



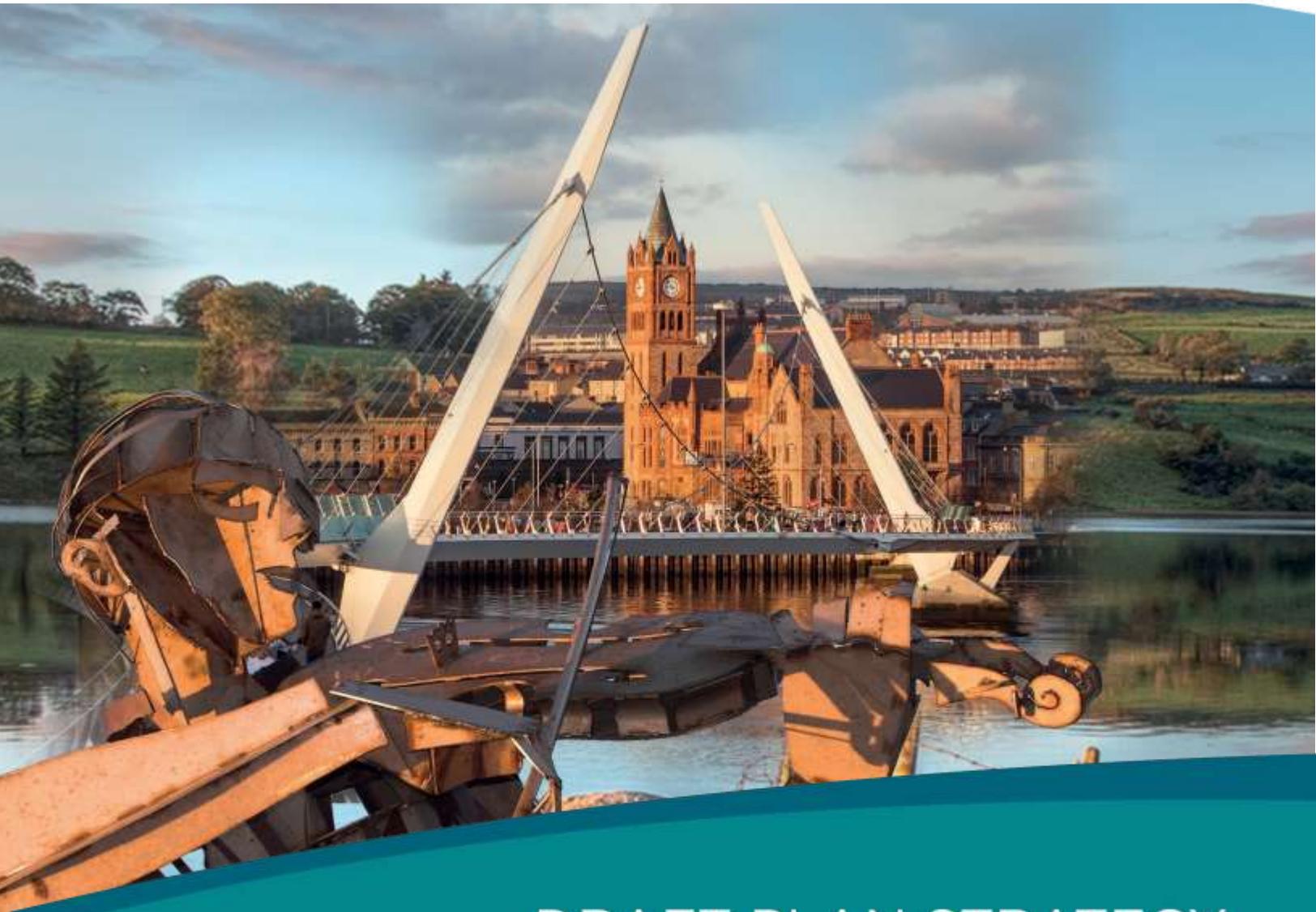
Derry City & Strabane  
District Council

Comhairle Chathair  
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DERRY CITY & STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL

# LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) 2032



## DRAFT PLAN STRATEGY

EVB F: Place-Making & Design, Urban and Rural Design, December 2019

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## DERRY CITY AND STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) 2032



#### EVIDENCE BASE PAPER F: Place- Making and Design, Urban and Rural Design

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 Place- Making and Design, Urban and Rural Design 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**

- 1.1 This paper is one in a series, building up the evidence base that will inform the preparation of the Local Development Plan (LDP). The LDP will have a new approach to Place Making, Urban Design / Townscape and rural design in line with the Strategic Growth Plan, moving away from the reactive planning of the past towards a more proactive approach which while protecting the environment permits iconic design which enhances its location.
- 1.2 The purpose of the planning system is to secure the orderly and consistent development of land, with the objective of furthering sustainable development and improving well-being. In pursuing economic and social priorities, Derry City and Strabane District Council, as the planning authority, should also simultaneously consider the careful management of our urban and rural areas and our built heritage.
- 1.3 When preparing our LDP, Derry City and Strabane District Council will take full account of the implications of proposed land use zonings, locations for development and settlement limits on the townscape, urban and rural environment and built heritage. When determining planning applications, Council will need to take account of the potential effects of development proposals on the urban environment and built heritage, including cumulative effects.
- 1.4 In preparation of the LDP, the Council commissioned three separate Place-making-Urban Design studies for a) the City of Derry b) the associated Main Town of Strabane, and c) the four potential Local Towns of Castlederg, Newtownstewart, Claudy and Eglinton. These studies and associated developmental documents are intended to inform the ongoing preparation of the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) as well as ongoing Regeneration initiatives and emerging Council-led investment projects. In addition to the above the Chapter will also take account of the ongoing 'Heritage Led Regeneration Masterplan', which was commissioned by DCSDC's Regeneration Team.



## **2.0 Legislative and Policy Context.**

2.1 In preparing the new LDP, the Council will have regard to several existing plans and documents that set out the main legal and policy context and considerations of what the LDP is required to do and can include, in relation to tourism in the District.

### Legislation for LDP Preparation

2.2 Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 - Under a remit of securing the orderly and consistent development of land and the planning of that development, the Act makes general provision for LDP's in Part 2 Section 3-22.

2.3 Part 2 Section 5 states that any person who exercises any function relating to the preparation of a LDP must exercise that function with the objective of furthering sustainable development. For the purposes of delivering this function there is an onus to take account of all policies and guidance issued by the Executive Office, the Department for Infrastructure and any matters which appear to that person to be relevant.

### Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)

2.4 The RDS 2035 sets out strategic guidance which is used in the preparation of LDPs, Planning Policy Statements and Urban Regeneration Initiatives. The RDS, in promoting urban renaissance, promotes the continuing development of compact urban form by further integrating key land uses with transportation consideration. The RDS sets out Regional Guidance (RG) and Spatial Framework Guidance (SFG) as follows.

2.5 The RDS recognizes that many places do not offer the quality of facilities required to meet the needs of local people. Cities, towns, and villages have unique identities and these should be recognized and built upon and enhanced as part of LDP preparation.

2.6 Urban renaissance is the process of development and redevelopment in urban areas to attract investment and activity, foster revitalisation and improve the mix of uses. Rural renaissance, likewise, is about revitalising the centres of small towns and villages so that they meet the immediate needs of the communities they serve. Redevelopment can include the reuse of both Listed Buildings and of locally important buildings, particularly the reuse of vernacular buildings and industrial heritage buildings/structures.



2.7 In some places, community division and localised economic decline have created areas and interfaces where businesses are reluctant to invest. Economic deprivation leads to environmental problems characterised by derelict buildings and undeveloped sites. It is important to promote a joined up approach to support urban and rural renaissance to ensure all stakeholders are involved by:

- *Develop innovative ways to bring forward under-utilised land and buildings, particularly for mixed use development* - There should be a focus on integrating new schemes within the existing townscape. The sensitive design of interfaces and access arrangements can allow a wide range of uses to co-exist peacefully. Mixed use developments can play a very important role in helping to regenerate and revitalise a declining area.
- *Promote regeneration in areas of social need* - Development initiatives should target areas that suffer low employment and high deprivation. The RDS identifies severe pockets of deprivation particularly around the Ballycolman and East wards in Strabane. Within Derry, people experience the highest level of income deprivation with around 38% classified as income deprived, compared to the Northern Ireland figure of 25%.
- *Ensure that environmental quality in urban areas is improved and maintained, particularly with adequate provision of green infrastructure*. Part of the process of urban and rural renaissance requires even greater significance being given to the design and management of the public realm. It is important to promote recreational space within cities, towns and neighbourhoods, and new developments or plans should make provision for adequate green and blue infrastructure. This is particularly important near designated nature conservation sites as it will help reduce recreational pressure on these sites.



- *Reduce noise pollution* - Noise levels which are above comfort levels can be caused by traffic, construction, industrial, and some recreational activities. It can aggravate serious direct, as well as indirect, health effects. When new developments or plans are being prepared it will be important to take into consideration the European Noise Directive which aims to avoid, prevent or reduce, on a prioritised basis, the harmful effects of noise.
- 2.8 In preparing our LDP, we will need to consider the hierarchy and role of our settlements as we seek to integrate the settlements of the former Derry and Strabane Districts into a settlement hierarchy that delivers for our new Council area. Understanding their roles will enable us to think about future development and urban design.
- 2.9 **RG 8 refers to a Housing Evaluation Framework including an Urban and Rural Character Test.:** In relation to the allocation of housing growth, an assessment should be made of the potential to maintain a sense of place, and to integrate new development in a way that does not detract from the character and identity of the settlement.
- 2.10 **RG 11: Conserve, protect and, where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment:** Our District has a rich and diverse built heritage which contributes to our sense of place and history. It is a key tourism and recreational asset and sustainable management of it makes a valuable contribution to the environment, economy and society. Our built heritage embraces many sites of local and international interest which once lost, or impacted on, cannot be fully replaced. The RDS identifies the importance to:
- Identify, protect and conserve the built heritage, including archaeological sites and monuments and historic buildings.
  - Identify, protect and conserve the character and built heritage assets within cities towns, villages and countryside.
  - Maintain the integrity of built heritage assets, including historic landscapes.
- 2.11 **SFG7: Strengthen the role of Londonderry as the principal city for the North West:** Securing a strong and vibrant city is important to the economic and social wellbeing of the North West. The physical transformation of this historic walled city to reflect its economic status and profile will enhance its urban character and promote neighbourhood recovery. The creation of imaginative new housing, the management of parks and open spaces and making streets safe and attractive will encourage the regeneration of the city. The RDS states Derry should be the focus for administration, shopping, commerce, specialised services, cultural amenities and tourism within the North West. The former military sites at Ebrington and Fort George will add approximately 17 hectares of development land to the city's land stock and provide a major opportunity for boosting economic development and regeneration.



- 2.12 The RDS states that the Strabane Town Centre Masterplan sets out the blueprint for further enhancement of the town.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

- 2.13 The SPPS was published in final form in September 2015 following agreement by the NI Executive. The provisions of the SPPS apply to the whole of Northern Ireland and must be taken into account in the preparation of the LDP. Until such times as the Plan Strategy for our District is adopted, the policy contained in all the PPS with the exception of PPS'S 1, 5 & 9 will continue to apply under transitional arrangements. When the Council adopts the Plan Strategy, existing policy retained under the transitional arrangements shall cease to effect and will no longer be material from that date.
- 2.14 The SPPS sets out (pg. 19-22) its intentions for supporting good design and positive place-making. The SPPS states that good design identifies and makes positive use of the assets of a site and the characteristics of its surroundings to determine the most appropriate form of development. It promotes the use of Pre-Application Discussions (PADS) and clear local design policies within the LDP which encourage good design and responsible innovation, originality or initiative.
- 2.15 The SPPS promotes place-making as a people-centred approach to planning, design and stewardship of new developments and public spaces that seek to enhance the unique qualities of a place. It will require a collaborative working between architects, planning officials transport planners, developers, Councillors, communities and individuals. The SPPS also stresses that planning authorities need to consider positive ways in which to improve the linkages between good places (i.e. design) and the management and maintenance of those spaces (i.e. stewardship).
- 2.16 The LDP is also directed to take account of the 10 qualities of urban stewardship and design as set out in the 'Living Places Urban Stewardship and Design Guide' for NI. These are:
- Visionary – with clarity of purpose & direction;
  - Collaborative – shared in use, management & planning;
  - Contextual – reinforcing sense of place;
  - Responsible – resource efficient;
  - Accessible – easy to access for all;
  - Hospitable – welcoming, safe and healthy;
  - Vibrant & Diverse – alive with centralized activity;
  - Crafted – of excellent design quality and aesthetics;
  - Viable – functional, flexible and lasting; &
  - Enduring – imbued with a legacy of continued understanding and interpretation.



- 2.17 The SPPS also directs on the importance of good rural design. Guiding principles of good place making in the countryside are set out in 'Building on Tradition: A Sustainable Design Guide for the NI Countryside' and include:
- Character – recognising what gives particular rural areas their unique character and how to conserve and reflect this through new development;
  - Reuse – the reuse of existing buildings, especially vernacular buildings, safeguards their significant contribution to rural place making;
  - Integration – visual integration of new buildings into the landscape ensures that they do not appear incongruous or out of place;
  - Replacement – high quality and appropriately scaled replacement dwellings avoids excessive build up of new development while retaining rural amenity and character;
  - New Build – Sensitive siting, designing new buildings to respect the landscape and careful boundary treatment ensures that new buildings fit the rural environment;
  - Environment – avoiding development that impacts adversely upon natural ecosystems.

A significant part of the Sperrin AONB lies within our District and it will be essential that this distinctive landscape is not harmed by unsympathetic development and poor design.

- 2.18 The SPPS stresses the strategic importance of the LDP in delivering archaeological and built heritage protection. It states the LDP should identify the main built and archaeological heritage features where they exist within the plan area and bring forward appropriate policies or proposals for their protection, conservation and enhancement. These features include:
- Archaeological sites and monuments;
  - Listed Buildings;
  - Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes;
  - Conservation Areas;
  - Areas of Townscape or Village Character; &
  - Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs)

#### Design and Access Statements

- 2.19 A core planning principle of the reformed two-tier planning system is to support good design. The planning system therefore plays a significant role in making successful places through its influence on the type, scale, location and design of development, and the use of land. A design and access (D&AS) statement is a report accompanying and supporting a planning application. It provides a framework for applicants to explain how a proposed development is a suitable response to the site and its setting, and demonstrate that it can be adequately accessed by prospective users. The Department has produced a guidance document on how to complete a D&AS entitled 'Design & Access Statements – a guide for Northern Ireland'.



- 2.20 The statutory provisions which set out the requirements for a D&AS are found in the **2011 Act, The Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015** (referred to hereafter as the GDPO) and the **Planning Listed Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015** (referred to hereafter as the Listed Building Regulations) as summarised below:-
- The 2011 Act (primary legislation)
  - Section 40(3) – Form and content of applications
  - Section 86(2) – Applications for listed building consent
  - GDPO (subordinate legislation)
  - Article 3(3) (f) – Applications for planning permission
  - Article 6- Design and access statements
  - Article 24(1) (a)-Register of applications
  - Listed Building Regulations (subordinate legislation)
  - Regulation 4- Design and access statements
  - 2.2.3 Sections 40(3) and 86(2) of the 2011 Act requires that certain descriptions of applications for planning permission and all listed building consent applications are to be accompanied by a design and access statement (D&AS). Details of the applications for planning permission which must be accompanied by a D&AS, and the form and content of such statements, are prescribed in the GDPO. The Listed Building Regulations set out the form and content of a DAS for listed building consent applications.

#### Planning Policy Statements

##### *Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage*

- 2.21 PPS 6 sets out the regional planning policies for the protection and conservation of archaeological remains and features of the built heritage. Avoiding the neglect and loss of built fabric and promoting the efficient use of land and buildings are two ways in which the planning system can contribute towards sustainable economic development. The aim of stewardship of our archaeological and built heritage is not to halt change, rather to manage it positively. Achieving a balance between conservation and development will have to be considered as part of our Sustainability Appraisal which will be ongoing throughout the LDP process.

##### *Listed Buildings*

- 2.22 Listed buildings are legislated for under Article 80 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011. Once a building is listed, Article 85 of the 2011 Act provides that consent is required for its demolition and for any works of alteration or extension in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed building controls apply to all works, including repairs that affect a building's special interest, whether or not the particular feature concerned is specifically mentioned in the list description. The design of new buildings planned to stand alongside historic buildings is particularly critical. Such buildings must be designed to respect their setting, follow fundamental architectural principles of scale, height, massing and alignment and use appropriate materials. The Council will operate a general presumption in favour of the preservation of listed buildings. Applicants

for listed building consent or planning permission affecting a listed building must therefore be able to justify their proposals and will need to show why they are desirable or necessary. Policies BH 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 of PPS6 currently refer to change of use, extension or alteration, advertisements, demolition and development affecting the setting of a Listed Building, respectively.

#### *Conservation Areas*

- 2.23 Conservation Areas are legislated for under Article 104 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011. Designation as a conservation area puts an onus on prospective developers to produce a very high standard of design, which respects or enhances the particular qualities of the area in question. Where any proposed development would harm the character, appearance or setting of a conservation area it will not normally be permitted. Policies BH 12, 13 and 14 relate to new development, advertisements and demolition in a Conservation Area, respectively.
- 2.24 Development should be in harmony with, or complimentary to, its neighbours having regard to the adjoining architectural styles. The use of materials generally matching those which are historically dominant in the area is important, as is the need for the development not to have a visually disruptive impact on the existing townscape. It should also, as far as possible, fit into the “grain” of the conservation area, for example, by respecting historic layout, street patterns or existing land form. It is also important where new uses are proposed that these respect the unique character and general ambience of a conservation area, for example certain developments may adversely affect the character of a conservation area through noise, nuisance and general disturbance.
- 2.25 Once the area is designated, Article 105 of the 2011 Act provides consent is required for the demolition of the majority of buildings within the Conservation Area. The Council will normally only permit the demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area where the building makes no material contribution to the character or appearance of the area. Where conservation area consent for demolition is granted this will normally be conditional on prior agreement for the redevelopment of the site and appropriate arrangements for recording the building before its demolition.

#### *PPS 6 (Addendum): Areas of Townscape Character*

- 2.26 An Area of Townscape Character (ATC) is designated through the Development Plan Process. The importance of ATCs is recognised in Strategic Planning Guidance ENV 3.3 of the RDS, and reinforced through RG11 (RDS 2035), which advises on the need to: “protect designated Areas of Townscape Character where the inherited mix and layout of buildings of different ages, styles and functions adds to the quality of life of the local community and keep under review the merits of extending Conservation Area status to townscapes of distinctive character.”
- 2.27 In recognition of their importance, planning permission is required for the demolition of an unlisted building in ATCs. In processing planning applications



within ATCs, the key consideration for the Council will be to ensure that development proposals respect the appearance and qualities of each townscape area and maintain or enhance their distinctive character. It is acknowledged, however, there may be exceptional cases where this consideration may be overridden in favour of development which is desirable in the public interest.

#### PPS 3 Access, Movement and Parking

2.28 PPS 3 sets out the planning policies for vehicular and pedestrian access, transport assessment, the protection of transport routes and parking. It forms an important element in the integration of transport and land use planning. Development Control Advice Note 15 (DCAN 15) sets out and explains those standards contained in PPS 3 and is a material consideration for planning applications and appeals.

2.29 PPS 7 sets out the Department's planning policies for achieving quality in new residential development. Its main objectives are:

-To promote an integrated approach to achieving sustainable and quality residential environments.

-To promote quality residential development that:

- creates places for people which are attractive, locally distinctive and appropriate to their surroundings, safe, convenient, adaptable and easy to maintain;
- respects and enhances features of value and local character and promotes biodiversity; and
- reduces reliance on the private car, supports movement by pedestrians and cyclists, provides adequate and convenient access to public transport and connects well with the wider locality.

-To promote the comprehensive planning and development of residential areas and ensure that adequate information accompanies planning applications which will enable the delivery of an improved design quality.

-To ensure that adequate provision is made for infrastructure and appropriate local neighbourhood facilities as an integral part of residential development.

#### Design Guides

*Living Places: An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for NI (September 2014)*

2.30 Living Places aims to clearly establish the key principles behind good place making. It seeks to inform and inspire all those involved in the process of managing and making urban places, whether developers, architects, agents or citizens, with a view to raising standards across Northern Ireland. Its content will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and in the preparation of the LDP which will seek, through policy, improved design quality which functions effectively and has respect for surrounding buildings. It is likely that the LDP will place significant emphasis on the Living Places document, in particular seeking evidence of how its principles been considered and worked up into any submitted planning application.



2.31 Changes in the planning system present an excellent opportunity for better places in Derry City and Strabane District Council Area. Changes in planning policy are moving us towards a more place orientated spatial planning practice. In addition, a greater commitment to collaboration and participation will make stronger connections and build trust between the many different people whose input is central to place making.

2.32 The quality of our urban environment is of fundamental importance to the future of the Derry City and Strabane District Council area. Economically, our urban centres must work hard to sustain and improve the context for existing business whilst attracting new investors, employers, employees and visitors. Physically, our urban centres must adapt to become cleaner, more efficient and more attractive for the benefit of us all. And socially, our urban centres, will play a pivotal role to improving quality of life, breaking down barriers and helping Derry City and Strabane District to begin its journey of transformation.

*Creating Places: Achieving quality in residential environments (May 2000)*

2.33 This guide describes the contributions to quality and sustainability that developers in Northern Ireland will be expected to make through the design of new residential developments.

2.34 It seeks to ensure that what is designed and built today will be cherished by both present and future generations.

2.35 The guide is for use by all those involved in the design of new residential developments and the rejuvenation of existing housing areas – primarily house-builders, architects, landscape architects, urban designers, planners and road engineers. It is intentionally not slanted towards any one profession or group, in the belief that what is said here is relevant to all those who have an interest in the design of the places where we live.

*Building on Tradition: A Sustainable Design Guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside*

2.36 This guide has been prepared to assist all of those involved with sustainable development in the Northern Ireland countryside to understand the requirements of Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 21 'Sustainable Development in the Countryside' - as published in June 2010. It seeks to address current trends in relation to poor standards of design that if left unchanged will gradually erode what is valued and considered special about our environment.

2.37 It is written primarily for the use of those who are thinking of building in the countryside, to help them understand what the policy is aiming to achieve and how to put together well designed development projects that conform to a new set of planning requirements. It is also written to assist all of those who provide design, construction, maintenance and conservation services for new development



projects featuring information and best practice advice on sustainable rural development.

#### Supplementary Planning Guidance

##### *DCAN 8: Housing in Existing Urban Areas*

2.38 This Advice Note, published in June 2002, provides advice which will help to ensure that urban and environmental quality is maintained, amenity preserved, and privacy respected when proposals are being considered for new housing development within existing urban areas.

2.39 The guidance promotes a design approach to housing in existing urban areas and sets forward a series of strategic design principles, including urban form, movement and urban structure. It also sets out a number of detailed design principles, including advice on parking, amenity, open space, provision of cycle facilities and landscaping.

##### *DCAN 11: Access for All: Designing for an Accessible Environment*

2.40 This Advice Note, published in 1991, provides supplementary design guidance for developers and their agents, aimed at creating a more accessible environment for all in support of the Council's planning policies.

2.41 The guidance is clearly focused on people with disabilities, but creating a more accessible and hospitable environment will also benefit others, such as the elderly, carers, parents with small children, people with temporary mobility problems (e.g. a leg in plaster) or simply those carrying luggage or heavy shopping.

2.42 Our built environment has not been designed with the needs of people with disabilities in mind, yet it is estimated that about 20% of the population has some form of permanent or temporary disability (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland 2001). This represents some 340,000 people.

2.43 Developers and designers should note that where access for all is designed in a scheme at the beginning and incorporated at planning stage this will help avoid later problems of compliance with the requirements of the Building Regulations or the rights provided by the Disability Discrimination Act. It is also far more cost effective than adapting buildings at a later date.

2.44 Employers and service providers will be acting unlawfully if they fail to comply with the duties imposed by the DDA and cannot show that the failure is justified. It will therefore be cost effective for employers and service providers to plan ahead by undertaking an access audit to evaluate whether or not physical improvements to their premises are necessary

##### *Current Area Plans*

2.45 The existing **Derry Area Plan 2011** was adopted in May 2000 and is now beyond its notional end date of 2011. The DAP 2011 is primarily a land use plan, which



- had a purpose of providing guidance on the amount and nature of development that can be expected and where it can be best located.
- 2.46 The DAP emphasises that it provided a policy framework only and it does not deal with matters of detail which will be resolved through the development management process. Notwithstanding this, it does contain broad objectives and policy that can be considered material in the formulation of this chapter.
- 2.47 It is noted that amongst its objectives there is support for sustainable development while protecting its natural assets and man-made heritage for the enjoyment of future generations, promotion of alternative means of transport, conserving and improving the built and natural environment and ensuring that all proposals wherever located pays attention to good design, positive contribution to the character of the area, and landscaping.
- 2.48 Furthermore, the DAP contains specific policies in relation to design within settlements. Chapter 5 Built Environment contains 12 policies and 1 proposal, of which BE 1 deals with Urban Design and BE 2 – BE 12 deals with Built Heritage.
- 2.49 *Policy BE 1 Urban Design:* The Council will require development proposals to make a positive contribution to townscape and be sensitive to the character of the area surrounding the site in terms of design, scale and use of materials. Development proposals should respect the opportunities and constraints of the specific site and have regard to the potential to create a new sense of place through sensitive design.
- 2.50 *Policy SE 1 Development within Villages and Small Settlements:* This policy development within settlement limits will normally be acceptable provided they are in keeping with the size and character of the settlement, do not lead either individually or cumulatively to a loss of amenity and comply with all other relevant Plan policies.
- 2.51 *Proposal CA 9 Redevelopment Areas:* The Department defines 3 redevelopment Areas at Meadowbank, McFarland Quay and Queen's Quay. Within these areas the Department will encourage a comprehensive approach to regeneration. All of these areas lie at the interface between City and River and consequently particular attention will be paid as to how proposals address this strategic location.
- 2.52 *Proposal CA 10 Opportunity Sites:* The Department defines Opportunity Sites within the Central Area.  
These opportunity sites are at St. Columb's Road, Good Shepherd Convent, Dunfield Terrace, Bishop Street Within and Bishop Street Without, Palace Street, East Wall, Foyle Street (2 sites), Victoria Market, Clyde Street and College Terrace. Work has already commenced on a number of these areas. Some of these sites are particularly suitable for certain uses and, where appropriate, these preferred uses have been indicated on Map 3.



On sites not so designated, the Department will assess each proposal separately and on its individual merits bearing location or neighbouring uses in mind.

- 2.53 *DAP Riverside Strategy*: The City has enjoyed a long and rich maritime history centred on the river. Important aspects of this history have included emigration from the North West, wartime naval base and, until recently, port activities and related industrial uses.

The relocation of the port downstream to Lisahally has provided the opportunity and the need to consider a comprehensive overview for the future development of the riverside and to realise its potential in contributing to the activities of the City. The Department recognises the widespread public desire to re-establish a meaningful relationship between the City and its river and to make use of this resource for the wider economic and environmental benefits of the City and District.

The Department's strategy for the riverside is:

- to re-establish activity by developing connections between the City and its river;
- to utilise fully under-used land for the economic and environmental benefit of the City;
- to achieve good urban design, improving the image of the City.

- 2.54 *Central Area Urban Design Principles*: A number of urban design principles have been identified. These include:

- buildings should define the street pattern and elevations should be visually interesting;
- servicing should be totally incorporated within the building envelope;
- large areas of surface level parking should be avoided;
- parking should be screened from view, preferably within the building envelope;
- parking areas should not be visible along the riverside;
- important views of the City skyline should be protected;
- building height should be commensurate with the overall scale and context of the riverside.

- 2.55 DAP 2011 also advises that Supplementary Planning Guidance for the 'Riverside' can be found within "Foyle Riverside Strategy". This consists of two documents, "Realising the Opportunities" and "Establishing Design Principles" which further detail the approach required by the Plan.

*Strabane Area Plan (SAP)*

- 2.56 The **Strabane Area Plan 2001** was adopted in 1991 and is beyond its notional end date of 2001. It is also a land use plan and like the DAP it provides broad objectives that are consistent with the principles of development, such as the aim to improve the quality of the urban environment, conserving and enhancing the natural and man-made environment and to promote vibrant town and village



centres by increasing their attractiveness as places in which to live, work, use and invest.

- 2.57 Section 19.3 of the SAP relates to Urban Areas and covers the Urban Environment and Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings. Under Urban Environment the SAP states each settlement within the district has its own distinctive character. Future development should ensure the preservation of existing assets and should make a positive contribution to improvement in the quality of the urban environment. New development should be carefully designed to respect the scale and character of existing buildings, using sympathetic building materials and should respect existing street patterns, land marks, topographical and other features which contribute to the character of each town.
- 2.58 Under Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings, the SAP states that where an area displays characteristics considered to be of special architectural or historic interest and as such is deserving of protection or enhancement the Council may designate it as a Conservation Area.
- 2.59 Since the publication of the SAP, Newtownstewart was designated as the second Conservation Area (designated in 1993) to join Sion Mills (designated in 1977). The SAP states development proposals are assessed by the Council on the positive contribution they make to the protection and enhancement of the character of the area. The SAP noted that the District contained a substantial number of Listed Buildings.

Conservation Area Design Guidance:

- 2.60 There are five Conservation Areas within the Derry City and Strabane District:
- Sion Mills (1977);
  - Historic City (1977);
  - Clarendon Street (1978);
  - Newtownstewart (1993);
  - Magee (2006).
  -
- 2.70 Each Conservation Area has its own design guide which provides information on the planning context, character appraisal and historic development and gives guidelines for future development proposals.
- 2.71 The Guides aim to encourage a well-cared for historic environment by promoting the retention of authentic historic fabric and the use of appropriate materials and historic construction methods for repairs. It fosters a context for the evolution of high quality contemporary architecture and landscape architecture in extensions and new build proposals. It is intended to be sufficiently robust to discourage poor quality design proposals and inappropriate approaches to conservation.



## Other Relevant plans

### *Derry City and Strabane District Council Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan – Our Community Plan:*

- 2.72 The SGP provides a unique opportunity for the Council to genuinely shape the District for local communities and will enable them to adopt a joined up approach, incorporating linkages to other functions such as regeneration, local economic development and community planning. The Local Government Act introduces a statutory link between the Community Plan (CP) and the LDP, in that the preparation of the LDP must 'take account' of the CP. It is intended that the LDP will be the spatial reflection of the SGP and that the two should work in tandem towards the same vision for the Council area and our communities and set the long term social, economic and environmental objectives for the District.
- 2.73 The SGP is committed to growing Derry as the regional capital, promoting sustainability and supporting health and well-being. Its sets out outcomes and key actions for economic, social and environmental well-being and aims to prepare a development and conservation spatial framework and masterplan for both Derry City Centre and Riverfront and Strabane Town Centre to provide high quality design and regeneration and investment. It also seeks to provide quality social and private housing in sustainable urban and rural neighbourhoods to meet the needs of our growing population providing attractive places to live within easy access to local services and amenities. Also to design and deliver high quality public realm schemes in our urban centres using innovative arts and cultural interventions. Actions focus on the environmental and physical regeneration of our urban and rural places, on our built and natural environment, on how they interact, and on how we live as part of both in a sustainable way.

### *Green Infrastructure Plan 2019-2032*

- 2.74 Green Infrastructure (GI) is an interconnected network of multi-functional natural and semi-natural areas, which provide multiple environmental, economic and social benefits, linked throughout the urban and rural landscape. It is mostly comprised of countryside, parks, natural habitats, allotments and green links (river and stream corridors, pedestrian and cycling routes). These spaces provide a mix of functions including recreation, sustainable transport, education, wildlife habitat, flood risk management, local food production, energy production and ecosystem services. Often these functions overlap, for example, a woodland can provide a habitat for wildlife, a recreational asset, a landscape feature and a fuel supply. GI can provide several environmental, social and economic functions within a site. For example, it will aim to physically connect areas of open space, to include the district's key parks, habitats, other open space features, greenways and blueways, in an interlinked network of GI corridors. Also, it will link the main urban areas with the urban fringes, countryside and with adjacent districts.



- 2.75 GI can provide several environmental, social and economic functions within a site. For example, it will aim to physically connect areas of open space, to include the district's key parks, habitats, other open space features, greenways and blueways, in an interlinked network of GI corridors. Also, it will link the main urban areas with the urban fringes, countryside and with adjacent districts.
- 2.76 Derry City & Strabane District Council and its Green Infrastructure (GI) partners have developed a GI Plan for the district that aims to improve its green and blue spaces. It outlines a new approach that requires a change to the way we think about and value these spaces. It highlights that these areas provide a range of benefits including helping mitigate the impact of climate change, improving public parks, play areas, food growing opportunities and the development of greenways as well as protecting biodiversity and providing a range of ecosystem services.  
*The One Plan*
- 2.77 The One Plan was published by Ilex in 2011. The 'Building Better Communities' section relates to Quality Spaces, Places and Neighbourhoods and identifies that this project aims to develop public realm, open, green and living spaces across the City in order to create high quality places, spaces and neighbourhoods. Outcomes include:
- New public realm, green spaces, parks and play areas;
  - Development of allotments and urban gardening programme;
  - Continuous riverside public realm;
  - Walled City Masterplan;
  - Job creation targeted at the most disadvantaged;
  - City Centre Development Framework and
  - *Strabane Masterplan*.
- 2.78 The RDS states that the Strabane Town Centre Masterplan sets out the blueprint for further enhancement of the town. The Masterplan, commissioned by DSD and the former Strabane District Council, and published in September 2010, addressed the retail, leisure, employment, transport and public space development opportunities for Strabane Town Centre. The purpose is to provide strategic guidance for the regeneration of Strabane Town Centre, protecting its physical, social and economic capital.
- 2.79 It has identified sites capable of supporting development with the potential to assist regeneration of the town centre; the potential for new leisure/retail offering at the SCORE site; the creation of a new public space to provide a civic focus for the cultural core of Strabane; and the potential development for mixed used retail to complement the existing retail core. With regards to Economic Regeneration, the Masterplan identifies the economic implications that need to be addressed. Some of these implications are:
- Widen its employment base from the dominant agriculture and manufacturing;



- Strabane must compete for additional jobs in business, retail, distribution, hotel and construction services;
- Exploitation of the Derry and cross border markets;
- To address the skills and qualifications mismatch. Business will be attracted by high skill levels.

#### *Ebrington Development Framework (EDF)*

- 2.80 Ebrington sits in a distinctive, prominent and central riverside location in the Waterside area of Derry-Londonderry and covers approximately 26 acres/10.5 hectares. The Framework, assisted by significant public input, proposes a development mix incorporating creative industries, culture, learning, community and commercial uses, and some residential/live-work accommodation. The EDF states that the city needs inward investment and a scale and critical mass of economic, social and cultural elements to become a driver for the Region. Ebrington (unlike anywhere else in terms of scale, character and signature location) can uniquely deliver these benefits.
- 2.90 A balanced approach to the framework has been developed to address social and employment needs; to introduce a mixed use area, which focuses largely on culture, creative industries, tourism and learning. This mix – with social integration and permeability at the core – will ultimately yield a sustainable place where people want to live, learn, work, play, visit and be proud of.
- 2.95 Strategic Objective 6 is to overcome the physical inadequacies of the urban riverfront and enable the use of the river as a key element in the sustainable regeneration of the waterfront and wider city-region. This will involve:
- Re-orientate the focus of the city towards the river;
  - Create a high quality, safe, welcoming and attractive riverside environment; containing a diverse mix of uses for a variety of users;
  - Grow the city's evening economy on the waterfront and the city-centre;
  - Reduce pedestrian severance and
  - Secure new and improved leisure, tourism and recreation infrastructure.
- 2.96 If Derry is to positively regenerate its waterfront, the whole of the city needs to be considered, and in many ways especially in urban terms, where the city needs to be re-balanced on a strategic planning level. It could be said that what must be done is to invert the focus of development upon the city's outer hinterland where vast swathes of land are currently zoned to accommodate the future housing needs of the city, so that regeneration focuses on the more central and sustainable location of the River Foyle in the core of the city.

#### **Fort George Development Framework**

- 2.97 Fort George Development Framework provides for up to 82,274 sqm of floorspace. To date a portion of the site has been developed for office accommodation (the North West Regional Science Park, NWRSP) and the construction of the Hibernia

Exchange Centre (Project Kelvin facility) to bring direct international connectivity to Fort George and the North West.

- 2.98 Planning Application A/2012/0335/O granted outline permission in December 2015 for the development of this former MOD site; it is located just within the Central Area. The proposal set out the development framework for the 6.2 ha site and provides for a significant mixed use development to include residential, office, employment and education uses, retail, cafes, bars and restaurants and associated multi story and surface car parking.

*Urban Villages Initiative (May 2013)*

- 2.99 Urban Villages Initiative is part of the NI Executive's Together: Building a United Community Strategy published in May 2013, which outlined that Urban Villages would be established to create and stabilise change within communities. The Bogside, Fountain and Bishop Street areas are one of five initiative areas in Northern Ireland. The Urban Village project is designed to tackle dereliction and decay within urban communities, tackling the low social capital that can create instability and disengagement, improving community confidence and securing the necessary foundations to foster better community relations within and between communities. One of the Strategic actions is to Transform Places by: tackling dereliction and vacancy; creating a well-designed sustainable and thriving place that maximises connections and creates effective shared space.

*Strategic Riverside Masterplan (draft published 2011)*

- 2.100 The Strategic Riverside Masterplan has three principal purposes:

- To secure a spatial strategy for the river corridor in the wider study area;
- To stimulate leisure, recreation and tourism opportunities creating employment whilst preserving and enhancing the environmental value of the river asset;
- To secure a detailed framework to guide development along the urban waterfront between the Foyle and Craigavon Bridges setting standards that will help regenerate the city.

- 2.101 The Strategic Riverside Masterplan consists of two main parts – a River Strategy, which covers the entire study area from Culmore to Newbuildings and an Urban Waterfront Framework, focusing in more detail upon the Riverbanks between the Foyle and Craigavon Bridges.

- 2.102 The River Strategy states that within Derry~Londonderry the major impact upon access to the riverside is created by having one of the city's main strategic arterial routes running directly adjacent to the river between the Craigavon and Foyle bridges on the Cityside. Such severance also exists on the Waterside as a result of the location of the railway line running along the eastern shoreline. Whilst the city has an extensive network of dedicated pedestrian and cycle paths, their connectivity (particularly along urban waterfront areas) and access to the waterfront itself from surrounding communities is interrupted by competing land



uses, namely arterial roads, car parks and rail. Integration between rail and bus services serving the city is fractured as a result of the each terminal being located on opposite sides of the river.

2.103 The Urban Waterfront Framework focuses on the waterfront areas between the Foyle and Craigavon Bridge. Its purpose is: “to set out rules for future development such that:

- The intentions of the river strategy are protected in the city;
- A vision for the waterfront city centre is established to stimulate development; and
- A framework is established to guide development along the urban waterfront between the Foyle and Craigavon Bridges which can be relied upon for development management purposes.

2.104 The Riverside Masterplan identifies that development of Derry~Londonderry over the past half century has shifted away from the River Foyle. As a consequence, the river is an almost wholly unexploited resource in the city and region alike. With limited recreational use, the river is largely silent and under-utilised by the city which has turned its back on this significant natural asset.

2.105 The Riverside Masterplan seeks to:

- Re-establish activity by developing connections between the city and its river.
- Utilise fully under-utilised land for the economic and environmental benefit of the city.
- Achieve good urban design, improving the image of the city.

*Strategic Masterplan for the Foyle Valley Gateway*

2.106 Commissioned by the former Derry City Council in 2013, this Masterplan represents a shared vision for the future of an important part of the City. It builds upon an in-depth understanding of the area and its people to identify opportunities for positive physical, social and economic change.

2.107 Chapter 6 relates to the Masterplan Concept and provides a strategic framework within which a suite of initiatives have been identified to address the social, economic and physical needs of the people that live, work, visit and study in the area.

*Spatial Movement Analysis and Masterplan Review – Ilex Urban Regeneration Company: Space Syntax*

2.108 In 2010 Ilex URC commissioned Space Syntax to provide an Urban Baseline Study and to evaluate the impact of proposed masterplans on how the city functions and can grow. Using spatial modelling techniques and on-site surveys, the spatial potential of the whole city was assessed with a particular focus on two masterplan sites, Fort George and Ebrington. This progress report identifies the highest concentration of landmark buildings within the city as being within the city



centre, and specifically within the City Walls. The report shows, in diagram form, that there is a highest concentration of pedestrian movement within the city centre, especially at Ferryquay Street and Newmarket Street as well as Waterloo Place and the Strand Road between Great James Street and Waterloo Street.

2.109 Chapter 4 of the report relates to Development Sites Overview and it identifies large areas which will potentially be developed in the future. The largest sites are St Columb's Park, Ebrington, Bay Road Industrial Park and Fort George. There are also a number of sites identified along both sides of the river.

2.110 The former Strabane District Council were involved in progressing economic development priorities in the rural areas of Strabane District to enhance the business, community, economic and social fabric of the Mourne-Derg and Glenelly areas. Mourne-Derg and Glenelly Rural Action Plans were produced. Integrated Village Plans have also been produced for areas including Clady, Cranagh, Donemana, Killeter and Victoria Bridge.

*Access Plan Derry~Londonderry 2009-2014*

2.111 The Plan aims to identify and develop walking and cycling access provision across the former Derry City Council District while simultaneously promoting new access opportunities, both urban and rural, in order to ensure the continued enjoyment and appreciation of the countryside by both local residents and visitors. The Plan recognizes the high environmental quality of our district as an important factor in attracting investors and visitors through increased access opportunities.

*Changing Gear – A Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland (August 2015)*

2.112 This high level DRD strategy aims over a 25 year period to set out progressively how we can transform NI into a place where travelling by bicycle is a healthy, every day activity. It will be supported by a Bicycle Strategy Delivery Plan which will outline specific time bound actions to realise the strategy. Future urban design in our District will need to accommodate the aims and vision of this strategy by improving cycling infrastructure which will enable more people to access facilities in our urban centres by bicycle or by multi-modal journeys.



### **3.0 Assets within Derry City and Strabane District Council Area.**

3.1 Clearly history and landscape have shaped us. Derry has been shaped by its hills, rivers and defensive walls. The Peace Bridge and the Riverside Walks on both sides of the city have opened up the River Foyle. Strabane has been shaped by its rivers, its role as a market town, and the town centre has canal heritage. Both Derry City and Strabane Town benefit from views into and out to the surrounding countryside especially the Sperrin and Donegal Hills. This is reflected elsewhere throughout our settlements. Landscape Assessment will be an important consideration in the LDP.

#### *Scheduled Monuments*

3.2 There are 128 Scheduled Monuments currently scheduled in the Derry City and Strabane District Council Area, including 28 Monuments in State Care. These include the iconic Derry Walls - the largest monument in State Care in Northern Ireland. The DAP 2011 identifies the area around the Walls as an area of archaeological potential, within which site evaluation may be necessary to reach a planning decision. Other notable scheduled monuments are the 14th Century Harry Avery's Castle (Newtownstewart) and the 15th Century Derg Castle (Castlederg).

3.3 In all cases the desirability of preserving an archaeological site or monument and its setting, whether scheduled or otherwise, is a material consideration in determining planning applications. Accordingly in assessing the archaeological implications of a development proposal, the Council will consider whether it would damage or destroy the site or monument, result in inappropriate change to its setting or whether the existing quality and character of the site or monument would be retained. Scheduling is an ongoing process, therefore the number of scheduled monuments may change as new monuments are added.

#### *Listed Buildings*

3.4 There are 675 Listed Buildings within the Derry City and Strabane District Council Area. The term "building" is defined broadly and can include, walls and bridges as well as structures falling in the more usual understanding of the term. Protection also extends to the interior of listed buildings and to most buildings within the curtilage of the listed structure. Buildings included in the statutory list are divided into three grades A, B+ and B. The Council would however emphasise that the statutory controls apply equally to all listed buildings, irrespective of grade.



### *Conservation Areas*

- 3.5 There are five Conservation Areas located within the Derry City and Strabane District Council area. The prime consideration in assessing whether new development proposals are acceptable will be the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of these areas. The Walled City and Clarendon Street Conservation Areas were reviewed in 2004 and both had their boundaries amended.

### *Areas of Townscape Character*

- 3.6 As noted there are four ATC's identified in the Derry Area Plan 2011.

### *Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes*

- 3.7 There are 9 registered in the District, and 13 supplementary sites. The register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes can be reviewed as part of the LDP process.

### *Other Council Initiatives*

#### *Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)*

- 3.7 Townscape Heritage Initiative is the Heritage Lottery Fund's grant giving programme for the repair and regeneration of the historic environment in towns and cities throughout the UK. Derry currently has a THI scheme, facilitated by the Walled City Partnership, which is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The THI scheme is located within the Historic City Conservation Area. There are various funders, including Derry City and Strabane District Council and NIHE. The Council's Planning Conservation Officer sits as an advisor to the Board.
- 3.7 Phase I of the THI scheme commenced in 2002 and was completed in March 2010. A total of fifteen properties within the THI area benefited from the scheme. The Heritage Lottery Fund provided a grant of £1 million for Phase I, and when partnership funding and owner contributions were included, resulted in an overall investment in the region of £4.5 million. The Walled City Partnership secured a further £1.669 million for a second phase which commenced during November 2010. The purpose of the Phase II was to build upon and reinforce the positive impact of Phase I.

#### **4.0 Urban Design / Townscape - Implications for the LDP**

- 4.1 In looking forward positively, we must acknowledge NI's troubled past and, in particular the resulting planning legacy across our District's city and towns. In the past, urban design and townscape were not considered priority. It could be said that there was an emphasis on a 'business as usual' approach and that accordingly design took a backseat.
- 4.2 It is incumbent on all involved in the preparation of the LDP to ensure that it promotes, via appropriate policies, a new requirement for enhanced design and stewardship across our District. This will necessitate a drive for contextual design which delivers iconic development and successful place-making. We should be ensuring that any future development seeks to enhance the unique qualities of its surroundings – particularly should they comprise built and archaeological.
- 4.3 The existing statutory consultees, The Department for Communities, Protecting Historic Buildings & Historic Monuments and the Historic Buildings Council will continue to perform their current role and provide advice, both in LDP preparation and through the Development Management process.
- 4.4 The importance of a promoting good urban design and the protection of our built heritage is a balance that has to be struck for our urban areas to thrive. The LDP presents a new opportunity and will strive to protect the built heritage, while at the same time promoting excellent design. The Community Plan will feed into the LDP to begin a community based consideration of how we want our future built form, both urban and rural, to look, as together we seek to design visionary, attractive, safe and accessible built form, reflective of the aspirations of this district.
- 4.5 As stated in 2.2.4, the 2014 Living Places document seeks to inform and inspire all those involved in the process of managing all those involved in the process of managing (stewardship) and making (design) urban places, with a view to raising standards across Northern Ireland. It will be a key reference in the production of our LDP and in the Community Planning process. Its content will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and planning appeals. Accordingly it is proposed to mainstream the contents of Living Spaces into the development of the LDP – both in terms of its overarching strategic guidance and in the development of specific policy to action its requirements.
- 4.6 Our City and towns have always been shaped by their economic context. Yet, acute deprivation remains a persistent problem for many of our citizens living in our settlements. Overcoming the physical, social and economic barriers of inequality must be an objective of all place making and regeneration initiatives within the LDP. Furthermore, the beginnings of the 21st century have been characterised by a global recession that has reconfigured Northern Ireland's economic landscape. One of the most visible effects has been the impact on retail,



which, combined with increased online shopping, requires action to safeguard the economic sustainability of our town and city centres.

- 4.7 Another challenge facing urban places is the impact of car oriented development. Car ownership in Northern Ireland is one of the highest per capita of the UK population. The impacts of this are widespread and have several direct relationships with the quality of our urban environments. The first is environmental, which in addition to global implications, results in localised health risks associated with air pollution at congested locations. 'Having to drive' instead of walking or cycling also affects our own levels of personal health and fitness.
- 4.8 The second impact is spatial, where our urban roads and car parks become choked with congestion. Furthermore, the necessary infrastructure to accommodate such traffic can dominate its surroundings and impact physically upon adjacent communities by creating barriers. The third impact of a car oriented development is social, with new 'exurban' areas built to a very low density, thereby reducing their ability to support shops, public transport and other community services. Such development goes hand in hand with the continued depopulation of traditional town and city centres.
- 4.9 While acknowledging the significant impact of car ownership on our urban environments, conversely within our District we have to recognise the opposite situation also exists. There are many citizens who do not own or have access to a car. Instead they have to rely on taxis and public transport for their daily access. In developing sustainably, we have to factor in the needs of those without car access when planning future housing schemes.
- 4.10 Our District has not escaped the unique set of NI socio-political circumstances, tragically defined by the Troubles conflict of the late 20th Century. Although much progress has been made in recent years, a legacy of division remains which materialises in many of our urban centres and city neighbourhoods. As long as tension and mistrust exists between communities of different religious and political backgrounds, the existence of physical barriers (or Peacewalls), of invisible territorial barriers and of spatial demarcation through murals and flags will continue to greatly impede the ability of our urban areas to prosper. In the context of continued efforts to jointly resolve such complex issues, the planning of 'neutral' urban space, not only for commerce and leisure, but also as places to live, will remain especially important.



- 4.11 'Living Spaces' advocates that ten qualities of urban stewardship and design are pursued. It is proposed that the LDP will take the lead on these in strategically implementing them when delivering the planning function across the District. The successful delivery of these principles and the making of successful places involves many more people than just architects and planners. Good places are the result of collective endeavour. The LDP relevance in each of these ten qualities is outlined as follows:

*Visionary:*

- 4.12 A primary ingredient of good place-making is vision. Few successful urban places come about by accident and even fewer remain so without concerted intervention. Such places need a clear vision at their heart to ensure that existing qualities are protected and future potential is realised. Many of our greatest cities, towns and spaces have derived from a bold vision which was subsequently delivered and upheld. Today this process requires a common understanding between all those involved in shaping a specific place, so that their actions over time contribute positively to its success. Without such a shared vision, the fate of an urban place is left to chance.
- 4.13 The LDP will need to clearly articulate the strategic vision for this District as brought forward in the Community Plan. Subsequently it will need to clearly translate this vision into sustainable zonings and policy, setting out a sound evidence base and effectively communicating an interdisciplinary process for creating successful places.

*Collaborative:*

- 4.14 The shared use, extent and impact of urban places on us all is such that no single person or organisation is capable of mastering such complexity or shouldering such responsibility. It is not the sole remit of planning officials. Shaping places with rather than for those who will use it will be the focus of the LDP. Finding and maintaining effective means of communication will be absolutely central to the collaborative process of place making. Care will be taken, therefore, to employ language in the LDP that is understood by all and that resists complicated terminology or jargon. Another greatly undervalued skill in participative planning is listening. Accurately hearing and understanding the needs and opinions of others is the cornerstone to developing a responsive outcome.

*Contextual:*

- 4.15 Our urban places sit within a wider landscape, be it urban or rural. Context is cultural, social and economic, as well as physical and visual. By successfully relating with this context, places not only function and look better, but they also make a more meaningful contribution to a wider 'sense of place'. It is likely the LDP will seek through its policy and the Key Site Requirements (KSR) for zonings, that applicants demonstrate an understanding of the following:
- Understanding place;
  - Natural systems;



- Harnessing heritage;
- Contextual design;
- Appropriate scale; &
- Edge, boundaries and transitions.

*Responsible:*

4.16 Successful places make the most of limited resources, be they natural, spatial or financial. A major shift in the economic landscape has seen a marked reduction of investment in our City and towns. A new-found responsibility is therefore placed upon us all to change our ways, not least in how we develop and manage our urban environments. The steady onset of climate change means the LDP will need to promote the use of new technologies, which through encouragement and requirement must continue to become the norm in mainstream development practice. For example, managing grey and storm water via rainwater harvesting and sustainable urban drainage systems, can save greatly on water infrastructure costs. Solar panels are innovative ways in which to supplement traditional energy sources, but their use in Conservation Areas will need to be carefully articulated and controlled to maintain the intrinsic character of the built heritage.

4.17 It is also imperative that the LDP strives to make the most of those limited resources we have. Capital expenditure by the public sector is one such area where many unrealised opportunities exist for this Council and its LDP to join forces with departments and agencies in a specific location. For example, the development of the A5 upgrade within this District needs to be factored into the LDP preparation to examine the mitigation of impacts and to take advantage of the opportunities. Enhanced tree and vegetation planting in our urban areas to enhance local biodiversity and abate noise are also likely proposals within the LDP.

*Accessible:*

4.18 Urban centres and their public realm are for everyone. They are destinations for economic and social activity and consequently remain for most of us places of necessity as much as they are of choice. It is therefore incumbent upon all those who design and manage urban places to ensure that everyone can reach them with ease. Doing so requires an understanding of all the different users and their needs, regardless of ability or background. Our own Peace Bridge not only adds a striking modern landmark to this historic city, but also contributes a vital foot and cycle connection.

4.19 Connectivity, legibility and car parking will be key areas of focus within the LDP and will be covered in subsequent reports prepared by urban design consultants.

*Hospitable:*

4.20 Successful places make us feel good. Human beings require to feel safe and comfortable in their surrounding environments. Our first impressions and the way in which we feel about a place will inform the decisions we make. How long will I



stay, will I come back and what will I say to others about this place? The answer to such questions have profound implications for the sustained social and economic success of our District's urban places.

- 4.21 The LDP will need to stress that the layout and design of our urban centres can influence the health of their users. Urban layouts, the quality of their design and the provision of green open spaces are also influential factors in the decision of people to walk or cycle, leading to increased exercise and reduced car use. The design and layout of our urban areas also contributes to how safe it is and feels. Public spaces including streets, should be overlooked as much as possible by the windows of adjacent buildings. Mixed use development helps to maintain activity levels through the day and evening, whilst also bestowing a sense of ownership which deters vandalism and other antisocial behaviours. Lighting must also be well provided for in publicly accessible urban areas, encouraging positive activity during the hours of darkness.
- 4.22 Urban centres should give everyone a positive welcome and sense of arrival. This must go beyond welcome signage and literature to become ingrained within the structure of our urban environments. Principal streets and spaces should be celebrated with a suitably scaled landmark building, establishing a hierarchy of streets within a settlement. Critically, derelict buildings and spaces in prominent locations must be tackled with urgency, so to eliminate the negative messages they inherently portray. The identification of such buildings and spaces across our District and their urgent need for redevelopment / regeneration will be highlighted in the LDP. Proposals for such buildings and spaces will be promoted for public comment and feedback through the EU IMPROVE project, which has just launched on the planning website. Citizens will also be able to leave their thoughts on Urban Design and Townscape, as well as all the other LDP topics, as part of the same IMPROVE project. [www.derrystrabane.com/LDP](http://www.derrystrabane.com/LDP).
- 4.23 Many of our safest urban centres are those with high levels of pedestrian activity, where the presence of many people deters criminal and antisocial behaviour. Conversely we all know how unsafe a very quiet or 'dead' urban space can feel. The animation of our urban areas can be achieved through the distribution of building uses, the coordination of opening times and regular events. Furthermore, repopulating our urban centres, including reoccupying the upper storeys of buildings, (e.g. Living Over the Shops), is an important long term objective. Assisting with the creation of a better evening economy for our City and town centres will also be an LDP priority.

*Vibrant & Diverse:*

- 4.24 Great urban centres buzz with activity. They are formed by a concentration of different uses, services and facilities, thereby attracting different people over a sustained period of time. Busy places are safe, engaging and even exciting. They sustain footfall - dependent businesses and create opportunities for cultural events and activities, both planned and impromptu.

- 4.25 It is vitally important that services and facilities, are located at the centre of our villages, towns and City. This establishes a critical mass of activity which sustains their economic, social and environmental viability, whilst keeping our urban centres safe and engaging places to visit. If such functions are dispersed across a settlement or worse, located beyond its urban limits, town centres risk falling into steady decline characterised by quiet streets and vacant sites. Furthermore, the dispersal of traditional services results in higher car usage, as pedestrian, cycle and public transport connections become unviable.
- 4.26 Activity levels in urban areas are directly linked to their density of development. Measured by the number of residential dwellings per hectare (Dph), traditionally medium to high densities have resulted in greater physical, social and economic activity levels, whereas low density development dissipates such activity. Through our LDP, we must strive to ensure our urban centres incorporate medium to high densities, whilst maintaining the other qualities necessary to create good urban places.
- 4.27 A key means by which this diversity can be achieved is through mixed use, type and tenure development. Mixed use involves bringing together different land and building uses in one urban area or building. By juxtaposing shops, offices and apartments, for example, activity levels are sustained at different times of the day, evening and week. Mixed type development involves a mix of dwelling sizes, such as 1 – 2 bed apartments and 3+ bed houses, which are attractive to people of different lifestyles and stages. Mixed tenure development should also comprise a mix of privately owned, privately let, affordable and social accommodation.
- 4.28 Buildings contribute greatly to the levels of activity we see along our streets and spaces. It is important, therefore, that they are planned and designed in a manner which maximises the activation of ground floor frontages. This is achieved by locating activity generating uses on the ground floor of buildings, (eg small shops, cafes, bars, community centres) and less activity generating uses on upper floors (e.g. offices, apartments, large shops, car parks). Further ground floor activation can be achieved through the provision of outdoor spill out space for stalls and seating, as well as generously proportioned openings that blur the boundaries between internal and external space.
- Crafted:*
- 4.29 It is no coincidence that many of our successful urban places are also attractive. Design quality impacts significantly on the overall character of a place, as well as its ability to function and prosper. A poorly designed building or open space can greatly compromise the overall strength of the place it is part of. Many of our most cherished urban places are testimony to the lasting power of good design. There is no reason why all our urban places should not attain such high standards.
- 4.30 Well designed places require a clear rationale based on evidence, as outlined under the quality of Vision. Similarly, successful buildings and spaces must have

a clear concept that underpins the way in which they look and function. Attractive buildings and spaces observe a number of aesthetic principles, which in good architecture often go unnoticed. Proportion, for example, governs the visual relationship of different elements with one another, resulting in a balanced aesthetic that is pleasing to the eye. Rhythm is another feature of successful building facades, where the distribution and spacing of windows, doors and other features forms a discernible rhythm, often tying in with adjacent buildings. The choice and distribution of materials is another important consideration, which should be underpinned by a clear rationale. Materials should have relevance to their location and sit well with one another in colour and texture. This will be stressed through the LDP and be made a requirement as part of the submitted design process.

- 4.31 It is essential that quality is a driver for urban development and regeneration across our District. Good urban places rely on consistent quality of design, materials, construction and maintenance, as well as the services which they offer. Quality must not be confused with cost. Buildings and spaces with modest budgets must still be designed to a high quality, using appropriate materials and maintained as intended from the outset. If through this process, costs impede the ability to deliver the original concept, then that concept should be revised, but not its quality.
- 4.32 Uniqueness is a precious feature of successful urban places, helping to forge their identity and reinforce their 'sense of place'. All places have unique attributes, be they views or natural features, buildings, open spaces, design details or materials. New design must therefore help to positively contribute to such identity through respect of its existing context and the incorporation of place specific features – such as important views to Derry Walls's. Place specific design does not however equate to mimicry or pastiche copies of existing places. Cutting edge, contemporary design can sit well within an existing urban context if it is of sufficient quality and it has understood, respected and responded to those unique features of its context. This will be particularly relevant within our Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape/ Village Character.

*Viable:*

- 4.33 good places need to be functional, flexible and lasting. The social and economic context of place is in a constant state of flux, often taking unforeseen directions. Consequently, a key quality of good place-making is flexibility. Buildings and spaces require flexibility built into their structure for changes of use. For example, ground floor units may be designed to accommodate retail or residential usages depending on demand.
- 4.34 Vacant buildings and spaces that no longer serve their intended purpose impact negatively upon the quality of our urban places. Efforts are therefore required to identify temporary uses and interventions that help to bring them back into use. 'Meanwhile occupancy' involves accommodating and incentivising appropriate

uses for vacant buildings and spaces. This often takes the form of ‘pop up shops’, which operate in empty premises for a limited period and for a reduced rate or rent.

- 4.35 Urban places provide different functions relative to their scale, infrastructure and regional context. It is vital that this role is understood by those shaping a vision and those taking decisions around provision of new facilities, services or commercial ventures in a specific urban area. The establishment of a sustainable settlement hierarchy for this District and fully understanding the role and services each provides, will be fundamental to the success of the LDP.

*Enduring:*

- 4.36 Places never stand still. As time passes they evolve and adapt, and the people involved with them come and go. We have a responsibility therefore to ensure that all our places remain successful and positive. Mixed use places not only help to generate positive activity and safety, they also strengthen the resilience of a place to the impact of external change. Good, lasting places normally consist of a variety of different uses, such as residential, employment, retail and leisure. They also often have a mix of private and public sector uses.
- 4.37 It is important that the LDP promotes a policy of adaptive reuse. Finding new uses for old buildings is a vitally important exercise that helps to re-energise urban places whilst retaining their unique identity and character. These precious buildings must not be regarded as a costly burden, but as an exciting opportunity for new development. They often prove more adaptable than modern counterparts, whilst also having the ability to attract different funding streams, such as grant aid for listed buildings.

*Key Issues for LDP to consider in relation to Place-making and Design*

- 4.38 There a number of key areas and arising issues in our District that place-making and design can influence during the plan period. Whilst the following list is not exhaustive, it gives a broad overview of key challenges and issues.

*City Deal*

- 4.39 The announcement of a City Deal package in May 2019 presents opportunities for re-development/ regeneration in Derry and Strabane. The ‘City Deal Vision and Outline Bid’ set out a number of key regeneration schemes that may be delivered through City Deal. These included the following:
- Central Riverfront Regeneration Project (CRRP) - The Central Riverfront is an integrated public/private sector programme of investment which will deliver the physical, economic, environmental and social regeneration of the City's currently underutilised banks of the River Foyle.
  - Strabane Town Centre Regeneration - The Canal Basin Regeneration Project will integrate a major health hub, further education campus, leisure centre and Council Office in the heart Strabane town centre, providing the opportunity for innovation through the link between these public services



*Existing regeneration sites at Ebrington and Fort George*

- 4.40 Whilst it is acknowledged that there are existing development frameworks for these sites, the LDP may still have a role to play in terms of delivering development that is not consistent with the original frameworks.

*Expansion of University*

- 4.41 Any potential expansion of the University must be managed carefully, using the principles of place-making and urban design.

*Maintaining our Historic Assets*

- 4.42 It is critical that the LDP plays a role in the maintenance of our historic assets, whether that be our Walled City, Historic Villages or Listed Building in both our urban and rural areas.

*Challenges of car-dominated infrastructure*

- 4.43 The evidence of the domination of car-led development is evident in our City and settlements. It is apparent through dual carriageways along our river fronts, surface level car parks, and the prevalence of cul-de-sac development and the increase of block perimeters beyond our historic cores. Place-making and Design has a key role to play in the considerable challenge of making our City, Towns, Villages and Settlements place for people rather than places for cars.

*Maintaining the character of our rural areas*

- 4.44 Place-making and design will influence how our small villages, settlements and open countryside will look for generations. Whilst the LDP will allow for sustainable development in the countryside, it is critical that it is not at the expense of the overall character of the rural area.



## 5.0 Preferred Options Stage

### POP Approach

- 5.1 Urban Design / Places was identified as a key topic a POP stage and 3 strategic planning options were provided.
- 5.2 Option 1 is that existing design standards are accepted – reasonable design sought on a site-by-site basis. This retains the status quo, where each application is assessed on its merits and appropriate design standards are sought.
- 5.3 Option 2 seeks a comprehensive drive for Place-Shaping, including high quality design of both buildings and key focal areas, in both urban and rural areas. This would provide for a higher quality design both in the rural and urban areas. The design of any proposed development will be as important any other aspect, when considering a planning application, which will make for a more attractive environment to live, work and socialise. Key urban focal areas may be identified within which development would be subject to enhanced design requirements.
- 5.4 Option 3 is for minimal design standards accepted with focus on development and investment paramount to the decision. This would place an emphasis on economic development and the need for good design would ultimately become a lesser requirement.
- 5.5 Further the above the POP set out approaches for Place-Making and Design Visions for each of the settlement tiers:

	LDP Approach	LDP Approach	Comments
<b>CITY Derry</b>	Continue current 'market-led' development. Do not intervene strategically in leading the city's regeneration.	Strategic leadership and intervention. Incorporate a strong Vision in the LDP for the city's regeneration. Commitment to future detailed Regeneration Framework and / or Supplementary Planning Guidance	Strategic Regeneration Framework to take account of opportunity/regeneration sites such as Ebrington, Fort George, Riverside, Harbour Square and Council-controlled assets.
<b>MAIN TOWN Strabane</b>	Continue current 'market-led' development. Do not intervene strategically in leading the	Strategic leadership and intervention. Incorporate a strong Vision in the LDP for the town's regeneration.	Strategic Regeneration Framework to take account of opportunity/regeneration sites such as the Canal Basin, Smith's Mill,



	town's regeneration.	Commitment to future detailed Regeneration Framework and / or Supplementary Planning Guidance	Railway St and traditional town centre area.
<b>LOCAL TOWNS Castleberg, Newtownstewart, Claudy</b>	Continue current 'market-led' development. Do not intervene strategically in leading the towns' regeneration.	Strategic leadership and intervention. Incorporate a strong Vision in the LDP for the towns' regeneration. Commitment to include a Design / Place-making Vision Statement in the LDP for each town.	Build upon and sustain existing strengths and assets of these towns.
<b>Sion Mills</b>	Continue current 'market-led' development. Do not intervene strategically in leading the settlement's regeneration.	Strategic leadership and intervention. Incorporate a strong Vision in the LDP for its regeneration. Commitment to include a Design / Place-making Vision Statement in the LDP.	Recognise the specific heritage qualities of the settlement and acknowledge other heritage initiatives carried out by the Council.
<b>Villages</b>	Continue current 'market-led' development. LDP Commitment to include a Design / Place-making Vision Statement in the LDP – for Villages tier.	Strategic leadership and intervention. Incorporate a strong Vision in the LDP for the villages' regeneration. Commitment to future detailed Regeneration Framework and / or Supplementary Planning guidance.	Be aware of the context, character and setting of our villages and encourage a good standard of design that acknowledges all of these
<b>Small Settlements</b>	Continue current 'market-led' development. LDP	Strategic leadership and intervention. Incorporate a strong Vision in the	Be aware of the context, character and setting of our small settlements and encourage a good



	Commitment to include a Design / Place-making Vision Statement in the LDP – for this tier.	LDP for the settlements’ regeneration. Commitment to future detailed Regeneration Framework and / or Supplementary Planning guidance.	standard of design that acknowledges all of these
<b>Open Countryside</b>	N/A		Good design standards, as set out in ‘Building on Tradition’

POP Responses

5.6 20 POP representations were received which referred to Place-Making and Design including specific comments relating to PM & D in Derry, Strabane, Local Towns, Villages, Small Settlements and the Countryside. These representations were received from Government Departments such as HED, DAERA and NIHE, bodies as such RPSB, Retail NI, as well as Councillors and planning consultants representing interested groups. There were also responses from members of the public and developers.

5.7 A range of POP responses were received and can be categorised in a number of key areas, ‘General comments relating to Place-making & Design’, ‘Comments relating to Derry’, ‘Comments relating to Strabane’, ‘Comments relating to towns, village and small settlements’ and ‘Comments relating to Countryside.’

General comments relating to Place-making & Design

5.8 There was a broad welcome to the approach suggested in the POP, with various bodies including government departments, lobby groups and planning professional registering positive comments in relation to the broad approach. Whilst welcoming the approach, they also stressed particular areas of focus that they wished to see in relation to any place-making and design vision/framework including a need for a focus on areas such as the natural environment, the historic environment, transport and movement of people and design. RSPB disagreed the POP option as they felt that it did not focus enough on green infrastructure and protection of biodiversity.

Comments relating to Derry

5.9 Comments included support for a re-visioning of the key locations such as the riverside, Ebrington and the town centre. Other comments highlighted the need for a focus on the Derry Walls. A number of responses were concerned that the POP responses did not have enough emphasis on the role that sustainable transport, cycling and greenways could play in place-making.



Comments relating to Strabane

- 5.10 The responses in relation to Strabane were focused on the role of that the historic environment and the river could play in any place-making and design vision for the town.

Comments relating to towns, villages and small settlements

- 5.11 There was support for nurturing the potential of named historic settlements, such as Sion Mills, Newtownstewart and Eglinton. Other comments included concerns in relation to how inappropriate development can affect the character of a settlement.

Comments in relating to countryside

- 5.12 Comments received included reminders that good place-making and design should apply as much to the open countryside as it does to large urban areas or settlements within rural settlements.

Stated POP approach

- 5.13 Having taken the POP responses into account, it is apparent that there is broad support for the preferred option and approaches set out in the POP and therefore it was decided that the preferred option and approaches should be carried forward to Draft PS stage. Whilst there was broad support for the approach in POP, the Draft PS has taken on board the view that specific themes were not sufficiently detailed at POP stage and therefore more emphasis was needed in highlighting the importance of the areas such as sustainable transport, the natural environment and the historic environment in any overarching place-making and design chapter.

## **6.0 LDP Plan Strategy Context**

- 6.1 In order to support and inform the content of the Draft Plan Strategy, the Council commissioned three separate Place-making-Urban Design studies for a) the City of Derry b) the associated Main Town of Strabane, and c) the four potential Local Towns of Castlederg, Newtownstewart, Claudy and Eglinton. These studies and associated developmental documents are intended to inform the ongoing preparation of the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) as well as ongoing Regeneration initiatives and emerging Council-led investment projects. This report has two components, which are described below; Part 1 'Settlement Studies' and Part 2 'Key Sites'. Draft Final versions of these reports are attached as Appendices 2 & 3. In addition to the above the Chapter will also take account of the ongoing 'Heritage Led Regeneration Masterplan' for Sion Mills which was commissioned by DCSDC's Regeneration Team and is being undertaken by GM Design. Stage 1 of this report is due to public consultation in late August 2019.
- 6.2 The Paul Hogarth Company and Space Syntax were commissioned to undertake this study with a purpose is to establish an understanding of each place, its design, character and functioning, with a view to informing policies of the Derry City & Strabane District Local Development Plan (LDP).
- 6.3 It is informed by desktop research, site analysis and consultation with representatives of DCSDC and its central government partners. The process also involved the development of a Space Syntax model of spatial accessibility.
- 6.4 To inform this study, Space Syntax constructed an Integrated Urban Model to include all settlements. The model combines a range of data, including demographics, land use and transport networks, with a spatial network model. This provides an in-depth understanding of the area and how connectivity, land use and transport infrastructure influence pedestrian movement, urban character and, in general, the quality of the place. This approach enables a multi-scale analysis, ranging from neighbourhood to region, with relatively low levels of data input and therefore making it sustainable for a long-term future scenario testing where detailed data is not available.
- 6.5 The Integrated Urban Model was used to provide a detailed evidence-based analysis that highlights the current movement network at different scales - vehicle, cyclist, pedestrian - and the key opportunities and constraints for each settlement.
- 6.6 The Settlement Study is structured using a geographic hierarchy, based on a hierarchy of areas starting at regional level, settlement level, study area and key sites.
- 6.7 It begins with an analysis at the regional level to encompass the plan area and wider North West region. The study then conducts analyses of each Settlement and in the case of Derry and Strabane, at a further Study Area level. Following the Analysis sections, a series of recommendations are made. Firstly Objectives and



Principles are established, before further proposals are made at the levels of Settlement and Study Area. The output from this part of the report has informed the contents Chapters 27 to 32.

- 6.8 A supplementary 'Key Sites' document has been produced alongside this Settlement Study. It seeks to apply the Urban Design principles set out in this document and illustrate them with potential demonstrators. The output from this part of the report may inform key sites at LPP stage of the plan.
- 6.9 The consultants were asked to consider all relevant legislation, policy, the existing Area Plans, design guides, supplementary planning guidance and other relevant documents, such as existing master plans. These are listed at part 2 of this report. They were also directed towards the contents of the POP and the comments received in the returned consultations.
- 6.10 The consultants also engaged with key statutory consultees, including Department for Infrastructure, Historic Environment Division and North West Development (DfC), as well as with other key partners such as the Regeneration team within DCSDC, Sustrans and Ulster University.
- 6.11 The Inclusive Growth Plan and the Council's bid for City Deal, were also keys areas that the consultants were asked to consider in the formulation of their study.
- 6.12 'Our Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan' is focused on conservation, regeneration, to design and deliver high quality public realm schemes in our urban centres and providing attractive places to live within easy access to local services and amenities. This plan expects the Local Development Plan to provide the framework for delivery and establish the planning parameters for the central riverfront, learning zone and other key locations. It sees the LDPs policies and detailed guidance as tools to ensure the fulfilment of the city deal vision, while giving the investor market the clarity and confidence necessary to rapidly progress development projects.
- 6.13 The City Deal Outline Bid Proposal sets out Councils ambition of how a partnership with Government will contribute to national growth in this Region and in Northern Ireland. This is a mechanism to unlock investment opportunities to catalyse growth to deliver on the priorities of the Strategic Growth Plan. Central to the transformation of our City Region are critical investment priorities, one of which is 'Enabling Infrastructure & Regeneration' of our City and Town Centres, central Riverfront and A2 Economic Corridor. High quality public realm, civic spaces and greenways, will be central to transforming our City. The Outline Bid believes the LDP will provide clarify, confidence and policy direction to progress both public and private sector investment to unlock development potential of key investment sites.

6.11 The consultants have been in close contact with the Senior Leadership Team of DCSDC, through parallel pieces of work relating to the City Deal and therefore have a full understanding of the aims of City Deal and indeed the Strategic Growth Plan.

*LDP PS Outcome*

6.12 All relevant legislation, policy and guidance was considered in the development of the Place Making and Design section for the LDP PS.

6.13 This section acknowledges the importance of promoting good design and place-making and reinforcing local distinctiveness. The policies and supplementary guidance within this section will be key in addressing the connections between people and places and the integration of new development.

6.14 We have taken account of the POP representations, input from Members and consultee responses in reaching the conclusions in the proposed strategy and the policy wording.

6.15 Furthermore the chapters have been informed by and taken account of a wide range of policy guidance including the 'Supporting Good Design and Place-Making' section of SPPS, the Department's 'Living Places', 'Creating Places' and 'Building on Tradition' Supplementary Guidance Documents, as well as the Department's 'Design & Access Statements – a guide for Northern Ireland' and the Northern Ireland Executive's 'Architecture and Built Environment Policy'. Relevant policy with the Derry Area Plan 2011, Strabane Area Plan 1986-2001, PPS 2 and PPS 21.

6.16 The study has also taken account of existing Conservation Design guides produced for each of the District's Conservation Areas.

6.17 Central to informing the overall Chapter has been the commissioning of three separate Place-making-Urban Design studies for a) the City of Derry b) the associated Main Town of Strabane, and c) the four potential Local Towns of Castleberg, Newtownstewart, Claudy and Eglinton. These studies and associated developmental documents are intended to inform the ongoing preparation of the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) as well as ongoing Regeneration initiatives and emerging Council-led investment projects. In addition to the above the Chapter will also take account of the ongoing 'Heritage Led Regeneration Masterplan', which was commissioned by DCSDC's Regeneration Team and is being undertaken by GM Design.

6.18 The Paul Hogarth Company and Space Syntax were commissioned to undertake this study with a purpose is to establish an understanding of each place, its design, character and functioning, with a view to informing policies of the Derry City & Strabane District Local Development Plan (LDP).



- 6.19 It is informed by desktop research, site analysis and consultation with representatives of DCSDC and its central government partners. The process also involved the development of a Space Syntax model of spatial accessibility.
- 6.20 To inform this study, Space Syntax constructed an Integrated Urban Model to include all settlements. The model combines a range of data, including demographics, land use and transport networks, with a spatial network model. This provides an in-depth understanding of the area and how connectivity, land use and transport infrastructure influence pedestrian movement, urban character and, in general, the quality of the place.
- 6.21 This approach enables a multi-scale analysis, ranging from neighbourhood to region, with relatively low levels of data input and therefore making it sustainable for a long-term future scenario testing where detailed data is not available.
- 6.22 The Integrated Urban Model was used to provide a detailed evidence-based analysis that highlights the current movement network at different scales - vehicle, cyclist, pedestrian - and the key opportunities and constraints for each settlement.
- 6.23 The Settlement Study is structured using a geographic hierarchy, based on a hierarchy of areas starting at regional level, settlement level, study area and key sites.
- 6.24 It begins with an analysis at the regional level to encompass the plan area and wider North West region. The study then conducts analyses of each Settlement and in the case of Derry and Strabane, at a further Study Area level. Following the Analysis sections, a series of recommendations are made. Firstly Objectives and Principles are established, before further proposals are made at the levels of Settlement and Study Area. The output from this part of the report has informed the contents Chapters 26 to 30.
- 6.25 A supplementary Key Sites document has been produced alongside this Settlement Study. It seeks to apply the Urban Design principles set out in this document and illustrate them with potential demonstrators. The output from this part of the report may inform key sites at LPP stage of the plan.
- 6.26 The structure of the Chapters 26- 32 will be based on the following:
- 6 Place-Making and Design Objectives for the LDP (PDOs);
  - 18 Broad Place-making and Design Principles (PDPs);
  - Settlement Specific Strategic Design Policies (SDPs).
- 6.27 The intention of these chapters is to provide a broad design/development framework, which will provide developers and decision makers direction and guidance for what the Council expects in term of place-making & design, when formulating more detailed proposals, either in the form of individual applications, regeneration schemes/masterplans and/or other design guidance.



- 6.28 It is the intention of the LDP, that the principles in these chapters are material considerations and that they are also read in conjunction with other detailed policy elsewhere in the LDP.
- 6.29 Regard was also given to existing elements of the Derry Area Plan 2011 in relation to relevant policies for design including BE 1 Urban Design, SE 1 Development within Villages and Settlements, CA 9 Redevelopment Areas, CA 10 Opportunity Sites and the Riverside Strategy (including the Urban Design Principles). These existing policies complement the thrust of the findings of the PM & D study, and when both are considered together they form the core of not only Chapters 26-33, but also GDPOL 2 Design Policy in Settlements in Chapter 7. The Strategic Design Policies (SDPs) found in Chapters 27, 28 and 29 have also been influenced by the findings of the PM & D study, as well as the principles set out in Living Places and representations received to the POP. These policies are mainly bespoke to the particular settlements, although they draw upon place-making and design and movement principles that are universal. The existing policy context within DAP 2011 as set out earlier in this paragraph provides some influence, though by in large the SDPs have no easily identified equivalent in any current policy framework.
- 6.30 With regard to Chapter 33, this provides policy guidance in terms of decision making on all development proposals outside the development limits of any settlement in what is termed as Countryside. This chapter has brought forward existing policy from PPS 2: Natural Heritage and PPS 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside, as well as the SPPS.
- 6.31 We have analysed and considered a stricter approach to development within the countryside, however having taken into account the views of Development Management and Members, we have proposed little or no changes to the policy approach as above in keeping with the SPPS and current policy within PPS 21. A greater emphasis has been given to take account of Building on Tradition to ensure more appropriate design proposals come forward, with a detailed statement of how each proposal has taken account of the Design Guide.
- 6.32 The proposed LDP PS approach is to ensure all development proposals in the countryside must be sited and designed to integrate sympathetically with their surroundings, including the natural topography, and to meet other planning policy and environmental considerations. Proposals must take account of supplementary planning guidance on sustainable rural design: 'Building on Tradition: A Sustainable Design Guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside'.
- 6.33 The LDP will not make any zonings or designations specifically for this section. The Chapter will however indicate the intention at LPP stage to identify Opportunity Sites and Redevelopment/Regeneration Sites, whilst naming key areas of development such as the Central Riverfront, Magee and Canal Basin. In relation to existing regeneration sites such as Fort George and Ebrington, the intention is



that they will be developed in accordance with their existing approved development frameworks. If proposals deviate from these frameworks, the expectation is that they will be developed in accordance with GDPOL 2: Design Policy in Settlements and Chapters 26-33.



## 7.0 Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

- 7.1 Throughout their formulation, the policies contained within the Place-making & Design Section 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 full wider SA for more information).
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 The process of sustainability appraisal aims to ensure that a council's approach towards place-making and design is the most sustainable of all reasonable options available i.e. having considered any reasonable alternatives. It is considered that the Development and the Place-Making & Design related Principles/ Policies that will be material considerations set a strategic framework for the future development of the district. They have been developed for our Settlement hierarchy and the Countryside to shape the future development that is in line with the LDP objectives and Vision. As such it is considered that there are no reasonable alternatives to these Development / Place-making Principles that have been designed specifically with our district in mind.
- 7.4 With regard to the degree of sustainability of each the resulting proposed policies, this is outlined below:

Place-making & Design Vision For Development In The District (PDO 1 – PDO 6 and PDP 1 – PDP 18), Place-Making & Design Vision / Policy for Derry-Londonderry (DSDP 1-DSDP 11), Strabane (SSDP 1-SSDP 7), Local Towns (LSDP 1 – LSDP 4), Villages and Small Settlements.

- 7.5 The policies have been informed by and taken account of a wide range of policy guidance including the 'Supporting Good Design and Place-Making' section of SPPS, the Department's 'Living Places', 'Creating Places' and 'Building on Tradition' Supplementary Guidance Documents, as well as the Department's 'Design & Access Statements – a guide for Northern Ireland' and the Northern Ireland Executive's 'Architecture and Built Environment Policy'. Relevant policy with the Derry Area Plan 2011, Strabane Area Plan 1986-2001, PPS 2 and PPS 21. The policies have been underpinned by the Place Making Study (undertaken as part of the LDP preparation) which forms the basis of this Chapter.



- 7.6 The intention of these chapters is to provide a broad design/development framework, which will provide developers and decision makers direction and guidance for what the Council expects in term of place-making & design, when formulating more detailed proposals, either in the form of individual applications, regeneration schemes / masterplans and/or other design guidance across the settlement hierarchy (excluding the countryside which is covered separately).
- 7.7 It is the intention of the LDP, that the principles in these chapters are material considerations and that they are also read in conjunction with other detailed policy elsewhere in the LDP.



## **8.0 Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)**

- 8.1 The policies contained within the Place-making and Design chapter have been subject to an equality impact assessment to ensure that no adverse impact on people of a particular religion, political opinion, race, age, marital status, sexual orientation or gender. Nor should there be adverse impact on 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.
- 8.2 Place making & Design will have a positive effect on all section 75 groups as it aims to enhance the natural environment, protect and promote heritage assets, promote sustainable transportation, sustain social and economic vitality, deliver high quality design and maintain rural character.
- 8.3 This can have a positive effect on particularly the elderly, those with disabilities and dependents as it promotes sustainable and inclusive transport and high quality design.
- 8.4 The Council is satisfied that there will be no adverse impact on any Section 75 groups as a result of Place Making & Design.



## **9.0 Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)**

- 9.1 The Rural Needs Act 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.
- 9.2 To 'have due regard' means that a public authority must consciously consider the needs of people in rural areas. How much 'due regard' will depend 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.
- 9.3 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.
- 9.4 This Section recognises that there is a differential in terms of the rural areas by setting out particular Chapters for local towns, villages, and small settlements and the open countryside. It acknowledges the different circumstances and character that exists in these areas, by setting out bespoke policy arrangements relevant to those areas.