



Preferred Options
Paper Summary
January 2017

Local Development Plan

2020-2035



Belfast
City Council

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Introduction

The future development of Belfast will be shaped by a number of key documents, including the Belfast Agenda and the new Local Development Plan (LDP). The Belfast Agenda is the city's first community plan, developed by a partnership of organisations and led by Belfast City Council. It represents our joint commitment to the city and its long-term success. Its primary key questions are:

“Imagine yourself in 2035 - what do you want to achieve? What are your hopes for you and your family? What kind of Belfast do you want to live in? Now think – what might help achieve this and what might get in the way?”
Many of the answers to the above questions will be influenced by the new Local Development Plan.

What is the Local Development Plan?

The new Belfast Local Development Plan will set out how the council area should develop and is vital to the delivery of the outcomes in the Belfast Agenda. It will guide investment and set out the policies and proposals for the use, development and protection of land in Belfast.

What is the Preferred Options Paper?

The Preferred Options Paper (POP) sets out the strategic approach to some of the key issues for the development of Belfast. This is the first stage of the plan-making process and is part of an ongoing consultation process.

Your views are important and will help us as we develop the Plan Strategy and Policies. This summary document poses a number of questions to help you think about how the new Plan might address important issues facing the city. There are more questions in the full version of the POP (which is available for comment online) and, of course, we welcome your views on any issues related to the future growth of the city.

RDS Spatial Framework

-  Belfast Metropolitan Area
-  Main Hub
-  Local Hub
-  Airport
-  Port



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About Belfast

Belfast is the capital of Northern Ireland and lies at the heart of a wider built-up area in the east of the region. It drives much of the region's economic growth and is the main gateway into the country.

We want you to help shape the future of Belfast up to 2035. We are seeking the views of those who live, work, or have an interest in the city.

- How should Belfast change and grow?
- What sort of city centre do we want?
- Where should new homes be built?
- Where should new jobs be located?
- How can Belfast be a more sustainable city?

For information on how you can tell us what you think please see the back page.

The Local Development Plan process

The Belfast Local Development Plan 2035 (or 'the Plan') will set a vision for how the council area should look in the future.

The Plan will guide investment and set out the policies and proposals for the use, development and protection of land in Belfast. The Plan will make economic growth possible and help meet the needs of the community.

It will have two documents:

- **Plan Strategy** – outlining an ambitious but realistic vision for the city; and
- **Local Policies Plan** – with specific proposals for the use and development of land.

Our Preferred Options Paper sets out what we plan to do to address the key issues we have identified for the city. It is part of an ongoing process of consultation and your views will help us as we write the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan.

Our vision

Belfast will be a globally successful, dynamic, smart 21st century regional city that is environmentally resilient with a vibrant economic heart, bustling with sustainable mixed-use businesses that attracts investment, talent and visitors; and is surrounded by thriving well-connected neighbourhoods where people love to live.

A strong local economy will support progressive, healthy, safe and vibrant communities and provides a gateway to opportunities locally, nationally and worldwide.



Our strategic aims

Shaping a liveable place

Promoting development that enhances the health and wellbeing of communities, neighbourhoods and places.

A green and active place

A protected, enhanced and attractive natural setting, reinforcing uniqueness and accessibility to all who live, work and enjoy the city.

Creating a vibrant economy

A strengthened Belfast as the regional economic driver.

A smart connected and resilient place

Improving connectivity and supporting the efficient movement of people, goods, energy and information to create a dynamic, innovative 21st century city with the capacity for adaption to environmental challenges





Belfast profile



Most of Belfast is a continuous built-up area, which joins onto Lisburn and Castlereagh to the south, Ards and North Down to the east and Antrim and Newtownabbey to the north. It is the main city in the region. Outside of this built-up area, Belfast also contains three small settlements – Edenderry, Hannahstown and Loughview.

Growing Belfast

We will grow Belfast by supporting a level of economic growth over the plan period that will allow the city to compete with similar sized UK cities and strengthen our position as the regional economic driver. Independent research demonstrates that this level of population growth is ambitious, but also realistic.



Identify land to support the creation of up to **46,000** new jobs



Increase the city's population by **66,000** to over 400,000 by 2035



Allocate land for **37,000** new homes

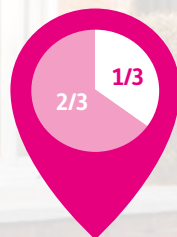


Shaping a liveable place

Promoting development that enhances the health and wellbeing of communities, neighbourhoods and places



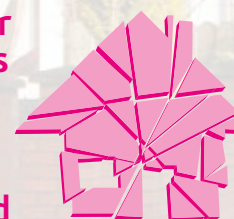
Belfast is the capital of Northern Ireland with a population of **338,907**



We are one of the youngest cities in Europe with nearly a third of our population up to 21 years old



Nearly a quarter (24%) of houses in Belfast are socially rented, while 57% are owner-occupied



In 2015, nearly **7,000** people were in housing stress



Homes

The Plan will support the development of sustainable, inclusive and well-designed neighbourhoods. They will connect well to local services and will support health and wellbeing. We will:

- **allocate land for 37,000 new homes prioritising the reuse of vacant and derelict 'brownfield' land and increasing the density of homes;**
- **make larger developments offer affordable homes;**
- **ensure a mix of housing types, size and tenures;**
- **ensure suitable housing for older people;**
- **consider Traveller specific accommodation;**
- **manage shared housing to maintain balanced communities; and**
- **ensure quality design in residential developments.**

The population of Belfast needs to grow. How can we accommodate new houses and facilities within the city?

Sustainable neighbourhoods

A sustainable neighbourhood is economically, environmentally and socially healthy and resilient. We want a city with lively and unique neighbourhoods. We will:

- **promote health and wellbeing in new developments;**
- **protect and enhance local services including health, education and community facilities; and**
- **encourage all new developments to promote community cohesion and improve community relations.**

Design and heritage

Good design can change lives, bring communities together, attract business, encourage healthier living and contribute to how safe places are. We will:

- **ensure new developments are of a high quality design;**
- **ensure our main routes and arrival points are attractive;**
- **ensure new development promotes greater connectivity;**
- **identify where tall buildings may be built;**
- **protect and enhance our older buildings;**
- **make the most of our unique features; and**
- **promote high standards of energy efficiency in design.**



Creating a vibrant economy



A strengthened Belfast as the regional economic driver



The Regional Development Strategy seeks to strengthen the role of Belfast city centre as the primary retail location in Northern Ireland

Belfast has been recognised as Europe's most business friendly city of its size for two years running



Visitors contribute £278m to our economy and a growing tourism sector supports **17,000 jobs**



Our city centre is the prime location for large scale retail with a catchment of over **600,000 residents**



Economic growth

The Plan will support inclusive economic growth. We will:

- **allocate land to allow up to 46,000 new jobs to be created;**
- **review key employment sites and identify opportunities to create more jobs;**
- **protect existing places of employment in a flexible way; and**
- **support the development needs of the city's universities and colleges.**

Retail

The Plan will seek to promote vibrant local neighbourhood shopping centres with quality services to create places where people want to live and meet friends. We will:

- **define the network of shopping centres to say where new shops should be provided;**
- **define boundaries for these and make sure they are compact; and**
- **ensure a good mix of uses to meet local shopping needs and to provide local services.**

City centre

We will ensure the city centre is lively and works well both now and in the future. We will:

- **review and define the city centre boundary to ensure enough space for future city centre developments;**
- **review and define the primary shopping area and say what types of uses will be allowed in this area;**
- **support and guide tourism development to enhance the city centre as the regional economic driver;**
- **support city centre living;**
- **promote shared space; and**
- **regenerate key places within the city centre.**

Belfast is the economic driver for the region and continued growth is critical. How do we ensure this supports accessible jobs and opportunities for all?



A smart connected and resilient place



Improving connectivity and supporting the efficient movement of people, goods, energy and information to create a dynamic, innovative 21st century city, with the capacity for adaption to environmental challenges



Belfast has the highest density of fibre network in Europe and nearly 100% of households have access to optical fibre broadband



Over **100,000** people travel into Belfast from other areas to work every day



The Belfast Bikes scheme has 40 docking stations in the city with over **4,000** annual subscribers



The Connswater Greenway Project is bringing benefits to local communities, including recreation, regeneration and flood alleviation





Infrastructure

Infrastructure, including water supply, electricity, gas, telecommunications and wastewater, is integral to the success of our city. We will:

- **aim to ensure there is appropriate infrastructure to meet our needs whilst protecting our environment.**

Transportation

Good transport networks help people get where they need to go and make cities better places to live. Moving people and goods around the city is essential to support a growing economy. We will:

- **support walking and cycling alongside sustainable transport;**
- **support improvements to public transport and facilities; and**
- **review parking to encourage more sustainable travel and accessibility for all.**

Environmental quality and building resilience

Enhancing the quality of the environment is important for human health and for wildlife and plants. New development must consider the natural environment and its value to us. We will:

- **improve environmental quality where possible, and protect communities from harm.**

Ensuring we can adapt to environmental change is one of our most important challenges. This is often called building resilience. We will:

- **facilitate the development of clean technologies and promote resilient design for a low carbon city;**
- **support appropriate renewable energy;**
- **ensure design helps us adapt to environmental change, protect people, wildlife, built and natural environments;**
- **manage potential flood risk in built-up areas; and**
- **manage our waste in an efficient way.**

Movement and accessibility are key to a healthy and vibrant economy. How do we protect the environment while helping to make the city and its facilities more accessible?



A green and active place

A protected, enhanced and attractive natural setting, reinforcing uniqueness and accessibility to all who live, work and enjoy the city



Belfast has over **14,000** street trees



The Lagan Valley Regional Park covers 2,116 hectares and stretches over 12 kilometres



The Belfast Hills extend over 18 kilometres and have 16 Belfast access points



There are more than 40 public parks in the city and 15 of these have Green Flag status





Open space, sport and outdoor recreation

Our city has a mixture of open spaces, playing fields, and green spaces. These could be connected to form an integrated green and blue network of open spaces and water features. The significant benefits for Belfast include:

- giving us places to relax and play sports;
- giving us places to visit;
- better looking places;
- a richer mixture of wildlife and plants;
- improved connections to places;
- safer routes for walking and cycling;
- helping to prevent flooding; and
- improved health and wellbeing.

We will:

- protect and improve open spaces, community greenways, natural green spaces, the Lagan Valley Regional Park, and the Belfast Hills; and
- ensure developers help provide 'green and blue' networks close to residential developments.

Natural heritage

Our city's natural heritage is of outstanding quality and beauty. It is one of Belfast's most valuable features and helps make the city distinctive and attractive. We will need to minimise the impacts of development on the natural environment, protect and enhance valued landscapes and important sites for a rich mix of wildlife. We will:

- protect and improve natural heritage; and
- protect existing trees and encourage new trees across Belfast.

As the city grows, open spaces and green areas are increasingly important. What should we be doing to protect and enhance our green environment?

How can I share my views?

From early 2017, there will be a 12-week consultation on the Preferred Options Paper. It is available, alongside a number of supporting documents, on our website and you can respond here:

yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk

In addition to responding through our online consultation, you can also tell us what you think about our proposals by emailing:

planning@belfastcity.gov.uk

Additional information is available on our Local Development Plan page on our website:

www.belfastcity.gov.uk/LDP

You can view hard copies from 9am - 5pm and share your opinions in writing at:

Belfast Planning Service
Cecil Ward Building
4-10 Linenhall Street
Belfast
BT2 8BP

You can send us your comments until **5pm, 20 April 2017**.

We will consider providing this document in other formats if requested.
Please call 9032 0202 ext 2255.

