



Derry City & Strabane
District Council

Comhairle Chathair
Dhoire & Cheantar
an tSrátha Báin

Derry Cille & Strábane
Deistrick Cooncil

DERRY CITY & STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) 2032



DRAFT PLAN STRATEGY
Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA), December 2019

derrystrabane.com/ldp

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Introduction

- 1.0 This document is the draft Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) of the Derry City and Strabane District Council Local Development Plan draft Plan Strategy.
- 1.1 The LDP Plan Strategy is the first stage of the two-stage Local Development Plan (LDP) process. In summary, the LDP Plan Strategy will detail the spatial growth strategy for the district as well as the policy framework for day-to-day decisions for future housing, retail, economic and infrastructure development in the district. It is a spatial representation of the Council's Community Plan. Once adopted by the Council, the Plan Strategy will be followed by the LDP Local Policies Plan (LPP) (second stage) which provides more detailed policy on the local allocation of land for development and designations.
- 1.2 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. The principles of rural proofing are incorporated in the RNIA process. The RNIA accompanies the LDP draft Plan Strategy and will be subject to consultation prior to an Independent Examination, possible amendment, and then adoption by the Council.
- 1.3 The LDP draft Plan Strategy follows the LDP Preferred Options Paper (POP) (May 2017), which was an earlier consultation document which considered several issues for the district and provided options, including a preferred option, of how these issues could be addressed. There was in excess 147 representations to the POP and these representations have all been considered in the formulation of the LDP dPS.
- 1.4 It should be noted that the RNIA, and therefore Rural Needs, are only one aspect that should be taken into account when developing the LDP Plan Strategy and its policies. Other aspects include the Council's Community Plan, but also the regional planning framework as set-out in the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035 and Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) and other assessments including the Sustainability Appraisal, Equality Impact Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment.
- 1.5 The RNIA has been produced by the Council LDP team as they have a working knowledge of the draft Plan Strategy and it has been undertaken in accordance with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Rural Needs Act (NI) guidance and template.

Summary of Issues

- 1.6 After an intensive period of research and fact finding in the form of evidence position papers, policy reviews, face to face engagements and public consultation, the RNIA has identified the following social, economic and environmental issues as being of particular relevance to the rural area in Derry City and Strabane District Council:
 - Whilst most of the population live in the two large urban centres, Derry City and Strabane town, the other 45 settlements would be considered rural. In addition to this, the remainder of the District, outside of settlement limits, would be

considered rural. There is a need to ensure that we sustain vibrant rural communities in these rural areas and provide support and appropriate growth is encouraged to enable this;

- This growth can be facilitated via appropriate levels of housing and employment in rural areas, both in the countryside and in our rural settlements;
- The Rural area of Derry City and Strabane District has specific circumstances that need to be considered and facilitate in order to support our rural communities. These issues include a high level of self-employment, entrepreneurship and farmers living and working in our rural area.
- Rural parts of the Derry City and Strabane District have some of the poorest broadband coverage and mobile data coverage in Northern Ireland and this can contribute to social exclusion and isolation;
- Similarly, some rural parts of the Derry City and Strabane District experience travel time to key services like A&E and other acute hospital services which are amongst the highest in Northern Ireland and this also contributes to the perception of rural isolation;
- Loss of services such as schools, banks and post offices in our rural areas; and
- The need to protect our unique landscapes and internationally renowned heritage sites from the impact of inappropriate development.

1.7 Having identified these issues as being particularly pertinent to the social, economic and environmental needs of our rural area, a range of measures have been included in the LDP draft Plan Strategy to attempt to address the above issues. The focus of the LDP draft Plan Strategy is to achieve balanced growth across the District settlement hierarchy. To grow and strengthen Derry City as the regional capital of the North West metropolitan, cross-border city region and also Strabane town as the linked main hub town. To direct appropriate developments to the local towns, villages and small settlements across the District as a focus for sustaining vibrant rural areas, including sustainable development in the countryside. The LDP dPS also includes measures that have particular relevance to the RNIA and they include:

- Additional criteria allowing houses in the countryside has been included;
- Villages, Small Settlement and the Countryside have been afforded appropriate growth based on their current size and role within the settlement hierarchy to sustain them as vibrant rural communities;
- Policy on economic development in villages, small settlements and the countryside has been made more flexible in order to facilitate growth and to allow the draft Plan Strategy to respond to the specific local needs of Derry City and Strabane District Council;
- Policy which facilitates telecommunications development where it will not have a negative impact on our most unique landscape assets has been included in order to help target the deficiency in broadband and mobile data provision in our rural areas;
- Protective designations have been included at and around our most valuable landscape and environmental assets in order to protect them from the impacts of development. These designations have been kept to a minimum in order to ensure appropriate protection whilst not impacting unduly upon development opportunities which may exist and which the rural area may benefit from.



Rural Needs Impact Assessment

Section 1 - Defining the Activity Subject to Section 1 (1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

- 1A Name of Public Authority:**
Derry City and Strabane District Council.
- 1B Please provide a short title, which describes the activity being undertaken by the Public Authority that is subject to the Section 1 (1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016:**
Derry City and Strabane District Council Local Development Plan Draft Plan Strategy 2032. In accordance with Part 2 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011.
- 1C Please indicate which category the activity specified in Section 1B above relates to:**
The activity specific in 1B is developing a Policy, Strategy and Plan.
- 1D Please provide the official title (if any) of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service document or initiative relating to the category indicated in Section 1C above:**
Derry City and Strabane District Council Local Development Plan Draft Plan Strategy 2032.
- 1E Please provide details of the aims and / or objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service:**
The LDP draft Plan Strategy will set out the spatial plan for Derry City and Strabane District Council up until 2032. It includes strategic and operational policies that seek to achieve the overall objective of sustainable development. It provides a planning framework to support economic development, social needs and to protect and improve the environment, in line with regional strategies and policies.
- 1F What definition of 'rural' is the Public Authority using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?**
Population Settlements of less the 5,000 (Default definition).

Section 2 - Understanding the Impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service.

2A Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas?

Yes

2B Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.

The definition of 'rural' used by Derry City and Strabane District Council is those settlements with a population of 5,000 or less. Therefore, everywhere outside of Derry City and Strabane Town is classed as being rural. This means that outside of Derry and Strabane, it is a predominantly rural district with approximately 36% of residents being classed as rural dwellers and therefore, the LDP dPS, which is the framework for development across the whole district, will clearly have an impact on what is defined as the rural area.

The dPS aims to deliver on the three pillars of sustainable development; these including economic, environmental and social conditions. In doing so, the impacts on the rural area will be spread across these three themes.

Through our operational planning policies on topics such as housing, renewables, economic development, minerals, tourism and agriculture and other rural development, the DPS will have a direct influence over the granting of planning permission for development which can generate jobs for the rural area and thus help sustain our vibrant rural communities. Such economic impacts can also lead to social benefits for the rural area which is a result of increased wealth and economic prosperity.

Rural dwellers can feel a sense of isolation and social exclusion given the remote nature of the locations in which they live. It is therefore vital that the DPS policies are capable of facilitating infrastructure in the rural area including improving and protecting road networks as well as telecommunications equipment in order to keep the rural areas and its residents feeling connected with the larger urban centres where services tend to be located. Access to housing in the rural area is also a contentious social issue and one, which can be impacted directly by the provision of this DPS through the proposed policies on housing in the countryside as well as housing in settlements.

All of the aforementioned potential benefits for the rural however, can also be reversed by the dPS and can impact in a negative way, if planning policy is introduced which is too stringent and not flexible enough to provide an adequate level of opportunities e.g. rural housing or rural jobs.

The LDP dPS must balance the social and economic needs of the rural area, with the need to protect and enhance the environment in the rural area. The character of our countryside is a major asset to the District and we are caretakers of our unique landscapes e.g. the Sperrin AONB. By introducing strategic designations to offer protection to our unique landscapes and areas of nature and heritage importance as

well as the introduction of criteria based policies designed to ensure protection from some forms of development, the LDP dPS hopes to achieve this balance between allowing appropriate growth in the rural area, whilst offering a level of environmental protection. These protected areas have been limited to areas which are largely uninhabited and therefore, negative impacts of these designations are not considered to be likely.

2C If the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas *differently* from people in urban areas, please explain how it is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently.

The LDP draft Plan Strategy (PS) adopts the approach of more balanced growth across the District whilst maintaining broad conformity with the Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS). While it directs a significant degree of focus on Derry as the principal city and Strabane as the main town it also provides for growth across the rural area, throughout the local towns, villages and small settlements. Growth of the City and Main Town serves not only to position both as places which can compete with peer settlements, across the island of Ireland and elsewhere, but also equally to provide services of a scale which can supply their respective rural area.

LDP Social Development objective (b) Accommodating People and Facilitating Communities point (iii) aims to:

'provide for vital and vibrant rural communities.... including in our small settlements...'

To that end, the LDP draft PS proposes to:

- identify three local towns to service the more peripheral rural areas; AND
- have a wide number of villages and small settlements, noting their potential for clustering to help ensure a vibrant rural area.

In addition to the above, new specific rural policy in the LDP will provide for appropriate development opportunities either to maintain the existing vibrancy and vitality of those rural areas which can be characterised so or to halt and reverse the decline of those which cannot.

In terms of individual policies not specific to the rural area there are several that, by the nature of the development to which they are applicable, will have more significant impacts on the countryside and smaller settlements. Foremost amongst them, the renewable and low carbon energy development policies of Chapter 25 and the minerals extraction policies of Chapter 14.

All forms of renewable energy have potential impacts on the rural area that are not matched in urban areas, in particular wind energy, as it is almost exclusively located in rural areas. Wind energy development can usually only occur where wind speeds are sufficiently fast¹. While in other jurisdictions, this may not be the case, in this District and throughout NI, the areas of highest wind speed, with the best wind energy resource, are located mainly in upland areas² which normally equates to a countryside location. In

¹ Wind Energy Development in Northern Ireland's Landscapes – NIEA 2010.

² Wind Energy Development in Northern Ireland's Landscapes – NIEA 2010

addition, due to the associated amenity considerations (noise, shadow flicker etc.), they cannot normally be sited in close proximity to developed areas where sensitive receptors such as residential development will be. Therefore, there are more significant impacts – both positive and negative, on the rural area. A degree of impact to visual impact and landscape character is to be expected but there will also be financial benefits to individual landowners (who are normally resident in the affected area) in terms of renewable energy for their own operations and for selling to the national grid. It should be noted that proposed policy aims to limit wind energy in designated sensitive areas and areas deemed to be at or reaching capacity and so this should help redress the balance of positive versus negative potential impacts of such development.

Similarly, biomass energy - particularly through combustion, can impact on such things as air quality and water quality (through emissions) and can produce significant noise. However, it also has financial benefits for the local economy; approx. 80 – 90% of operational expenditure on biomass fuel supply can accrue to the local economy and the supply of biomass fuel can secure a long-term income for farmers, forestry owners and contractors, and transport operators in rural areas³.

Solar energy and hydro schemes, by their nature, are also more likely to be in rural areas and like wind energy, can have associated amenity issues such as visual amenity. While Minerals Development delivers economic benefits to the rural area through employment, there are also a number of challenges arising from this form of development. Specific proposals can have adverse impacts on the environment and on the amenity and well-being of people living in proximity to operational minerals sites. This presents a challenge because minerals can only be extracted from sites where they occur, and there may be limited opportunities for consideration of alternative sites. This has an even greater impact in the rural area as minerals deposits are normally found in rural areas. In our District, the predominant raw mineral is sand and gravel, which is normally found in river valleys in rural locations.

Policies for the Natural Environment have the potential to impact on the rural area more than urban areas due to the fact that, with the exception of country parks and the like in cities and towns, much of our natural environment is located in rural areas. Arguably, the natural environment and the countryside are synonymous. The impacts largely stem from the level of protection given to the conservation of natural assets, such as landscapes for example, in the rural area versus those in the urban area where there is a presumption in favour of development (subject to relevant material considerations). Proposed natural environment policies retain existing high level designations such as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) but also now include strengthened policy through the creation of additional designations such as Areas of High Landscape Importance (AHLIs) and Special Countryside Areas (SCAs). Our greatest Natural Environment assets are in the rural area.

There is little which separates the impacts of Historic Environment policies on the rural area from the urban area save primarily that urban areas have more built development

³Best Practice Guidance to Planning Policy Statement 18 'Renewable Energy' – DOE 2009

and thus it follows more historic environment assets. Setting aside the number of assets then, the policy provisions are the same and so no meaningful differential exists. Flooding can be a potential issue for all areas as it can stem from several sources. Given that there is a presumption against development in the countryside, with some exceptions, and given that development in smaller settlements is generally of a smaller scale, if there is a significant differential impact it would be in favour of the rural area in that less development would have lesser potential for surface water flooding. It is considered that the proposed flooding policies therefore are not more or distinctively impactful on the rural area.

Proposed policies pertaining to Retailing and Town Centres reflect the overall thrust of the dPS in that development is directed to appropriate locations within the City and, secondarily the Main Town with some smaller scale retail uses permissible in the 'rural' settlements (commensurate with their position in the settlement hierarchy). This has a variety of positive and negative impacts on the rural area.

The Tourism policies in the countryside are influenced by the need to protect our natural heritage for future generation and the tourism policies in the countryside will impact differently on people living in urban and rural areas. The policies include one to safeguard tourism assets as well as policies for tourism development in the urban and countryside areas. They will primarily impact on the people in rural areas. The policies will attract more visitors resulting in a beneficial impact on the rural economy and will result in employment opportunities that will benefit the rural community.

The protection and enhancement of sporting and outdoor recreational facilities in urban areas may also reduce the demand for such activities in the countryside and may have an impact on rural dwellers. Those policies for outdoor recreation in the Countryside will impact on the people in the rural area positively and will improve the service provision of the rural area as well as improving the health and wellbeing of rural dwellers.

Economic Development generally reflects the spatial strategy for the LDP directing planned economic development growth that is balanced with the sustainability objectives of the LDP to ensure that environmental quality for the countryside is not compromised. Whilst there may be a perception that the rural policies are prohibitive, they reflect the importance of sustaining vibrant rural communities. The LDP dPS recognises the role small enterprise play in rural life and provide a degree of flexibility for a number of uses, provided that the established rural character is retained.

There are differential impacts associated with Transport and Movement as the provision of public transport and transport infrastructure is centred around our urban centres. There is a discrepancy in terms of provision to the rural areas, however this should be considered in the context of the population these transport services support.

Agriculture and Other Rural Development is mainly applicable in the rural area as there are very few opportunities for this type of development in our urban centres. It is not envisaged that there is a differential impact on the rural area in relation to this topic.

Housing by its very nature will have a differential impact in the rural area as there is the strategic directive to locate housing in centres and more accessible locations. Rural housing has been considered extensively through the development of the strategic allocation and the drafting of rural policies as there is a large rural population in Derry City and Strabane District Council. Opportunities have been afforded within each of our rural settlements and in the countryside we have included policies for a number of opportunities to get a house in the countryside, provided the relevant planning criteria have been met.

There are some differential impacts associated with development associated with waste management in the rural area. Waste policy can direct certain types of development to rural area e.g. re-use of former mineral sites etc. Given the low likelihood of such developments, the impact is likely to be negligible over the LDP period. Because of the remoteness of some developments there is likely to be no access to mains sewerage and thus non-mains sewerage is required usually through a septic tank. This can have an additional cost attributed to it whilst an accumulation of these types of developments can have an impact on the environment. The same is applicable to public utilities in so far as it relates to water and electricity supply and telecommunications.

Within the rural area there will likely be less access to community infrastructure and services as these are mainly located in main hubs and centres, it is likely that a differential impact will be had in the rural areas as it is less likely that publicly funded community infrastructure projects are going to be located outside of urban centres. Thus leaving community led organisations to fill this gap where a demand is evident. An exception has been made for community infrastructure provision in the countryside where the relevant planning criteria are met.

A Green Belt has also been re-introduced into the rural area, this is to restrict urban generated pressure in rural areas outside out main centres, whilst also aiming to restrict the merging of settlements which have seen an increased demand for 'greenfield' and edge of settlement developments, marring the distinction between settlement limits.

The LDP draft PS also contains overarching principles for all forms of development in both urban and rural areas. It has a specific principle for sustainable development and threads this aim throughout the chapter as a common theme underpinning the other principles. This chapter includes specific provisions for such things as active travel and high levels of connectivity which normally will be more difficult to achieve in rural areas however it is anticipated that such requirements will be applied in a way that is appropriate to the scale and locational context of a proposal.

2D Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to primarily impact on.

All of the areas listed below will be affected by the LDP dPS:

- Rural Businesses;
- Rural Tourism;
- Rural Housing;
- Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas;
- Education or Training in Rural Areas;

- Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas;
- Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas;
- Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas;
- Poverty in Rural Areas;
- Deprivation in Rural Areas;
- Rural Crime or Community Safety;
- Rural Development;
- Agri – Environment; and
- Other (Please state) – Minerals, Coastal Development, Renewable Energy and Vulnerable Landscapes.

Section 3 - Identifying the Social and Economic Need of Persons in Rural Areas.

3A Has the Public Authority taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

Yes

3B Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas:

All of the method listed below were used:

- Consultation with rural stakeholders;
- Consultation with other organisations;
- Surveys or questionnaires;
- Published statistics;
- Research Papers;
- Other publications; and
- Other Methods or information sources (details included in section 3C).

3C Please provide details of the methods and information sources used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including relevant dates, names of organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc.

Evidence Base Papers (EVB)

A series of evidence base papers were produced to inform the LDP process. Each position paper provides a summary of the evidence base relevant to each topic and was used to justify the policy direction for each topic, which is now evident in the LDP dPS. The EVBs establish a baseline position and identify the key issues, which need to be addressed.

EVBs were prepared before the launch of the LDP POP and presented to Planning Committee for their agreement. There are a range of policy topics for which position papers have been produced and some of these are relevant to the rural area or both the urban and rural area. A full list of EVBs published at the LDP POP stage can be found on Derry City and Strabane District Councils website and updated versions of each of these papers will be published alongside the LDP dPS.

Policy Reviews

Prior to publication of the LDP POP, it was also important to carry out policy reviews on each of the topics in order to consider how we could tailor policies to respond to the unique circumstances in Derry City and Strabane District Council whilst also taking account of the RDS and SPPS. These papers were crucial in identifying the needs of the rural area and how they could be better addressed by tailoring planning policies to reflect the unique circumstances of the rural area in Derry City and Strabane District Council.

Range of Information / Sources

In producing our EVBs and policy review papers, a range of information was utilised. A list detailed in Appendix 1 of this RNIA details some of the sources of information used in the production of our baseline evidence. This list is not exhaustive but is intended to provide an example of the range of sources considered in the formative stages of the creation of the LDP POP and the LDP dPS.

Consultation on the LDP POP

Having considered the information from various sources and having developed the evidence base and policy review papers, the POP was developed and published (May 2017). Following publication, there was a series of consultation events held across the City and District during June 2017.

At these events number of issues including rural housing, employment in rural areas and provision of better transport links to key services were some of the issues highlighted. The formal consultation period lasted for 12 weeks after the publication and a total of 147 representations were received. The consideration of these views which were received at the meetings and via representations informed the LPD dPS in its current form.

Location	Evening Meeting (LDP and SGP - Strategic Growth Plan)	Daytime Workshop (focussed on LDP, as well as SGP)
Guildhall, Derry	Tuesday 6 th June, 7pm	Weds 7 th June, 2 - 4pm
Alley Theatre, Strabane	Weds 7 th June, 7pm	Friday 9 th June, 2 - 4pm
Magee, Great Hall	Tuesday 13 th June, 7pm	
The Glen Community Centre, Derry		Thurs 15 th June, 3pm - 5pm
Claudy Community Centre	Thurs 15 th June, 7pm	Friday 16 th June, 2 - 4pm
Derg Valley Leisure Centre, Castlederg	Monday 19 th June, 7pm	Tuesday 20 th June, 11.15am - 1pm
Amnity House, Donemana	Tuesday 20 th June, 7pm	Weds 21 st June, 2 - 4pm
Skeoge House, Leafair, Derry	Thurs 22 nd June, 7pm	Friday 23 rd June, 2 - 4pm
St. Columbs Park House, Derry	Tuesday 27 th June, 7pm	Wednesday 28 th June 2 - 4pm

Members Round Table Discussions

Policies were considered on a regular basis by the Council's Members in attendance at LDP Round Tables Discussions (RTDs). This allowed for cross-party representation. On many occasions draft versions of the 'rural' policies were considered at the RTDs. Many of the Members represent rural constituents and therefore this was a further opportunity for the social and economic needs of people in rural areas to be considered.

3D Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas, which have been identified by the Public Authority.

Derry City and Strabane District Council has a large rural area with 36% of its population living in the rural area.

Derry City and Strabane has vibrant rural areas consisting of active communities, a strong entrepreneurial spirit which contributes to the overall employment base and rural villages and small settlements with considerable character and heritage importance. These vibrant rural communities need to be supported and sustained if it is to remain as a vitally important part of our district. This means the LDP dPS needs to deliver a suite of policies which can allow adequate flexibility to provide appropriate housing and employment opportunities in the rural area, whilst still protecting the character and heritage of the countryside and rural villages and small settlements.

As well as the need to sustain vibrant rural communities and consolidate their current situation, there are also various elements of rural life which have been identified as needing to be improved.

Section 4 - Considering the Social and Economic needs of Persons in Rural Areas.

4A Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

In order to promote vibrant rural communities, we need to continue to provide an appropriate share of housing and employment opportunities in order to allow people to live and work in the rural area. Therefore, planning policies within the LDP dPS a provision is made to allow appropriate economic uses both in rural settlements and in the countryside.

In rural settlements, the main issue will be facilitating this type of development whilst not harming the character of the settlement or impacting negatively on residential amenity. In the countryside the main issue will be how we accommodate small scale economic uses that are associated with a rural dwelling and can be grouped / cluster with a group of buildings, without causing harm to residential amenity. It is also important that we continue to protect existing sites of economic employment in the countryside and allow sufficient flexibility to facilitate appropriate expansion.

In terms of housing opportunities, the LDP dPS continues to allow for housing development in our rural settlements, at a level, which is appropriate to each settlement's place in the settlement hierarchy and spatial framework. In the countryside, we aim to continue to allow people who need to live in the countryside to continue to do so e.g. farm dwellers, business dwellings and personal and domestic circumstances. We also provide a number of other opportunities for non-farming rural dwellers through infill, clustering and replacement and conversion of existing buildings. Information gathered as part of our evidence base papers has helped to identify that there are various groups of people who have justifiable needs to live in the countryside, the main one being farm dwellers to allow the succession of existing farm businesses run by families within our district. In total, there are 1,771 farms within Derry City and Strabane District Council with a large proportion of these farms small in scale. We recognise the need to provide an opportunity to erect a dwelling associated with these farms in order to sustain their business and way of life. It is also considered appropriate that the same consideration should be given to rural businesses to sustain their development and encourage employment to sustain vibrant rural communities.

The housing needs of other rural dwellers that are not farmers or associated with a non-farming business, has also been considered. Policies must be flexible enough to allow those who have grown up in the countryside to remain in the countryside, provided housing can be facilitated through one of the other policies provided in the LDP dPS by clustering, replacing, infilling, reusing or conversion.

In terms of providing infrastructure in order to tackle some of the problems which contribute to rural isolation and social exclusion, the LDP dPS must be capable of protecting existing key transport corridors which link the City and main hub town in the District to each other and to the wider rural area. Policies will also facilitate telecommunications infrastructure where this can be done without causing harm to our most vulnerable landscapes.

The environmental quality of our landscapes can also generate social and economic benefits and these must be protected from inappropriate impacts that may arise from development such as telecommunications development, renewable energy development and minerals development. It is a key challenge of the LDP dPS to find the balance of allowing such development and exploitation which can bring local and regional economic and social benefits, whilst at the same time protecting our unique landscapes which provide rural residents with a sense of pride and belonging.

In terms of rural regeneration, the key issue facing the LDP dPS is its ability to identify areas which are in social and economic decline and provide strategic designations and appropriate policies to offer opportunities to attract people to live in our vibrant rural communities.

Renewable energy has a number of issues in relation social impacts such as noise, visual impacts and biodiversity. There may however be positive impacts in terms of economic benefits for landowners and their business, farm or family.

The Green Belt has a number of issues in terms of reducing the number of opportunities for some types of developments close to settlements. This however is countered by the positive implications to reducing urban generated pressure close to Derry City and Strabane Town.

Section 5 – Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service.

5A Has the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy, or Plan or the design or delivery of the Public Service, been influenced by the rural needs identified?

Yes

5B Please explain how the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy, or Plan or the design or delivery of the Public Service, has been influenced by the rural needs identified?

The aims, objectives and planning policies in the LDP dPS will encourage sustainable growth across the rural area in an effort to sustain our vibrant rural communities and resist economic and social decline.

In order to facilitate a sustainable level of rural housing, the LDP dPS makes a provision for housing development in the rural settlements and countryside subject to normal planning considerations. There has been a provision for housing in the countryside for dwellings on farms, dwellings for established rural businesses restoration and replacement of rural dwellings and the conversion and reuse of other rural buildings. A provision has also been made for clustering, infilling, personal and domestic circumstances and affordable housing. All of these opportunities are all subject to meeting the relevant policy tests and criteria set out in the LDP dPS.

In terms of economic development in the rural area, the policies in the strategy have been designed to allow more opportunities for small rural start-up businesses. The strategy also seeks to provide more opportunities for existing businesses in the rural area to expand and grow in order to support employment in our vibrant rural communities.

The LDP dPS acknowledges the importance of continuing to permit the extraction of minerals in the rural area, as this is an area which provides rural employment both directly and indirectly through associated manufacturing and construction industry. The LDP dPS therefore balances the need to facilitate minerals development against the need to protect the environment and our most vulnerable and scientifically important landscapes.

Similarly, the LDP dPS recognises the need to ensure that rural farms remain operational and are able to continue functioning as a key rural employer. The LDP dPS however has to balance the need to sustain local farms against the potential environmental impacts of intensive farming and the concentration of farms in one area may have on ammonia levels.

The LDP dPS recognises the importance of connectivity and the need to ensure that rural areas remain linked both via physical roads and infrastructure and through improvement in telecommunications infrastructure. Protected route networks will be afforded protection by the LDP dPS and therefore, journey times to main hub centres from rural areas should remain at their optimum level. In terms of telecommunication development, the LDP dPS will facilitate such development where it is appropriate, without causing negative environmental impacts or effects on human health.

In relation to environmental protection, all rural development proposal will be subject to strict criteria based policies as well as strategic designations such as Special Countryside Areas (SCA), Areas of Constraint on Minerals Development (ACMDs), Wind Energy Capacity Areas (WECA) and Areas of High Landscape Importance (AHLIs) will protect the most vulnerable of our unique landscapes from inappropriate development.

The Green Belt has been re-introduced, as there is a need to balance the need for development in the countryside against the demand for urban generated pressure close to our main settlements; the Green Belt is proposed to provide extra protection around Derry City and Strabane. The LDP team have considered how a number of policies would be applicable inside and outside of the Green Belt to ensure a balanced approach. This stricter test also has a knock on effect on the rural remainder, as there may be room for a more flexible policy approach.

The LDP dPS recognises the importance of rural community services and infrastructure. Within the rural area there will likely be less access to community infrastructure and services as these are mainly located in main hubs and centres, it is likely that a differential impact will be experienced in the rural areas, as it is less likely that publicly funded community infrastructure projects are going to be located outside of urban centres. This normally leaves community led organisations to fill the gap where a demand is evident. An exception has been made for community infrastructure provision in the countryside where the relevant planning criteria are met.

Section 6 – Documenting and Recording.

6A Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA will be retained by the Public Authority and the relevant information on the Section 1 activity compiled in accordance with paragraph 6.7 of the guidance.

I confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained and relevant information compiled.	✓
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Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:	
Position / Grade:	
Division / Branch:	
Date:	
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	
Position / Grade:	
Division / Branch:	
Date:	

Appendix 1 – Range of Information Sources Used in the Formative Stages of POP and DPS Preparation.

- NISRA Census 2001 / 2011
- 2011 Local Government Election Results;
- Household Estimates, NISRA;
- Household Projections, NISRA 2012;
- House Condition Survey 2001 & 2006;
- Northern Ireland Housing Market Review and Perspectives 2014 – 2017;
- NIHE – District Housing Plans 2014-2015;
- DOE / DfI planning statistics;
- DRD – Ensuing a Sustainable Transport Future;
- DETI – Statistics on Electricity Consumption
- DOE – Renewable Energy Statistics;
- DARD Flood Maps / DfI Flood Maps; and
- NISRA – Local Government District Tourism Stats, 2013
- Derry City and Strabane District Council Statistical Bulletin:
<https://www.derrystrabane.com/Subsites/Derry-and-Strabane-Statistics/Home>