from the Community Plan, to the POP, consideration of representations received and ultimately into the version set out in the dPS.

3.0 LDP Preferred Options Paper (POP) Stage

LDP Vision and Objectives (POP)

- 3.1 At the LDP POP stage in May 2017, the Council's Vision for the District was that set out in our recent Community Plan – the inclusive Strategic Growth Plan for the Derry City and Strabane District (SGP). The LDP POP shared this Vision for the District, namely to be a:

thriving, prosperous and sustainable City and District with equality of opportunity for all.

- 3.2 The LDP is required to 'take account of' the Community Plan; the two documents are closely aligned, having been prepared at the same time (POP & SGP), with the same vision and priorities for the District to 2032, structured across the themes of Economy, Environment & Regeneration and Health & Community. The LDP is the spatial articulation of the SIGP / Community Plan, in that the LDP deals with the land use and place-making aspects of the various actions and priorities in the SIGP; therefore, the LDP will be an important vehicle for the implementation of the SIGP's vision for the District.
- 3.3 The preparation of the Council's SGP (Community Plan) had involved a co-design process and an extensive community and stakeholder consultation and input during 2015 to 2017, especially involving many meetings of Thematic Sup-Groups, public meetings, stakeholder engagement events and also commissioned research. The LDP has in turn utilised the findings and opinions of this SGP process, in order to assist in their alignment and direction towards addressing the identified needs and objectives for this District. The Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC) has undertaken research on behalf of the Council, to underpin the proposed strategic priorities and target growth levels. Therefore, the following Council / Region / SGP (Community Plan) / LDP documents were referenced as part of the Evidence Base for the LDP POP:

<http://www.derrystrabane.com/getmedia/5c932053-752b-4b54-9912-98a6c9dc06f0/Baseline.pdf>

<http://www.derrystrabane.com/Subsites/Community-Planning/Developing-our-Plan>

<http://www.derrystrabane.com/Council/News/Conference-presents-major-boost-to-North-West-Regi>

<http://www.derrystrabane.com/Subsites/LDP/LDP-Events/LDP-Pre-POP-Stakeholder-Event>

<http://www.derrystrabane.com/getmedia/5875f3e5-c3aa-4a7d-8f23-8265d76488f2/Strategic-Growth-Conference-Presentation-06-Dec-2016.pdf>

<http://www.derrystrabane.com/Council/News/Councils-publish-joint-report-exploring-challenges>

Proposed LDP Objectives – POP Stage

3.4 At POP stage, a series of Workshops with Councillors had discussed the vision and broad strategic objectives, as well as summarising the Growth Strategy Options in the POP. Arising from the above, Stakeholder / Consultee feedback and the various Councillor Workshop discussions, the POP stated that the LDP will aim to deliver the shared SGP / LDP vision through the following strategic economic, social and environmental objectives:

Economic

(a) Creating Jobs and Promoting Prosperity

- (i) To facilitate the creation of approximately 15,000 new jobs, based upon projected population increase, reduced unemployment rates and investment-driven growth, at all skill levels by 2032, at a variety of locations where they are accessible to all members of the community, including those without a private car.
- (ii) To accommodate particularly those sectors identified by the Council as targets for step-change growth, as well as those existing sectors identified for incremental growth and significant further job creation.
- (iii) To recognise and accommodate entrepreneurship and innovation for large, medium and small firms by attracting new firms, facilitating new business start-ups and accommodating expanding businesses, in urban areas and also in rural areas where appropriate location, type and scale.
- (iv) The need to recognise the importance of self-employment and home working, particularly in rural locations.
- (v) To recognise the North West's significant renewable energy resource and encourage the use of sustainable energy both as a means of generating money for the local economy, attracting investment in enterprise and providing sustainable and affordable lighting and heating for the population.

- (vi) To facilitate the City to capitalise on its role as a key cross border and international gateway providing access by road, rail, and sea, while similarly maximising the economic corridor potential for Strabane and the rest of the District of the cross border and A5 and A6 improvement schemes to the North West.
- (vii) Continue the high levels of co-operation between Letterkenny, Derry and Strabane as pursued by the Northwest Regional Development Group, to unlock the potential of the North West and consider opportunities to improve transport / accessibility and public services in sectors such as health and education.
- (viii) Continue the regeneration of the City and its promotion as a major tourist destination while respecting its heritage assets, exceptional landscape setting and unique walled core through sensitive development.

Social Development

(b) Accommodating People and Facilitating Communities

- (i) To further develop Derry as the core settlement and regional gateway city for the North West and Strabane as the main hub. A regenerated city should be the focus for administration, shopping, health, education, commerce, specialised services, cultural amenities and tourism within the North West. Strabane has the potential to benefit from its close proximity to Lifford, an administrative centre for Donegal County Council; strengthen its service provision to local communities and expand its tourism offer by working with our cross border neighbours.
- (ii) To protect and consolidate the role of local towns and villages so that they act as local centres for shops and community services meeting the daily needs of their rural hinterlands.
- (iii) To provide for vital and vibrant rural communities elsewhere, including in our small settlements, whilst protecting the countryside in which they live by accommodating sustainable growth within the countryside which reflects the extent of existing rural communities.
- (iv) To provide for approximately 12,000 new homes by 2032 in a variety of formats designed to meet the needs of families, including single parent families, small households, the elderly and disabled and single people, at sustainable locations accessible to community services, leisure and recreational facilities, for those people with and without a car. Housing schemes in Derry city and Strabane particularly will require imaginative and innovative design, including mixed use schemes, and possibly mixed tenure, to ensure that they link into the existing urban fabric.
- (v) To recognise the needs of both growing families and carers of the elderly and disabled by accommodating development which allows people to remain within their own communities while not adversely impacting on neighbours or the environment.

- (vi) To facilitate the development of new community facilities at locations accessible to the communities they serve, through a variety of modes of efficient public transportation in accordance with the community plan.
- (vii) To accommodate cultural differences between communities of all religious backgrounds, whilst promoting “shared spaces” to bring people together with equality of opportunity.
- (viii) To close the gap in quality of life for those living in deprived areas.

Environment

(c) Enhancing the Environment, Creating Places and Improving Infrastructure

- (i) To protect and enhance the natural and built environment to achieve biodiversity, quality design, enhanced leisure and economic opportunity and promote health and well-being.
- (ii) To build upon the existing urban assets / built heritage value, but also improving connectivity to existing and new urban soft and hard spaces, so as to achieve enhanced place-making.
- (iii) To accommodate investment in power, water and sewerage infrastructure, and waste management, particularly in the interests of public health.
- (iv) To improve connectivity between and within settlements and their rural hinterland through accommodating investment in transportation to improve travel times, alleviate congestion and improve safety for both commercial and private vehicles as well as more sustainable modes of transport including buses, walking and cycling.
- (v) To improve connectivity through telecommunication which both meets the needs of business and private households whilst reducing the need to travel.
- (vi) To enhance transport linkages across the North West particularly between Londonderry, Strabane and Donegal, to and from the air and sea ports and the distribution of traffic from and between transport corridors.
- (vii) To improve the public transport service and consider the more efficient integration of land use and transportation. The siting of new developments in locations well served by public transport will provide a sustainable choice of transport.
- (viii) Protect areas of high scenic value, undeveloped coastline and wetlands from inappropriate development. The attractive natural and historic setting of the City reinforces its uniqueness and brings benefits to the economy and society.
- (ix) Protect and enhance the network of open spaces in the North West. Opportunities should be taken for connections to an enhanced network of pedestrian paths, cycle-ways and ecological corridors

4.0 LDP Key Considerations

4.1 The POP set out a draft Vision (same as the Strategic Growth Plan (Community Plan) and twenty-five draft Objectives (8 Economic, 8 Social and 9 Environmental) and asked if people agreed with those Vision/Objectives, inviting any suggestions. Following on from the POP stage, a number of further consultations were carried out

4.2 **POP Representations:** A total of seventeen relevant responses were received, with a high proportion of these agreeing with the Vision and Objectives outlined at the POP stage; other representations highlighted:

- 1) DfI Strategic Planning noted that the vision should be worded in terms of spatial Planning and be more-locally focused and there was a need to consider making objectives more concise.

LDP Response: Comments taken on-board regarding the vision and this has been reworded. It is not considered appropriate to shorten or make objectives more concise - generally.

- 2) A Councillor agreed with vision, however noted that the Council must ensure that objectives do not differentially and negatively affect rural locations – which would impact upon the Council’s Vision for a District which provides “equality of opportunity for all.”

LDP Response: Comments taken on-board and objectives will be equality-proofed and monitored at 5 year review to consider if they are limiting opportunities for rural businesses, this will also be considered through Rural Needs Impact Assessment report. Comments regarding social development and quality of opportunity for all will also be monitored and consider as part of our EQIA.

4.3 **Consultee Liaison:** Consultees were generally satisfied with the vision and objectives and / or inputted their requirements prior to the POP.

4.4 **Selected Stakeholder Engagement:** There was a limited response to the Council vision and objectives specifically, at any of our stakeholder engagement events; however, comments and priorities were taken on board in the wording.

4.5 **Member Round-Table Discussions:** The Vision and Objectives were presented during the 2016 series of Member Workshops. Appropriate amendments were incorporated in the POP version.

The Vision and Objectives were not identified as one of the key issues to be discussed by Members at the Spring 2018 RTD Sessions.

- 4.6 **Senior Planners / Development Management Input:** It is important to have clearly thought-out Vision and Objectives, for the policies / designations and policies to seek to deliver, also for monitoring of effectiveness.
- 4.7 **Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Input:** As above, also stress the need to be in line with the SGP and Council's corporate objectives, including the growth ambitions and City Deal.

5.0 Draft Plan Strategy Stage

Overall

- 5.1 All relevant POP responses were considered in the development of the Vision and Objectives for the LDP PS. This section seeks to define the Council's Vision and Objectives and highlight our requirements to 'take account' of the Community Plan. Accordingly, the LDP dPS has developed an appropriately more spatial and District-specific Vision in line with responses received at the POP stage.

Vision

- 5.2 The LDP Vision has been revisited and, whilst still similar to the SGP Vision for the District, it now specifically names the Derry City and Strabane District, (rather than focussing on either Derry, Strabane and rural or Sperrins) and is worded to be pro-active (for balanced and appropriate development), and specifically includes land-use planning terms, (planning, balanced development and 'protecting our environment') whilst still retaining the important but secondary concepts of 'well-being' and 'equality of opportunity'. This should better reflect the objectives, aim and focus of the Council's LDP, as well as meeting the criticisms / suggestions of DfI.

Objectives

- 5.3 It has not been possible to reduce the number of objectives as it is felt necessary to have high-level strategic objectives for the LDP and Council's Planning generally, as well as a specific strategic objective for each of the main Planning subject areas / topics. Whilst, this may indeed mean challenges for later monitoring of the LDP, each of these subject areas / objectives is considered to be important to the Council and to the success of a balanced and comprehensive LDP.
- 5.4 Text has been added to reflect several comments about the categorisation of topics, that they are mostly cross-cutting rather than being either economic, social or environment. A new cross-cutting category has also been added to draw out the spatial priorities of Planning in accordance with the Regional Development Strategy (RDS 2035) and balanced with the aspirations of the Council for this District. The re-focussing of objectives also seeks to recognise the tone of comments from DfI to recent LDP draft Plan Strategies of other Districts.
- 5.5 The LDP PS Vision and Objectives have also been reviewed to consider other POP consultations, including the need for specific objectives relating to retail / town centres, minerals, flooding, waste and open space. The wording is also amended to reflect Members' comments on: a much better rural balance, self-

employment and home working, tourism, rural housing quality, rural broadband and designated landscape protection.

Recommendation

- 5.6 It is considered that the Vision and Objectives outline the strategic direction of the LDP / draft Plan Strategy. They are set out below:

LDP VISION AND OBJECTIVES

- 5.7 *The Council's overall Vision for the District is set out in Our Community Plan – the inclusive Strategic Growth Plan for Derry City and Strabane District (SGP, 2017). The LDP builds upon this Vision for the District, namely:*

To make Derry City and Strabane District a thriving, prosperous and sustainable area – Planning for balanced and appropriate high-quality development, whilst protecting our environment, and also promoting well-being with equality of opportunity for all.

- 5.8 *The LDP is required to 'take account of' the Community Plan; the two documents are closely aligned, having been initiated at the same time, with similar vision and priorities for the District to 2032, structured across the themes of Economy, Environment & Regeneration and Social / Health & Community. The LDP is the spatial articulation of the SGP / Community Plan, in that the LDP deals primarily with the spatial, land use and place-making aspects of the various actions and priorities in the SGP; therefore, the LDP will be an important vehicle for the implementation of the SGP's vision for the District.*
- 5.9 *The LDP formulates key Planning designations, zonings and policies for the District, with the intention of delivering 'sustainable development'; these are structured under the three key headings of sustainable development i.e. economic, social and environment. It is apparent that if the needs of the population are to be addressed, then there must be a strong focus on significantly increasing and improving our economic and social base, whilst at the same time, protecting and enhancing the environment and improving public infrastructure. Accordingly, a number of Planning needs and policy goals have been drawn from the survey / analysis of the District and these have assisted in formulating the relevant aims and objectives of the new Local Development Plan.*
- 5.10 *In practice, most LDP objectives are cross-cutting, having different degrees of economic, social and environmental aspects, and all have differing spatial impact – which is the primary focus for the Planning of development in the District, through the LDP. In practical terms therefore, the LDP will aim to deliver its Vision through the following main strategic Objectives, categorised broadly into spatial / cross-cutting, economic, social and environmental objectives:*

Spatial & Cross-Cutting Objectives

(d) Planning for a sustainable District, with a strong Derry, Strabane and vibrant rural areas, as the focus of the North West Region

- (i) To put in place the Council's sound Planning framework of policies and land uses, aligned with the Strategic Growth Plan and taking account of regional priorities, that will deliver high-quality, sustainable developments across the City and District to 2032, contributing to climate-change prevention / adaptation, protecting the environment and meeting the needs (including health, well-being and amenity) of residents and visitors.*
- (ii) To develop and reinforce Derry City as the core settlement, regional gateway and principal city of the North West – providing employment, administration, commerce, specialised services, cultural amenities and tourism / visitor facilities as well as shopping health, education and leisure services, particularly for the cross-border population within the one-hour drive time across the North West Region.*
- (iii) To further develop and grow Strabane as the main hub, as a prosperous and regenerated town linked to Derry, Tyrone and the rest of the North West, particularly benefitting from its close proximity to Lifford, a key administrative centre for Donegal County. Strabane will be the focus for employment, administration, shopping, health, education and commerce for its local and cross-border hinterland.*
- (iv) To protect and consolidate the role of local towns and villages spread across the District so that they act as local centres for appropriate-scale shops, employment, houses and community services, meeting the daily needs of their rural hinterlands.*
- (v) To provide for vital and vibrant rural communities elsewhere, including in our small settlements, whilst protecting the countryside in which they live by accommodating appropriate development so as to sustain and service these rural communities.*

Economic Development Objectives

(e) Creating Jobs and Promoting Prosperity

- (j) To facilitate the creation of approximately 15,000 new jobs by 2032, based upon projected population increase, reduced unemployment rates and investment-driven growth, focussed on the identified growth sectors, at a variety of locations where they are accessible to all members of the community, including those without a private car.*
- (ix) To recognise and accommodate entrepreneurship and innovation for large, medium and small firms by attracting new firms, facilitating new business start-ups and accommodating expanding businesses, in urban areas and also in rural areas where appropriate location, type and scale.*
- (x) To recognise the importance of, and to accommodate, self-employment and home working, in both urban and rural locations.*

- (xi) To recognise the North West's significant renewable energy resource and encourage the use of sustainable energy both as a means of generating money for the local economy, attracting investment in enterprise and providing sustainable and affordable electrical power for the population.*
- (xii) To manage the utilisation of the District's mineral resources in a responsible and sustainable manner that meets the developmental needs of the District and wider region, yet protecting the landscape quality and natural environment of the District.*
- (xiii) To facilitate the City to capitalise on its role as a key cross-border and international gateway providing access by road, air, rail, and sea, while similarly maximising the economic corridor potential for Strabane and the rest of the District of the cross border and A2, A5 and A6 improvement schemes to the North West.*
- (xiv) Continue the high levels of co-operation between Letterkenny, Derry and Strabane as pursued by the Northwest Regional Development Group, to unlock the potential of the North West and consider opportunities to improve transport / accessibility and public services in sectors such as health and education.*
- (xv) Retailing and Centres – to achieve a strong, vibrant and multi-use City Centre and Town Centres supported by a hierarchy of other centres that sustainably meets the shopping, working and leisure needs of all the people.*
- (xvi) Tourism – to increase the visitor numbers, spend and economic benefit of tourism for the District. To continue the regeneration of the City and its promotion as a major tourist destination while respecting its heritage assets, exceptional landscape setting and unique walled core through sensitive development. The city-based tourism success will be complemented by sustainable, focused rural tourism across the District especially through assets such as the Sperrin AONB and Foyle / Faughan valleys.*

Social Development Objectives

(f) Accommodating People and Facilitating Communities

- (ix) To provide for approximately 9,000 new, quality homes by 2032, in private and social housing, in a variety of formats designed to meet the needs of families, including single-parent families, small households, the elderly and disabled and single people, at sustainable locations accessible to community services, leisure and recreational facilities, for those people with and without a car. Housing schemes in Derry city, Strabane and the smaller settlements will require imaginative and innovative design, including mixed use schemes, and possibly mixed tenure, to ensure that they link into the existing urban fabric. Rural houses also need to be of quality design and siting, with a focus on sustainable development to provide homes to sustain vibrant rural communities.*
- (x) To recognise the needs of both growing families and carers of the elderly and disabled by accommodating development which allows people to remain within their own communities while not adversely impacting on neighbours or the environment.*

- (xi) To facilitate the development of new community facilities at locations accessible to the communities they serve, through a variety of modes of efficient public transportation in accordance with the community plan.*
- (xii) To achieve balanced communities and to accommodate cultural differences between communities of all religious backgrounds, whilst promoting “shared spaces” to bring people together with equality of opportunity.*
- (xiii) To close the gap in quality of life for those living in deprived areas.*
- (xiv) Open Space – to provide a network of ample, good quality open spaces, sports and recreation facilities to give the District’s people a healthy well-being and high quality of life.*
- (xv) Waste – to minimise our waste products and to sustainability provide facilities to manage / reuse any such products in a sustainable manner – as a ‘Zero Waste-Circular Economy’ approach.*

Environment-Focused Objectives

(g) Enhancing the Environment, Creating Places and Improving Infrastructure

- (x) To protect and enhance the natural and historic built environment to achieve biodiversity, quality design, enhanced leisure and economic opportunity and promote health and well-being. Protecting ecosystem services of fauna and flora, as well as achieving significantly more tree-cover, energy efficiency, less pollution and other measures to tackle climate change.*
- (xi) To build upon the existing urban assets / built heritage value, but also improving connectivity to existing and new urban soft and hard spaces, so as to achieve enhanced place-making. High standards of design and materials will help to develop / protect the distinctive character of each of the District’s settlements, and the countryside. In particular, Derry city is to grow to look and function as a modern, cosmopolitan, people-focussed university and riverfront city. Strabane is to regenerate with improved internal accessibility, a strong unified commercial heart and Riverine-linked green edge.*
- (xii) To accommodate investment in power, water and sewerage infrastructure, and waste management, particularly in the interests of public health.*
- (xiii) To prevent future development of areas of flood risk, mitigating where necessary, and prevent inappropriate development that would cause or exacerbate flooding elsewhere.*
- (xiv) To improve connectivity between and within settlements and their rural hinterland through accommodating investment in transportation to improve travel times, alleviate congestion and improve safety for both commercial and private vehicles as well as more sustainable modes of transport including buses, rail, walking and cycling.*
- (xv) To improve connectivity, though developments for telecommunications - especially broadband, which both meets the needs of business and private households whilst reducing the need to travel.*

- (xvi) *To enhance transport linkages across the North West particularly between Derry, Strabane and Donegal, to and from the air and sea ports and the distribution of traffic from and between transport corridors.*
- (xvii) *To contribute towards a ‘modal shift’ away from dependence on private cars and minimising traffic-generation, enabling ‘places for people’, relying more on improved public transport services and achieve the more efficient integration of land use and transportation. Planning for new developments in locations well-served by public transport will provide more accessibility to sustainable choices of transport.*
- (xviii) *Protect areas of high landscape quality / scenic value, undeveloped coastline and wetlands from inappropriate development, particularly recognising the attractive natural and historic setting of the City and the Sperrins, which also bring benefits to the economy and society.*
- (xix) *Protect and enhance the network of open spaces and greenways in the North West. Opportunities should be taken for connections to an enhanced network of pedestrian paths, cycle-ways and ecological corridors.*

5.11 *The traditional approach to Planning can assist in achieving many of these objectives by:*

- (a) *designating settlement limits, city and town centre boundaries;*
- (b) *zoning land for housing and economic development;*
- (c) *reserving land for community, recreational use or infrastructure;*
- (d) *identifying and designating areas subject to environmental protection.*

5.12 *However, if the District’s needs are to be fully addressed, there is also a need for some policy innovation in the Local Development Plan, which is likely to vary to some degree from established regional policy. The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) does increase the scope of the Local Development Plan by facilitating Councils to formulate their own policies.*

5.13 *It is not intended that the list of needs and policy goals is exhaustive. It is also recognised that these policy goals are based on a general analysis and benefit from the views of elected Councillors and input from those directly involved in Planning and from the different stakeholders. **Such Vision and Objectives will be critical for the clarity of focus of the LDP, as the ensuing strategic policies need to implement that Vision / Objectives, as well as for the ongoing Monitoring of the LDP’s policies – so as to ensure that they are indeed effective in achieving the desired Planning impacts for the District.***

6.0 Technical Appraisals of LDP dPS Vision and Objectives

Sustainability Appraisal (SA, incorporating SEA) Habitats Regulations (HRA), Equality Impact (EQIA); Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)

- 6.1 Throughout their formulation, the dPS Vision and Objectives have been subject to an ongoing internal sustainability appraisal (SA). This is in addition to the wider external SA, conducted by Shared Environmental Service as part of the wider suite of impact assessments/appraisals required under the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. The internal appraisal was carried out with the fourteen objectives of the external appraisal in mind (refer to the SA report for more information).
- 6.2 A draft Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has also been undertaken and published for consultation with the Draft Plan Strategy. It similarly determines possible adverse effects on the integrity of European sites (Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas) as a result of the policies within the LDP. This assessment also includes Ramsar sites under the provisions of the Ramsar Convention. Please refer to the full HRA document for full details.

Summary of Considerations

SA - Considered mostly 'positive' across the sustainability objectives.

HRA – considered mostly positive impacts on European sites.

Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.3 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires that public authorities have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of a particular religion, political opinion, race, age, marital status, sexual orientation or gender. It also includes people with disabilities or those with primary responsibility for the care of a dependant, such as an elderly person. These are known as 'Section 75' groups.

Summary of Considerations

EQIA – not considered to have adverse or differential impacts on S75 groups. See EQIA report.

Rural Needs Impact Assessment

- 6.4 The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 requires District Councils and other Public Authorities to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services.

- 6.5 To 'have due regard' means that a public authority must consciously consider the needs of people in rural areas. How much 'due regard' depends on the circumstances and, in particular, on the relevance of rural needs to the decision or function in question. The greater the relevance and potential impact for people in rural areas, the greater the regard required by the duty.
- 6.6 Throughout the formulation of the draft Plan Strategy, there has been consideration of the impact of each policy approach on the rural area, relative to the urban area and policies have been amended where it was deemed appropriate to do so.

Summary of Considerations

RNIA (rural) – rural considered and built into vision and objectives. See full report done for PS.