



Derry City & Strabane  
District Council

Comhairle Chathair  
Dhoire & Cheantar  
an tSratha Báin

Derry Cittie & Stràbane  
Deistrick Council

DERRY CITY & STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL

# LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) 2032



## DRAFT PLAN STRATEGY

DS-605 – Climate Change & LDP – December 2021

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# **DERRY CITY AND STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) 2032**



### **Climate Change & LDP**

**December 2021**

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.

This is a Submission document in accordance with Regulation 20 of the Planning (LDP) Regulations (NI) 2015.

# Summary of what the LDP dPS is doing to prevent / adapt to Climate Change

## 1.0 Introduction

The importance and immediacy of climate change has been highlighted by two recent reports, as well as the United Nations COP 26 Conference in Glasgow..

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report on Climate Change was published in August 2021. It is a major UN scientific report. It states unequivocally that human activity is changing the climate in unprecedented and sometimes irreversible ways. There will be a further increase in the occurrence of extreme weather events unprecedented in the historic record. It has been called 'code red for humanity'. However, catastrophe can be avoided if the world acts quickly. It is hoped that deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions could halt and possibly reverse the ongoing increase in temperatures. Global emissions would need to be cut in half by 2030 and reach 'net zero' by 2050. Even if this is achieved, it is likely that global temperatures will increase by 1.5°C by 2040 above 1850-1900 temperatures. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-58130705>

The Republic of Ireland government in August 2021, published a report (The Status of Ireland's Climate 2020) confirming that climate change has made the island of Ireland warmer and wetter. Temperatures have increased by 0.9°C over 120 years. Sea levels are increasing by 2-3mm per annum. There are more regular droughts, especially in the east and rainfall has increased by 6% in the last 100 years. <https://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2021/0811/1240321-climate-change-ireland/>

The eyes of the world, and the Planning profession, were then focussed even more on the 'Climate Change Crisis' when, in October /November 2021, the United Nations Climate Change Conference more commonly referred to as 'COP26' was held in Glasgow, Scotland. The COP26 Decision represents agreement on what is known as the 'Paris Rulebook', which now sets a single transparency standard for how countries report on their emissions reductions under the Paris framework.

<https://www.theplanner.co.uk/features/the-glasgow-climate-pact-a-final-assessment-of-cop26>

<https://www.theplanner.co.uk/opinion/how-to-cut-the-crap-on-cop-a-planners-guide-to-reducing-carbon-emissions>

<https://www.theplanner.co.uk/opinion/wales-is-giving-planners-the-tools-to-address-the-climate-crisis-let%E2%80%99s-use-them>

<https://www.theplanner.co.uk/news/qa-the-planners-role-in-delivering-cop26-goals>

Climate change is therefore a very current and pertinent concern, arguably the most pressing environmental issue of our time both locally and globally. The LDP dPS includes a specific section - Paras 7.11 to 7.16 considering climate change specifically, before making it an underlying, fundamental consideration of the whole of the rest of the LDP. It highlights that the District and the wider Northwest has experienced changes in the frequency, intensity, duration and timing of extreme weather events and will continue to do so unless there is substantial intervention by the public and private sectors and private individuals locally and beyond. Within the City and District this has led to increasing instances of extreme flooding, disrupting business, community, infrastructure, agriculture, the natural environment, health, water

supply, productivity and daily life. In June 2019, the Council 'declared a climate emergency', which reinforced the need for urgency. So, what is the LDP dPS doing to prevent / adapt to Climate Change?

## **2.0 LDP Draft Plan Strategy (dPS) Vision and Objectives**

The overall Vision of the Council's LDP includes the aim to be a 'sustainable' District as well as 'protecting our environment'. The first of the LDP's stated cross-cutting Objectives relates to putting in place a sound planning framework, taking account of the local and regional policies and 'contributing to climate change prevention / adaptation'. Below this, the other economic, social and environment-focussed Objectives either directly or indirectly reference or will support sustainable development and climate change prevention, mitigation and adaptation.

## **3.0 Sustainable Development – Overview**

The LDP draft Plan Strategy's General Development Principle GDP 1 (Sustainable Development) directs development to the most sustainable locations, generally the defined settlements of Derry, Strabane and other settlements defined in the LDP in accordance with the LDP's Growth Strategy and the Spatial Strategy. Depending on their scale, type and function, such developments should be at the appropriate settlement tier. Within each settlement, development is directed to the most sustainable areas i.e. centrally located and accessible by a range of modes of transport including active travel and taking advantage of current/ proposed infrastructure. In the Countryside, development will be delivered in a sustainable manner in accordance with the Growth Strategy, Spatial Strategy and the LDP's Housing and Economic Development strategies. Office and retail development is directed to the town centres (town centre-first policies), close to where people live and/ or accessible by active travel and public transport. Edge-of-centre or out-of- centre sites will only be considered where there are no suitable sites in larger centres (see Policy RP1). Similar policies apply to Strabane and other towns and villages/ small settlements. Development in Local Centres would only be allowed where it is compatible with the character and function of the centre and would not harm the viability of settlements. Policy ED 5 permits small-scale economic development in the countryside where it would not undermine the essential rural character of the area especially where it is associated with the settlement and re-uses existing rural buildings.

## **4.0 Implementation of General Development Principles**

The Council will deliver the development principles through:

- The policies contained in the LDP;
- Leading by example through the application of best practice guidance;
- Considering the feasibility of a pilot 'resilient settlement' project at LPP stage; and
- Significantly increasing tree planting associated with development proposals (in addition to landscaping proposals).

## **5.0 Climate Change**

General Development Principle GDP 2 (Climate Change) requires development to minimise harm that would cause climate change, mitigate against the effects of climate change, adapt to its impacts and to ensure resilience. This includes

- promotion of sustainable patterns of development
- promoting renewable energy

- facilitating sustainable travel including active travel and public transport in preference to use of the private car
- adapting existing homes to reduce energy use (provided there is no harm to listed buildings or Conservation Areas)
- supporting the delivery of facilities to divert waste from landfill and to promote the prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery of materials with disposal to landfill as the last resort.
- encouraging energy and power sharing in new developments and decentralised low carbon sources of heat and power
- limiting/ mitigating greenhouse gas emissions through provision of green infrastructure and minimising resource and energy requirements through the siting, layout and design of new development
- avoiding development in flood plains and
- using Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs). SUDS will now be required for all development unless it is demonstrated that this is not feasible.

These, and the other principles are reflected in Policy GDPOL 1 (General Development Management Policy) which applies to all planning applications in the District. This also requires measures for carbon offsetting as necessary, including the planting of trees on or off site (proportionate to the scale of the site and the development).

## **6.0 Transport**

DfI has undertaken the LDP Local Transport Study (LTS) in conjunction with the Council. It is underpinned by DCSDC's Parking Strategy, which seeks to constrain parking, as a tool to discourage car use. The LTS has seven objectives, which are shared by the LDP and are in line with the District's Strategic Growth Plan. They include improving public transport and active travel accessibility, providing a high quality public realm in Derry city centre (especially along the riverside) and in Strabane town centre. They also seek to ensure that our transport systems integrate climate change adaptation. The LTS includes 13 measures for the period up to 2032. In the dPS, the schemes are referenced in terms of strategic locations with detail and specific schemes to be added at LPP stage. They include improved 'limited stop' bus services and rail improvements to Coleraine, Belfast and Dublin, Park & Ride sites served by frequent bus services into Derry city and better parking near regional bus services in Strabane. The 'Derry Glider' is a proposed high quality cross-city bus route serving key residential and commercial areas. 'Park & Stride' sites will be provided near town and city centres and improvements to walking routes. Radial cycle routes and greenways will run between settlements, serving residential areas. Roads will be redesigned to accommodate general traffic, pedestrians, cyclists, buses and HGVs alike.

Development that reduces travel such as electric and hydrogen vehicles, delivery drones and home working will be accommodated. Parking policies will assist in reducing reliance on the private car and help tackle growing congestion. This will discourage long-term commuter parking in town and city centres and encourage 'Park & Stride' long stay provision. Pricing will make public transport more attractive and parking will be constrained for city/ town centre developments and out of centre sites. Additional Park & Ride sites will be created around the District and at strategic locations beyond.

Policy TAM5 protects disused transport routes such as old railway lines where identified in the LDP for future transport or recreation purposes. Policy TAM7 (Walking & Cycling Provision) requires developers to take into account the needs of these users including physical links, ease of access, cycle parking and the provision of shower and changing facilities. Policy TAM9



states that in providing parking, consideration should be given to electric vehicles and the provision of charging points. At the LPP stage, certain areas may be zoned to only allow operational parking for servicing and other essential purposes.

## **7.0 Housing**

In the interests of promoting sustainable patterns of living and working, most residential development will continue to take place in the main settlements, towns and villages on previously committed sites and within settlement limits. Actual zonings will be identified at the LPP stage. Policy HOU3 encourages higher density development in the City Centre and Strabane Town Centre and along major transport routes.

Though 12 - 16% of new dwellings will continue to be provided in the countryside, the relevant dPS policies are now more focussed on the sensitive clustering of new and existing developments, in order to sustain rural populations in the District. These will be permitted under the proposed 'rural housing policies' for farm dwellings, those associated with rural enterprises, restored and replacement dwellings, conversions, new dwellings in existing 'rural clusters', 'infills', affordable housing and personal circumstances. Some policies have been altered from the existing retained planning policies. A Green Belt has been reintroduced to avoid urban sprawl and to minimise the potential harm from undue urban-generated development pressure in the countryside. Policy HOU25 also permits developments of up to 14 affordable housing units adjacent to or near a small settlement or village in the countryside, creating more sustainable forms of development.

## **8.0 Other Development in the Countryside**

Emerging Policy OD 1 (Other Development in the Countryside) will set out clearly what types of development are permitted in the countryside and under which circumstances. This will include farm diversification, forestry, proposals re-using old buildings, tourism, minerals, renewable energy development, sports, community uses, infrastructure and certain types of retailing and economic development uses, as well as rural houses – where they are done in accordance with the listed policies. It will go on to set out that other types of development will generally be directed to the settlements, or developers will be required to explain clearly why they cannot be located there.

## **9.0 Renewables**

GDP 2 promotes renewable energy. Criterion ii promotes energy efficient, micro generating and decentralised renewable energy systems and criterion iii the use of zero carbon technologies.

Policy GDPOL 1 requires incorporation of renewable and low carbon energy technology in development proposals wherever feasible. The dPS also recognises that there must be a balanced approach to avoid significant adverse impacts, which could undermine the benefits of renewable energy. Policy RED 1 makes detailed provision for permitting renewable energy development proposals whilst protecting amenity and our most important natural and built features through mitigation. This is a robust policy basis for balanced decisions for proposals with competing considerations.

In addition, the introduction of the Wind Energy Capacity Area (WECA) designation, which identifies lands considered to be at or reaching, capacity for wind turbines, will ensure particular scrutiny of any further developments in such areas. This measure and the other detailed guidance under RED 1 is intended to help the renewable energy sector in devising proposals which are more likely to be capable of approval, ensuring that the continuing supply

of energy through renewable and low carbon technologies can be facilitated across the District.

The Council's LDP vision already includes the commitment to sustainable development. Objective B (iv) commits to promoting renewable energy and environment objective D (i) commits to measures to tackle climate change. This is also reflected in the respective policies and is tied to the NI renewables objectives as set out in paragraphs 24.6 and 24.7.

By 2020, The NI government's 40% target was being met, with approx. 42-47% of NI energy from renewables; see <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/Issue-21-Electricity-Consumption-and-Renewable-Generation-Northern-Ireland-October-2020-to-September-2021.pdf>

The new Northern Ireland Energy Strategy 'Path to Net Zero Energy' (December 2021) includes a target to meet 70% of electricity consumption from a diverse mix of renewable sources by 2030. See: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/news/lyons-announces-new-energy-strategy-path-net-zero-energy> & <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/Energy-Strategy-for-Northern-Ireland-path-to-net-zero.pdf>

## **10.0 Green Infrastructure**

LDP Policies such as OS 3 (Green and Blue Infrastructure) promote the protection of such open spaces in the District and the creation of new areas and linkages. It is acknowledged that this can provide 'ecosystem services' such as SuDS, providing and linking wildlife habitats, walking and cycling routes, flood alleviation and the role of trees in mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change by absorbing rainfall and capturing carbon. Importantly these routes and greenways will physically link homes and destinations for active travel and create routes for more local journeys by foot and by bike.

## **11.0 Flooding**

A key impact of climate change will be the occurrence of significant flooding events. Chapter 25 directs development away from areas at risk of flooding and has been amended to include allowances for climate change modelling. Development is not permitted in the flood plain unless it meets a strict 'exceptions test' such as certain types of development in areas with flood protection, replacement buildings, minerals, agricultural development, water-compatible development, open space and developments of over-riding regional or sub regional importance. For certain other developments, a Flood Risk Assessment must be submitted to demonstrate there would be no adverse effects on Flood Risk.

## **12.0 Minerals**

One of the main aspects of climate change prevention is to ensure the ongoing 'carbon storage' benefits of peatland. There is no commercial peat extraction in DC&SD and any application for such would be adequately assessed against the dPS minerals policies and other related policies in the LDP especially NE 3 (Biodiversity or Features of Natural Heritage Importance) & RED 1 (Renewables and Low Carbon Energy Development). Paragraph 13.23 in the Minerals chapter deals with commercial peat and only allows developments where valuable wildlife/ landscape bogs would not be harmed.

Policy MIN 1 states that approval would only be granted where no unacceptable adverse impact on natural environment including earth science features. All / most peatlands would be protected habitats. No other specific minerals are mentioned in MIN 1. An amendment will be

made to paragraph 13.10 to highlight the 'carbon storage' benefits to reinforce the importance of peatland.

### **13.0 Place Making**

Places will be designed as walkable town and city centres and neighbourhoods linking with public spaces and green and blue infrastructure networks with daily facilities within easy walking distance as far as possible. The needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport are prioritised, making places for 'people not cars' and creating a lively, active public realm.

### **14.0 Resilient settlement – exemplar project.**

The idea for a feasibility study for a 'Resilient form of Settlement' as a one-off pilot project has been included in chapter 7 as an initiative to demonstrate best practice in terms of sustainable development and adaptation to climate change. The council will explore opportunities to demonstrate/ test climate change adaptation processes but any new settlement form would be of modest scale and possibly based upon an existing cluster or settlement – if/ when it is developed over the life of this LDP. Any such development would be an 'exceptional case' considered on its individual merits, and it would need to fit in with the appropriate tier within the LDP's settlement hierarchy.

### **15.0 Conclusion**

Therefore, through its vision, objectives, policies and principles, a fundamental tenet of the Derry City & Strabane District Council's LDP dPS is the furtherance of sustainable development principles. This includes measures and policies that require development to minimise harm that would cause climate change, mitigate against the effects of climate change, adapt to its impacts and to ensure resilience to it.



