



Belfast Local Development Plan

Sustainability Appraisal of the Draft Plan Strategy 2035
Incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment

Scoping Report August 2018



Belfast
City Council **Energising**
Belfast

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Abbreviations

SA:	Sustainability Appraisal
SEA:	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEA Directive:	Strategic Environmental Assessment EU Directive 2001/42/EC
EAPP:	The Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004
DPPN:	The Northern Ireland Development Plan Practice Note 04
PPP:	Plan, policy and programme review
LDP:	The Belfast Local Development Plan 2035
SCI:	Statement of Community Involvement
SES:	Shared Environmental Services, Mid & East Antrim Council
DfI:	Department for Infrastructure
DAERA:	Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
NIEA:	Northern Ireland Environment Agency
HED:	Historic Environment Division
RDS:	The Regional Development Strategy 2035
SPPS:	Strategic Planning Policy Statement
PPS:	Planning Policy Statements
BMAP:	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015
BUAP:	Belfast Urban Area Plan
HRA:	Habitats Regulations Assessment
HIA:	Health Impact Assessment
EQIA:	Equality Impact Assessment
SAC:	Special Areas of Conservation
SPA:	Special Protection Areas
WFD:	Water Framework Directive
LWWP:	Living with Water Programme
RBMP:	North-East River Basin Management Plan
SUDS:	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
HMO:	Houses in Multiple Occupation

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This Scoping Report has been prepared by Belfast City Council, and forms part of the council's duty to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of its Local Development Plan (LDP).
- 1.2 It has been produced for consultation with Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and the Historic Environment Division (HED) for an **eight week** statutory period between **20 September** and **15 November 2018**. Comments received in response will be reviewed and considered, following which the report will be updated as appropriate to reflect any changes.
- 1.3 The Scoping Report is produced at each relevant stage of the LDP preparation process, and this current versions reflects all comments received through previous consultation processes.
- 1.4 Together with the integrated SA and SEA of the Draft Plan Strategy of the LDP, the Scoping Report forms part of the evidence base upon which the LDP is based.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Belfast City

- 2.1.1 In the last fifteen years Belfast has had tremendous success in attracting national and international businesses. Encouraging economic growth has helped rebalance the economy and has seen a positive improvement in the quality of life for those that live and work in the city.
- 2.1.2 Major expenditure in infrastructure upgrades and public realm improvements have attracted substantial private sector investment that has created new employment opportunities and strengthened Belfast's role as the Capital City and economic driver for the region.
- 2.1.3 Nonetheless, the city still faces significant challenges. Significant public and private sector investment is required, in addition to modern infrastructure, tourist attractions and modern offices. Not all parts of the city have benefited from growth, with the most deprived neighbourhoods remaining marginalised and disconnected from the wider city.
- 2.1.4 Belfast City Council is focused on inclusive growth, with a priority to balance economic growth with improved social outcomes and reduced inequality. To create the conditions needed to guide future investment and development decisions, the Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP) will provide a spatial plan and policies to shape future growth, guiding development to create a smart and resilient city for the 21st Century.

2.2 The study area

- 2.2.1 Belfast is our capital city and lies at the heart of a wider urban metropolitan area that dominates the east of the region.
- 2.2.2 Bordered by the neighbouring council areas of Mid & East Antrim Borough; Lisburn & Castlereagh City; and North Down & Ards District, it is the largest of the 11 new local government districts that were formed in April 2015.



Image 1: Belfast Local Government District

2.2.3 It drives much of the economic growth across the province and given its strategic location, it is the major gateway to Northern Ireland and the primary administrative, retail and commercial location in the region.



Image 2: Northern Ireland Key Infrastructure

2.2.4 In 2014, the Belfast City Council area had a total population of roughly 283,166. By 2015, this was estimated to have risen to 338,907¹; which is approximately 18 percent of the Northern Ireland population and an increase of more than 53,000. This was a result of the city boundary expansion in April 2015, which saw Belfast take in additional residents from Castlereagh Borough Council, Lisburn City Council, and a small section from North Down Council. The most recent 2017 figures show a population of 340,220 residents.

2.2.5 Today the Belfast district covers a total area of 137.7 square kilometres; of which 30 percent is defined as 'rural', which means land outside the settlement development limits. It consists of Belfast City and the 3 small settlements of Edenderry, Hannahstown and Loughview.



Image 3: Belfast District Settlements

¹ [Demographic Statistics Branch \(NISRA\)](#)

2.3 The Belfast Local Development Plan 2020–2035

2.3.1 The LDP is being prepared in line with Part 2 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. Providing a planning strategy for the council area, it will be fundamental in the council's efforts to deliver sustainable development that reflects the vision and aspiration of local communities. It will address the needs and opportunities of Belfast as well as establishing a basis for safeguarding the environment, adapting to climate change and ensuring good design.

LDP Vision

2.3.2 The LDP is guided by a vision which provides the overall context for delivering sustainable development up to 2035. This is reproduced below.

The Belfast LDP Vision

In 2035, Belfast will be a globally successful, smart regional city that is environmentally resilient with a vibrant economic and social heart. As a centre of learning and business, the knowledge economy flourishes where collaboration and innovation attracts investment, talent and jobs. We will value and conserve our unique natural and built heritage to enhance and develop tourism.

Thriving socially inclusive well connected neighbourhoods, that encourage a healthy active lifestyle with well-designed homes where people love to live. A strong, inclusive local economy will support progressive, safe and vibrant communities. The city will provide a gateway to opportunities locally, nationally and worldwide.

2.3.3 The council has identified a number of strategic aims and objectives that we believe can help fulfil this vision, as shown in **Image 4**.



Image 4: LDP Strategic Aims

2.3.4 To help us understand how the LDP can deliver each of these aims, 21 strategic objectives have been identified to directly address key issues and shape future development. These are shown in **Image 5** for reference.

Shaping a liveable place:

Objectives 1 – 7



To grow the population of Belfast and connect with other cities across the UK and Ireland in supporting a greater level of inward investment.



To address current and future residential needs through ensuring the supply of suitable land to meet future requirements for new socially inclusive residential development where there is an appropriate type, size, density, tenure and mix to suit all needs of the population.



To promote sustainable urbanism to deliver high quality design by including policies to protect and enhance the built environment that fosters local distinctiveness.



To improve community safety and reduce the potential for antisocial behaviour or crime through an approach to new development focused on design quality.



To improve safe access for all groups in society to public services through the design and location of new development.



To protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment through effective management of proposed development and ensuring high quality design.



To promote collaborative cross-community projects that utilise derelict interface sites, that contribute to the integration of neighbourhoods and the development of shared spaces to build social cohesion.

Creating a vibrant economy:

Objectives 8 – 11



To maintain a strong and growing economy by ensuring a range of suitable sites for employment uses are available and able to be developed to meet the future growth of the economy and employment.



To support local economies by promoting development of suitable land and buildings to provide sustainable access to retail, leisure, culture, office and commercial uses within the city centre and district centres, ensuring the future needs are addressed and their continued vibrancy and viability maintained.




To strengthen the potential of local tourism to appeal to a wide range of visitors, and the development of suitable tourism infrastructure, including overnight accommodation, leisure and cultural facilities for this important sector of the economy.



To support the continued regeneration of disadvantaged areas, to facilitate well linked high-quality mixed developments, designed to create diverse communities, to break down the social and sectarian divisions of existing city neighbourhoods.

Building a smart connected and resilient place


Objectives 12 – 17



 <p>To build stronger communities by protecting and improving social, economic, green, digital and physical infrastructure through supporting its development and enhancement, and through securing contributions from new development.</p>	 <p>To ensure availability of land to facilitate sustainable patterns of development and promote travel by more sustainable modes of transport.</p>	 <p>Address the local elements that could contribute to wider environmental challenges through ensuring new development is designed to minimise carbon emissions, use resources efficiently, and be resilient to longer term implications.</p>
 <p>Adapt for the potential implications of environmental changes through management of development within areas of risk and designing new development to reduce future risk from flooding.</p>	 <p>Ensure new development minimises the production of waste and supports recycling.</p>	 <p>In relation to Minerals, to safeguard the environment by ensuring new development proposals address the potential risks in respect of environmental pollution or damage.</p>

Promoting a green and active place:

Objectives 18 – 21







 <p>To support healthy lifestyles by managing existing open spaces and ensuring sufficient land availability for the development of a blue and green infrastructure network to encourage walking, cycling, accessible play, allotments, sports and recreation opportunities.</p>	 <p>To protect, enhance and link the natural environment and biodiversity by managing the location and design of new development.</p>
 <p>To protect the natural ecosystem services and conserve the natural asset of Belfast's countryside, coast and hills by managing proposed development in sensitive areas.</p>	 <p>To support the development of a blue and green infrastructure network to manage water through sustainable urban drainage and connected green spaces.</p>

Image 5: LDP Strategic Objectives

2.4 Purpose of the SA Scoping Report

2.4.1 This Scoping Report forms part of the council's duty to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC)², of its Local Development Plan.

2.4.2 Sitting alongside the SA Report, the Scoping Report involves:

- Reviewing relevant plans, policies and programmes, and objectives relevant to the plan with information on synergies or inconsistencies;
- Collecting baseline information;
- Identifying the economic, social and environmental issues and objectives the council proposes to address in helping to deliver sustainable development through the LDP;
- Developing the proposed framework by which the strategic options and detailed policies and proposals of the LDP will be appraised; and,
- Consulting on the scope of the SA/SEA in accordance with the SEA Directive.

2.4.3 The Scoping Report enables statutory authorities and other interested bodies to make comments on the scope of the SA, and is updated and produced at each stage of the process. Any significant gaps in the information gathered can be identified and steps taken to remedy these before the LDP is developed further.

2.5 Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

2.5.1 The LDP Draft Plan Strategy is subject to the following assessments:

- **Strategic Environmental Assessment**
- **Sustainability Appraisal**

² [SEA Directive 2001/42/EC](#)

2.5.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) are separate processes but have similar aims and objectives. Simply put, SEA focuses on the likely environmental effects of a plan whilst SA includes a wider range of considerations, extending to social and economic impacts.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

2.5.3 SEA aims to provide a high level of environmental protection, with a view to promoting sustainable development. It is a systematic process for evaluating the environmental consequences of proposed plans or programmes, to ensure environmental issues are fully integrated and addressed at the earliest appropriate stage of plan preparation and decision making. Introduced to the UK through EU Directive 2001/42/EC, SEA was transposed into Northern Ireland law by the 'Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (NI) 2004 (EAPP)³, and is referred to in this report as the 'SEA Directive'. The main output of SEA is the production of an Environmental Report.

Sustainability Appraisal

2.5.4 SA is wider in scope, and is essentially a tool for appraising the social, economic and environmental effects of development plans and programmes, again with the view of promoting sustainable development. It is a statutory requirement under Sections 8(6) and 9(7) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. The key aims and principles of SA are to:

- Make the LDP more sustainable and more responsive to its social, economic and environmental effects;
- Identify key issues, significant impacts and ways to minimise any negative effects;
- Eliminate or 'scope out' insignificant effects;

³ [EAPP 2004](#)

- Influence the alternatives and mitigation measures we have assessed;
and
- Document the LDP story – why is it proposed the way it is.

2.5.5 SPPS shows how it is possible to satisfy both requirements by undertaking a joint SA and SEA process, with the production of a single SA report that incorporates the SEA requirements. By adopting this approach the council can efficiently carry out a single integrated appraisal without duplicating information. It also ensures that the assessment complies with both sets of regulations by amalgamating the Environmental Report, required by the SEA Directive, within the wider appraisal.

2.5.6 We are committed to undertaking an integrated SA of both the Draft Plan Strategy and the Local Polices Plan, and all reference to SA in this report denotes SA that fully incorporates the SEA requirements.

2.6 Compliance with the SEA Directive and regulations

2.6.1 The integrated SA appraisal must meet the SEA Directive requirements for production of an Environmental Report. In line with these this Scoping Report has been prepared in full accordance with SEA Directive **Articles 5, 6 & 7** in terms of level of information and consultation measures. The subsequent adoption and monitoring stages of the SA process will be carried out in direct accordance with **Articles 9 & 10**.

2.6.2 **Tables 1 and 2** show where the relevant requirements under **Article 5 (1) (Annex 1)**⁴ and **Articles 6 to 10** are integrated within this report.

⁴ [SEA Directive 2001/42/EC, Article 5 & Annex I](#)

SEA Directive Requirements		Where is this covered?
Identify, describe and evaluate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and Reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme 		SA Report & Non-technical Summary
a)	An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	Contents Section 2 Section 3 Appendix 1
b)	The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme	Section 3 Appendix 1 Appendix 24
c)	The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	
d)	Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC	
e)	The environmental protection objectives, established at international, community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation	SA Report & Non-technical Summary
f)	The likely significant effects on the environment, including: biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural & archaeological heritage, landscape & the interrelationship between the above factors (<i>includes secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium & long-term permanent & temporary, positive & negative effects</i>)	
g)	The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme	
h)	An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information	
i)	A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Art. 10	
j)	A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	Non-technical Summary

Table 1: Meeting the requirements of the SEA Directive – Article 5(1) / Annex 1

SEA Directive Requirements	How will this be covered?
<p>The report shall include the information that may reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme, its stage in the decision-making process and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process to avoid duplication of the assessment (Art. 5.2)</p>	<p>This Scoping Report and the SA Report adhere to this requirement.</p>
<p>Consultation</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorities with environmental responsibility, when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report (Art. 5.4). 	<p>Consultation carried out at each stage as required.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1, 6.2). 	<p>This Scoping Report and the SA Report are now subject to consultation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other EU Member States, where the implementation of the plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment of that country (Art. 7). 	<p>There will be no effect on another EU Member State.</p>
<p>Taking the environmental report and the results of the consultations into account in decision-making (Art. 8)</p>	
<p>Provision of information on the decision:</p> <p>When the plan or programme is adopted, the public and any countries consulted under Art.7 must be informed and the following made available to those so informed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan or programme as adopted • A statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme and how the environmental report of Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of consultations entered into pursuant to Art. 7 have been taken into account in accordance with Art. 8, and the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and • The measures decided concerning monitoring (Art. 9) <p>Monitoring:</p> <p>The significant environmental effects of the plan's or programme's implementation (Art. 10)</p>	<p>Requirements will be met at a later stage in the SA process.</p>

Table 2: Meeting the requirements of the SEA Directive – Articles 5 - 10

2.7 Other assessments applicable to the LDP

Habitats Regulation Assessment

- 2.7.1 Section 102 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to be undertaken during the preparation of a LDP where necessary. The purpose of HRA is to assess the implications of a land use plan for European sites in terms of their conservation objectives. These sites are defined in the Regulations as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). Ramsar sites are also considered in HRA as a matter of policy. The HRA should ascertain whether the plan, on its own or in combination with other plans, is likely to adversely affect a site's integrity, and whether alternative solutions to respect this integrity should be examined.
- 2.7.2 The Shared Environmental Services (SES) team in Mid & East Antrim Council provides support to Belfast City Council on a range of specialist functions, including HRA. SES have undertaken the HRA of the Belfast LDP to ensure the legal requirements of these habitats and sites are fully met, and to reduce the risk of challenge to planning decisions, development plans and policies.

Health Assessment

- 2.7.3 The first of the core principles in Northern Ireland's two tier planning system is 'improving health and wellbeing'. The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) for Northern Ireland states that the planning system has '*an active role to play in helping better the lives of people and communities in Northern Ireland and supporting the Executive's key priority of improving health and wellbeing*'.⁵ The LDP can influence policies to improve health and wellbeing, for example ensuring there is sustainable access to green and open spaces, and considering the need for adequate public amenity space within all residential developments.

⁵ [SPPS 2015 DOE \(pp.15\)](#)

2.7.4 Whilst a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is not a formal requirement of the LDP, provision for health and wellbeing is identified and examined within the 'social' aspect of the SA, and is a key theme within both the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan.

Equalities Impact Assessment

2.7.5 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, Equality of Opportunity, places a statutory requirement on councils to promote equality of opportunity⁶. This applies to persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation; between men and women generally; between persons with a disability and persons without; and between persons with dependents and persons without. The council must also recognise and consider the need to promote good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

2.7.6 We are required to ensure that the LDP is prepared in accordance with the Section 75 statutory obligations. As a result, we have undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) to determine if the policies and proposals in the LDP will have any potential impacts on Section 75 groups.

Rural Proofing

2.7.7 The Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 requires the council to consider rural needs when preparing and implementing policies, plans or programmes. Rural proofing is the process where any major policy and strategy is assessed to determine whether it will have an impact on rural areas, and where appropriate, adjustments should be made in the LDP to take account of particular rural circumstances. We are required to inform the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) on how this duty has been fulfilled on an annual basis.

⁶ [Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998](#)

2.7.8 We have fully incorporated rural proofing within the SA to ensure rural areas are properly considered as part of the LDP preparation, in line with the DAERA guidance note 'Thinking Rural – a Guide to Rural Proofing'⁷.

Links to other assessments

2.7.9 You can find links to all assessments relevant to the LDP on our [Local Development Plan webpage](#).

2.8 Consultation

2.8.1 Consultation and public participation is an important part of the SA process. All consultation must be carried out in line with the SEA Directive, the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 procedures for SA, and the LDP Regulations.

2.8.2 Under the SEA Directive the council must consult with the 'Consultation Body' at specific stages during preparation of the LDP. In Northern Ireland this function is delivered by the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), led by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). Other bodies such as Historic Environment Division (HED) and the public are also consulted on all sustainability issues within the SA.

2.8.3 Accordingly we are committed to undertaking consultation at each stage of the process, as shown in [Table 3](#), with the current stage highlighted in blue.

2.8.4 We will welcome comments on the Draft Plan Strategy, SA Report and the Scoping Report for a period of **8 weeks** between **20 September** and **15 November 2018**.

2.8.5 Representations can be submitted by e-mail to localdevelopmentplan@belfastcity.gov.uk, and written submissions should be sent to:

⁷ [Thinking Rural – a Guide to Rural Proofing](#)

Belfast Planning Service
Cecil Ward Building
4-10 Linenhall Street
BELFAST
BT2 8BP
02890 500510

2.8.6 All relevant documents are available to view on our Local Development Plan webpage, whilst a hard copy is available to view at the above address.

Stage	Description	Consultation Date / Period
1. Screening	Determining if a plan or programme requires a SEA	N/A – plan screened in
2. Scoping	Scoping Report – deciding on scope and level of detail of information to be included. Comments received have been fully reflected in the updated Scoping Report, and directly informed the Interim Report & SA Report.	15 November – 20 December 2016 5 weeks
3. Draft Plan	Consultation on the Interim Report and Scoping Report, alongside the Preferred Options Paper. Comments received have been fully considered and addressed when preparing the Draft Plan Strategy.	26 January – 20 April 2017 12 weeks
	Draft Plan Strategy preview (4 weeks). Statutory Consultation on the Draft Plan Strategy, SA Report & Scoping Report (8 weeks). The documents are published on the council's website, and the Consultation Body have been consulted.	23 August – 15 November 2018 12 weeks
4. Decision to Adopt	SA Statement – the council will make information available, including a post-adoption statement to show how the SA, and opinions and consultations have been taken into account, the reasons for decisions made and choosing the plan as adopted, and proposed measures to monitor the plan.	

Table 3: Consultation Stages

2.9 The SA process

2.9.1 The SA is fully integrated into the wider LDP process; informing each stage where decisions are made, and identifying arrangements to monitor the plan's implementation.

2.5.2 **Table 4** provides a summary of the specific SA procedural steps as set out in the Northern Ireland Development Plan Practice Note 04 (DPPN)⁸. The Scoping Report stages are highlighted in blue, whilst the SA of the Draft Plan Strategy, which the council has now undertaken alongside this updated Scoping Report, is highlighted in green.

⁸[Development Plan Practice Note 04](#)

SA Stage	
A(1)	SA Scoping Report – Updated throughout process
1	Identify other relevant policies, plans, programmes & sustainability objectives
2	Preparation of the evidence base
3	Identify existing environmental issues and challenges
4	Establishing the SA Framework and objectives
5	Consultation
A(2)	SA Interim Report
1	Assessment of preferred options and reasonable alternatives
2	Consultation alongside Preferred Options Paper and SA Scoping Report
B	Assessment
1	Test the LDP objectives against the SA Framework
2	Assessment of reasonable alternatives
3	Assessment of likely evolution without the LDP
4	Evaluate likely significant effects of the draft plan and alternatives
5	Proposed mitigation measures for addressing adverse / beneficial effects
C	SA Report
1	Documents appraisal process, findings, including SEA Directive requirements
D	Consultation on the SA Report & Draft Plan Strategy
1	Consult public, environmental authorities and any affected EU member state
E	SA Statement
1	Identify how the SA & consultations have been taken into account
2	Reasons for choosing the plan as adopted
3	Proposed monitoring measures
F	Monitoring
1	Establish arrangements to monitor significant effects of plan implementation
2	Identify unforeseen adverse effects
3	Undertake appropriate remedial action

Table 4: SA Procedural Stages

3 CONTEXT, BASELINE & SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES

3.1 Scoping

- 3.1.1 By assessing relevant policies, plans and programmes together with current baseline data, we are able to identify existing social, economic and environmental conditions and issues. This paves the way for production of a framework of sustainability objectives; against which we can then appraise our policy options and alternatives.
- 3.1.2 Scoping is the first phase of the SA, which is the process of deciding the scope and level of detail for the SA, including the environmental and sustainability effects to be considered, the assessment methods to be used, and the structure and contents of the SA Report.
- 3.1.3 The primary requirement of this Scoping Report is to set the criteria for assessment by bringing together baseline data and other relevant information, such as a review of up-to-date policies, programmes and plans.

3.2 Plan, policy and programme review

- 3.2.1 The LDP may be influenced in various ways by other plans, policies or programmes (PPPs), or by external sustainability objectives such as those put forward in other strategies or initiatives. The SEA Directive requires a review of relevant PPP's so that we can determine how the LDP is affected by these, how it may affect them, and to address any inconsistencies and constraints.
- 3.2.2 The review of key PPP's and strategies that are likely to be relevant to the LDP was first presented in the first version of this report, and again alongside the SA Interim Report. This allowed the council to establish a coherent policy context for the SA and to ensure the emerging LDP reflects and complies with international, national and local policies. The review has

now been updated following consultation on both reports, whilst future versions will reflect any new relevant policies which are published between now and the next stage of the process.

3.2.3 The review identifies the key objectives and requirements of each PPP, together with any specific sustainability implications for the LDP. A high level summary is set out in **Table 5**, focussing on some of the key examples at each level, what those documents say that the LDP should or must do, and how the review has directly influenced both the LDP and SA. A full detailed list of all PPP's relevant to the Belfast LDP is presented in **Appendix 1**.

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP
INTERNATIONAL & EUROPEAN LEVEL		
SEA Directive	Provide for high level of environmental protection and integrate environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of LDP with a view of promoting sustainable development.	The SEA Directive must be applied to the preparation of the LDP. Specific requirements of the Directive must also be met through the SA.
Habitats Directive	Promote the maintenance of biodiversity, taking account of economic, social, cultural and regional requirements; conservation of natural habitats; and maintain landscape features of importance of wildlife and fauna.	The LDP should take account of the Habitats Directive. Specific SA objectives should be included to protect and maintain the natural environment and important habitats.
Europe 2020 Strategy	The European Union's 10 year jobs and growth strategy; launched in 2010 to create the conditions for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Includes 5 headline targets for the EU to achieve by 2020.	The council should take account of the 5 headline targets when preparing the LDP.
NATIONAL LEVEL		
The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011	Formulation and co-ordination of policy securing the orderly and consistent development of land, and the planning of the development.	The LDP must adhere to the legislation set out by the Planning Act.
Regional Development	Aims to take account of the economic ambitions and needs of the region, and put in place spatial	The LDP should take into consideration and reflect the

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP
Strategy 2035 (RDS)	planning, transport and housing priorities that will support and meet the aspirations of the region.	relevant policies contained within the RDS.
Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)	Sets out the Department's regional planning policies for securing the orderly and consistent development of land.	The provisions and core principles of the SPPS must be taken into account and reflected in the preparation of the LDP.
N.I. Sustainability Development Strategy	Framework to respond to major threats such as climate change and energy price instability, encouraging integrated action to tackle problems and take advantage of opportunities.	The LDP should take the strategy into consideration by promoting sustainable development whilst identifying and addressing issues and maximising opportunity.
LOCAL LEVEL		
Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015	Although formally adopted in 2014, this process of final BMAP adoption was declared unlawful as a result of a judgement in the court of appeal delivered on 18 May 2017. This means the Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP) 2001 and the other Development Plans provides the statutory plan context for the area. However BUAP was published in 1990, nearly 30 years ago. The Belfast City Council Plan Area has undergone massive transformation since then, particularly in the city centre. The formal development plans which apply are dated and silent on many of the planning issues pertinent to needs of current planning decision making. In recognition of this unique circumstance and taking account of the short term transitional period in advance of the adoption of the Local Policies Plan it is important to provide clarity in relation to the application of planning policy.	Draft BMAP, in its most recent, post-examination form remains a significant material consideration in future planning decisions. It was at the most advanced stage possible prior to formal adoption. Draft BMAP referred to throughout this document therefore refers to that version. However, in preparing this document the council has also had regard to the provisions of the draft BMAP which was published in 2004, the objections which were raised as part of that plan process and the Planning Appeals Commission Inquiry report.

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP
Belfast Agenda	The community plan for Belfast, created in partnership with key city partners, residents and community organisations. The plan sets out medium and long term goals for social, economic and environmental improvements for Belfast over the next 15 years.	The LDP should provide the spatial reflection of the Community Plan and establish a coherent, joint vision for Belfast that will shape development and growth of the city over the next 15 years. The LDP preparation must therefore take full account of the Community Plan. This is explained below in more detail.
Belfast City Centre Regeneration Investment Strategy	Strategy to ensure maximum economic and social impact.	The LDP should promote the underlying and core principles of the strategy.
Belfast Integrated Tourism Strategy	Aims to achieve the ambition and aspiration to make Belfast a world class, must-visit, city destination.	The LDP should promote Belfast as a tourist destination through its strategies and policies.
Belfast Integrated Economic Strategy	Sets out the key strategic aspirations and priorities for Belfast City Council, Invest NI and its partners.	The LDP should enable economic growth and prosperity of the city council area through its strategies and policies.

Table 5: High Level Plan, Policy & Programme Review

3.3 Links with the Belfast Agenda



3.3.1 There is a statutory obligation for the evolving LDP to take account of Belfast's Community Plan, 'The Belfast Agenda'⁹, which was informed by the 'Belfast Conversation' consultation event in May 2015. This brought key stakeholders together from across the sector to gain a better understanding of the aspirations of residents, community groups and partner organisations, and how they would like to see the city shape and develop over the next 15 years.

3.3.2 The response of participants was overwhelmingly positive, with each workshop generating a wealth of ideas to help shape the Belfast Agenda. There were many recurring themes and ideas which centred around:

- Enhancing the city's public transport infrastructure;
- The need for greater co-ordination and support for the economy, skills and employability;
- Addressing issues of community relations, social and health inequalities;
- Making the most of our physically compact city and enhancing the strong links to our surrounding natural environment;
- Maximising the benefits of our built environment, protecting the local distinctiveness of our built heritage whilst allowing for high quality innovative development; and
- Stronger civic participation and engagement, and finding ways to support greater individual fulfilment and self-empowerment.

⁹ [The Belfast Agenda](#)

- 3.3.4 Alongside the power of Community Planning, the council has an opportunity to tailor fit a joined-up approach with other functions such as regeneration and economic development. Working directly with key statutory agencies, the council will develop a joint vision for Belfast outlining how we will work with statutory, business and community partners to shape future development and growth, by setting medium and long term goals for social, economic and environmental improvements over the next 15 years.
- 3.3.6 These principles shall be integrated and reflected directly within the LDP, to enable the planning system to move away from a land-use focus towards a place-shaping approach which incorporates a spatial analysis and visioning process. In this respect, the LDP shall essentially present a spatial reflection of the Belfast Agenda.

3.4 Baseline information

- 3.4.1 The collection of baseline information is a fundamental, necessary requirement of the SA process and covers a wide range of interconnecting, pertinent sustainability topics. Its purpose is to identify an evidence base of existing conditions and issues in the area, against which the plan's effects can be assessed and monitored. With a focus on what the plan can deliver, it can help us define key opportunities and challenges facing Belfast.
- 3.4.2 The information incorporates the key themes shown below in **Figure 1** which could impact sustainability as a result of adopting and implementing the LDP. These include the environmental receptors derived from Annex I (f) of the SEA Directive and their inter-relationship, whilst social and economic themes are identified for the wider purpose of the integrated SA process.

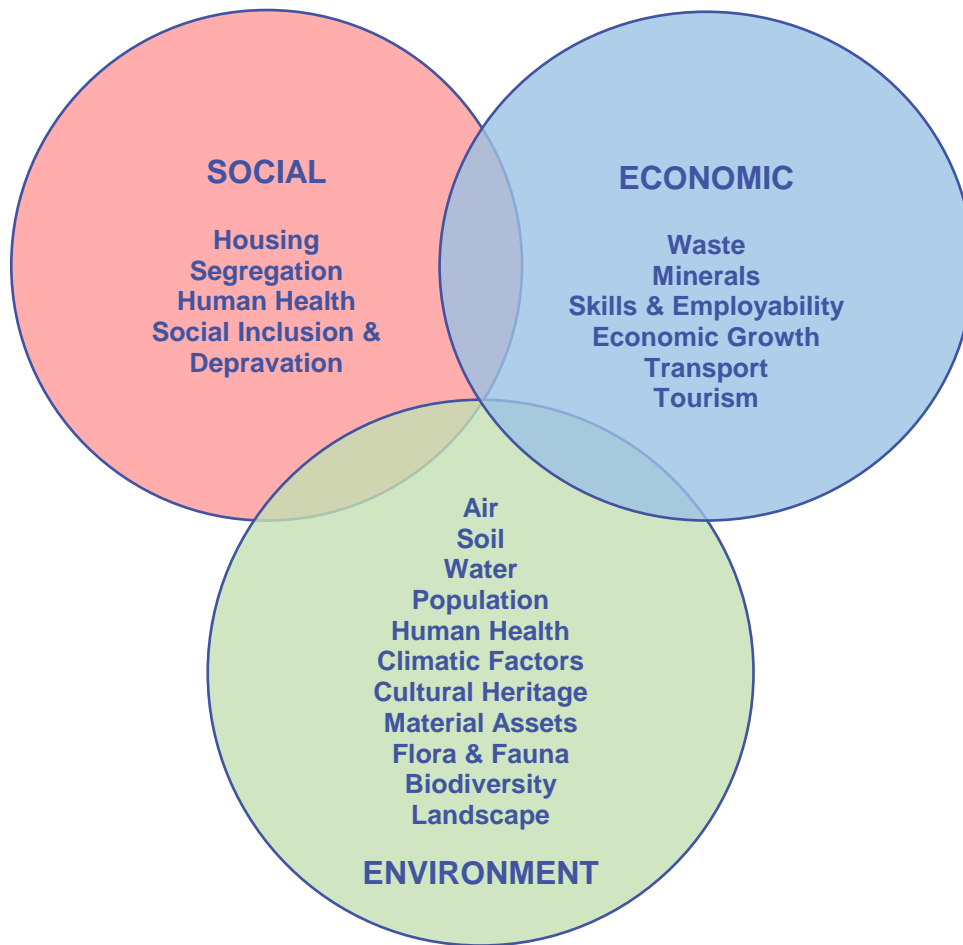


Figure 1: Belfast LDP Baseline Data Topics

- 3.4.3 In addition to establishing the existing conditions within Belfast, the baseline data also allows us to predict and understand how each issue is likely to evolve if the LDP was not implemented. It establishes a solid evidence base from which we can identify trends, predict likely effects and monitoring outcomes, and it can not only indicate the current situation, but how far it is from reaching any established targets or thresholds.
- 3.4.4 A full presentation of baseline information can be found in [Appendix 24](#). The data was collected from a wide range of sources including external studies, assessments and higher level plans, and is presented through a combination of tables, text and maps to provide a spatial representation of the information. The information collected reflects data collected from early 2016 to 2018, however the collection of baseline data will go on indefinitely and will be updated on an ongoing basis. It is noted however that there

have been limitations in gathering evidence specific to Belfast, particularly in light of the recent Review of Public Administration (RPA). Other evidence only provided trends on a Northern Ireland basis. The information represents the best available data at the time of collection, and has been updated to reflect comments received through the previous consultation stages.

3.5 Key sustainability issues

3.5.1 By analysing the baseline information we can identify existing conditions, problems and issues, as required by the SEA Directive. Understanding these current issues gives us the opportunity to respond by developing sustainable plan objectives and options, and to consider how the LDP can avoid exacerbating existing problems or explore alternative solutions.

3.6 Likely future without the plan

3.6.1 It is also a requirement of the SEA Directive that we consider the likely evolution of the environment in the plan area if the LDP was not implemented. This is an important part of the overall SA process, especially for the later consideration of cumulative effects.

3.6.2 If the Belfast LDP is not implemented, it is assumed that the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS), corresponding Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and supplementary guidance documents would remain, and a number of other key strategies and plans would continue; thus there would not necessarily be a policy vacuum. Nonetheless it is clear from the evidence base that certain, existing trends could continue or worsen in some areas.

3.6.3 **Table 6** provides a very high level summary of the key sustainability issues identified from the baseline information, together with how the LDP could respond. The likely evolution of each issue in the absence of the LDP is also considered.

Themes	Key Sustainability Issues	Implications The LDP should:	Likely Evolution without LDP
Population & Human Health	<p>Around 45% of Belfast's population live in the most deprived Super Output Areas (SOAs) in NI.</p> <p>This represents 18% of the regional population.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce poverty & social exclusion by encouraging regeneration to deprived areas, thus tackling spatially persistent social deprivation & inequalities; • Support urban & rural renaissance; • Connect deprived communities to employment opportunities and services. 	<p>The Department of Communities 'Neighbourhood Renewal' scheme targets interventions in the most deprived 10% wards across NI. In the short/medium term this programme will continue to address deprivation and local issues.</p> <p>However, without the LDP and supporting evidence, it would not be possible for the council to fully understand its spatial and development needs and to plan positively to address these.</p>
Population & Human Health	<p>Life expectancy in Belfast is lower than the NI average.</p> <p>People living in deprived areas of Belfast are expected to live up to 4.5 years less than more affluent areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to community & health facilities to encourage the wellbeing of the population & reduce inequalities in health; • Safeguard & facilitate quality open space & access to outdoor recreational & sporting facilities; • Provide secure age-friendly environments; • Enable better integration between land use planning & transport. 	<p>Regional and potentially local programmes are likely to be implemented which seek to address health disparities across the city.</p> <p>However, without the LDP and supporting evidence, current trends could continue to worsen.</p> <p>Additionally the absence of a LDP could result in a lack of connection and integration of sustainable modes of transport within land use development.</p>
Population & Human Health	<p>In Belfast, health inequalities exist between the most and least deprived areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide adequate access to areas of open space, sport & recreation particularly via walking & cycling; • Provide adequate access to health care facilities; 	<p>The Belfast Agenda identifies health as a priority for Belfast and could potentially coordinate programmes to address these inequalities. Likewise the Open Space Strategy will continue to be developed; but may lack spatial planning input, and the disparity of open space across the city may not be adequately addressed.</p>

Themes	Key Sustainability Issues	Implications The LDP should:	Likely Evolution without LDP
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use development management policies to manage the number & distribution of certain use types (e.g. hot food takeaways, betting shops) which could be contributing to negative health outcomes. 	Without the LDP and supporting evidence, it would not be possible for the council to fully understand its spatial and development needs and to plan positively to address these.
Population & Human Health	<p>Between 2010 and 2014 Belfast had the highest rate of deaths due to obesity in NI.</p> <p>Childhood obesity in Belfast is 9 percentage points higher in comparison to the NI average.</p> <p>Within Belfast LGD, childhood obesity is 33% high in deprived areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support broader government policy aimed at addressing obesity & other health & wellbeing issues; Influence the environment in a way that builds strong, healthy & vibrant communities 	<p>There are likely to be programmes which seek to address specific health issues e.g. obesity.</p> <p>However, without the LDP and supporting evidence, it would not be possible for the council to fully understand its spatial and development needs and to plan positively to address these.</p>
Population & Human Health	<p>Segregation continues in parts of Belfast. 88¹⁰ different security barriers and forms of defensible architecture, known as 'Peace walls', located within and between communities.</p> <p>These could hamper potential development in terms of housing or open space.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play an important role in the delivery of good quality housing & spaces that supports the creation of more balanced communities; Take account of the council's good relations policies. Encourage opportunities to foster community pride and identity through conservation or regeneration of local heritage assets, such as 	Interventions would continue at NI Executive level, Local Council and NIHE level. However, the NI Executive set ambitious targets to reduce and remove all interface barriers by 2023. Without the LDP, an updated evidence base and supporting policy would be absent to assist the removal of barriers to create shared spaces, and to maximise the accessibility of all areas within our communities. There would also be a potential lack of collaborate approaches to integrated

¹⁰ Information received from BCC Good Relations Unit

Themes	Key Sustainability Issues	Implications The LDP should:	Likely Evolution without LDP
		the retention of heritage assets in peace line areas for community use.	regeneration of wider neighbourhood environments.
Housing	A crucial factor in accommodating housing growth in Belfast will be the ability to provide suitable and affordable house types, in the right locations, to meet the needs of differing household compositions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a sustainable level of population growth; • Promote sustainable patterns of residential development – adequate & available supply of quality housing to meet the needs of everyone; • Prioritise the use of previously developed/ brownfield land; • Tackle vacancy & dereliction through the re-use of vacant buildings to accommodate housing needs; • Address housing affordability. • Encourage & promote the sensitive & innovative re-use of existing historic listed & non-listed building stock. 	<p>Without the LDP and supporting evidence, there would not be an up-to-date housing policy to accommodate local growth, meet demand for the identified annual housing supply in the area, or satisfy local requirements for housing type; including affordable housing.</p> <p>The location of suitable housing lands may not correlate to clear areas of housing stress.</p>
Housing	<p>There is a shortage of programmed social housing schemes to meet social housing need.</p> <p>Welfare reforms are likely to increase the demand for smaller housing units.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate a reasonable mix & balance of housing tenures & types; • Take into consideration the NIHE Housing Needs Assessment in the allocation of land required to facilitate the right mix of housing tenures. 	<p>Without the LDP and supporting evidence, there would be a lack of appropriate policies to address the demands of population need, including an aging population.</p> <p>This could mean people are living in houses that do not address their particular need.</p>
Crime	A third of NI's recorded crime offences in 2014 occurred in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the quality of life by encouraging safe & accessible environments; 	Alternative policies and community safety initiatives from other statutory providers will

Themes	Key Sustainability Issues	Implications The LDP should:	Likely Evolution without LDP
	Belfast. Anti-social behaviour is higher in Belfast than any other council area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide greater access to employment areas; • Encourage secure by design standards; • Improve quality of life by ensuring adequate access to employment opportunities & opportunity for regeneration. 	<p>continue to provide interventions to reduce crime. Additionally there is guidance within the SPPS that encourages good design and positive place making that can 'further sustainable development and encourage healthier living; promote accessibility and inclusivity; and contribute to how safe places are and feel'.</p> <p>However, without the LDP and supporting evidence, trends could continue or worsen due to a lack of strategic direction in spatial terms.</p>
Open Space	<p>There is a disparity in the provision of open space across Belfast.</p> <p>There are low levels of open and green space in the city centre.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect, enhance & make open space accessible for enjoyment of the natural, cultural & industrial environment; • Tackle issues of accessibility for sport, leisure & open space in terms of social participation, cohesion & inclusivity in the city; • Identify additional areas of open space & ensure an adequate provision; • Encourage developer contributions via Section 76 to offset the impacts caused by developments by contributing to & creating open space as per land use plans; • Create additional & well-designed open space particular in areas lacking in provision; • Identify & promote green linkages throughout the city & to the surrounding hills; 	<p>SPPS and PPS 8 would still prevail in terms of providing protection to open spaces.</p> <p>However, the SPPS requires LDP's to undertake an Open Space Strategy. Without the LDP and this requirement, the uneven distribution of open space may not be adequately addressed.</p> <p>Some areas across the city would have under-provision of accessible open spaces, and the city centre would continue to have a significant lack of open space.</p>

Themes	Key Sustainability Issues	Implications The LDP should:	Likely Evolution without LDP
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage more open space provision along the rivers, the waterfront, & links to seascape where appropriate. 	
Education	<p>The 2011 census outlined that 41% of the adult population have no formal qualifications, which decreases chances of employability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure adequate access to schools, colleges & universities, in particular the relocation of the University of Ulster to the North end of the City Centre; Ensure community & educational facilities are in the right locations, accessible and well connected. 	<p>Other statutory providers will continue to invest in employability and skills of the population through interventions such as the council's Skills and Employability Framework.</p> <p>However, without the LDP and supporting evidence, there may be insufficient economic and employment land to provide locations for entrepreneurs and attract inward investment. This could in turn displace Belfast as the regional economic driver as outlined in the RDS 2035.</p>
Employment	<p>30%¹¹ of Belfast's working age population are economically inactive, who are either not seeking employment or available for work.</p> <p>Notably, half of this group is claiming out of work or 'other' benefits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote connectivity to employment lands (especially in areas of employment deprivation); Recognise the need to sustain a more responsive, flexible & accessible system of higher education for the social & economic benefit of Belfast; Enable large scale housing developments to be planned close to existing education facilities, with good infrastructural connectivity; Review the Employment Lands Assessment in Belfast. 	<p>Without the LDP and supporting evidence, the absence of specific policies and guidance to address local needs could further disadvantage those on lower incomes in terms of access to places of work and local amenities.</p> <p>The LDP can enable better connectivity between communities and places of work; and can zone land for economic development and regeneration specifically to the needs of the area.</p>

¹¹ Labour Force Survey

Themes	Key Sustainability Issues	Implications The LDP should:	Likely Evolution without LDP
Tourism	<p>Whilst Belfast has a growing tourism economy, there are a number of weaknesses that could potentially inhibit growth.</p> <p>Hotel bed space is limited and Belfast has lower than average overnight trip length and spend per night, which could hamper economic growth in this sector. There are notable weaknesses in connectivity between key points of interest in the city.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a City Centre Approach to new tourist based accommodation/ development where appropriate; • Ensure an adequate supply of land for tourism uses especially within the City Centre; • Retain the built & landscape character of Belfast; • Ensure an integrated transportation approach to land use in order to improve connectivity, & promote more sustainable patterns of transport and travel. 	<p>Without the LDP and supporting evidence, the council would be unable to facilitate sustainable tourism growth to adequately reflect the needs and assets unique to Belfast. For example; the potential to exploit the international trend towards city and business tourism, and its capacity to become a destination for cultural tourism.</p> <p>The absence of the LDP could also inhibit the potential to explore opportunities to expand water based tourism along the Lagan and canals.</p>
Transportation	<p>Regionally, there is an overall dependency on travel by private car which has had an adverse impact on environmental quality.</p> <p>There is a need to integrate transportation and land use to maximise development around a quality sustainable transport network, in order to reduce the need to travel and car dependency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make land available to facilitate sustainable patterns of development & travel by more sustainable modes of transport; • Integrate transportation & land use in order to improve connectivity & promote more sustainable patterns of transport & travel; • Support the growth of the economy whilst reducing the environmental impact of transport. 	<p>Regional policy under PPS13 may address this issue to some extent. However, the implementation of up-to-date LDP policies specifically relating to public transport in Belfast would provide more certainty in relation to how public transport issues will be addressed locally.</p> <p>In particular, the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) is currently being reviewed. Without the LDP it would be harder for transport strategies such as this to be implemented in an integrated way.</p>
Retail	<p>There are high levels of vacancy rates in Belfast, which reduces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a City Centre first approach; 	<p>The SPPS and RDS identify the need to enhance the distinctive role of Belfast City Centre as the primary retail location in NI, whilst regional</p>

Themes	Key Sustainability Issues	Implications The LDP should:	Likely Evolution without LDP
	<p>the retail offer and economic potential of the city centre.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide for sustainable mixed development centred around the potential for an anchor store; • Encourage a robust retail core & frontage; • Promote areas of high quality office development; • Promote sustainable re-use of vacant lands & buildings; • Promote areas of mixed use and/or retail & opportunity; • Promote compact development with good accessibility to facilities. 	<p>objectives also set a town centre first approach to new retail.</p> <p>Without the LDP and supporting evidence, high levels of vacancy would continue which would be detrimental to the vitality and viability of the city centre.</p> <p>There could be a reliance of market-led development which could take people out of the town centre.</p> <p>The LDP would provide an integrated framework for the regeneration and development of the city; particularly for supporting investment through the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Investment Strategy.</p>
<p>Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna</p>	<p>Belfast has many designated sites protected for their biodiversity and conservation importance.</p> <p>New development, pollution and disturbance could pose a threat to vulnerable biodiversity sites resulting in habitat loss and fragmentation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to protect, conserve and enhance the hierarchy of natural heritage sites; • Protect & maintain ecological networks, including priority species, biodiversity & habitats; • Protect & integrate natural heritage features when zoning sites for development through key sites requirements; • Protect & maintain sensitive landscapes from obtrusive development, & explore opportunities for their enhancement; 	<p>Policies within the SPPS and the suite of PPS's (in particular PPS2 Natural Heritage) would provide some protection. The Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2015 also provides policy for local designations, thus even in the absence of the LDP this issue is being addressed to some extent by planning policy.</p> <p>However, given the current pressures for growth and development within the district, an up-to-date LDP and supporting evidence can help to</p>

Themes	Key Sustainability Issues	Implications The LDP should:	Likely Evolution without LDP
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitively manage through the promotion of additional green & blue infrastructure to add value to the provision & enhancement of the City, as well as its connection to open space & habitats in / around settlements; • Provide a greater emphasis on the protection of trees & woodlands, & their positive contribution to the social, cultural & physical environment benefits i.e. habitats, flood protection and amenity value. 	<p>conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity; by directing development away from sensitive locations; and managing new development so that its design minimises effects on the natural environment and helps to create and connect habitats.</p> <p>The LBAP is currently being updated by the council and sets Belfast's local priorities for action on habitats and species. The LDP can identify, map and define the sites requiring protection obtrusive development. Without the LDP to provide guidance on siting, scale and nature of development; there would be significant risk to sites of nature conservation.</p>
Air Quality	The heavy reliance on vehicular travel leads to road traffic congestion, which in turn adversely effects air quality and CO2 emissions in Belfast.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce reliance on private car journeys by supporting development which is located suitably close to services, amenities & established transport corridors; • Promote the use, development & improvement of sustainable modes of transport; • Take account of air quality management areas; • Continue to protect & increase tree coverage across Belfast. 	<p>The policies and guidance set out in SPPS (and associated PPS's) would provide some protection to air quality, particularly through the Environmental Impact Assessment screening. Existing legislation will seek to continue to manage air quality to acceptable thresholds.</p> <p>However, without the LDP and supporting evidence, development could not be directed to sustainable locations or encouraged to increase provision of sustainable transport infrastructure.</p>

Themes	Key Sustainability Issues	Implications The LDP should:	Likely Evolution without LDP
			The increasing trend for car ownership and travel would likely continue, along with a subsequent increase of air polluting emissions.
Water	<p>The LWWP outlined that without major investment in waste water and sewage infrastructure in Greater Belfast, it may not be possible to permit any new connections that will impact significantly on an already stretched infrastructure.</p> <p>This will have an adverse effect on the economic growth strategy for Belfast.</p> <p>All water bodies within the River Lagan, tidal Lagan and inner Belfast Lough are currently failing to meet their WFD objectives, which is being addressed through the LWWP and the North-East River Basin Management Plan (NE RBMP).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the infrastructure requirements for future land supply; • Conduct an urban capacity study; • Make provision for waste water & sewage infrastructure as required; • Consider the spatial implications of other statutory plans; • Increase green & blue infrastructure; • Promote the use of SUDS; • Meet the requirements of the NE RBMP. 	<p>The LWWP would continue to progress.</p> <p>However, without the LDP and supporting evidence, there is the potential that development would be difficult to coordinate, resulting in ad-hoc, piecemeal development and supporting infrastructure.</p> <p>Utility providers may find it difficult to plan for growth and expansion in their networks in the absence of the LDP.</p> <p>The knock-on effects of this could result in delays and the inability to adequately address water quality, which could contravene the WFD requirements.</p>
Contaminated Soils	Belfast has significant areas of previously developed or brownfield land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an urban capacity study; • Identify re-use of existing brownfield sites, which should be prioritised for development; 	The council and NIEA, as a statutory consultee to the Planning Service, will continue to regulate the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 as much as possible, and will

Themes	Key Sustainability Issues	Implications The LDP should:	Likely Evolution without LDP
	<p>Many existing brownfield sites have remained undeveloped or vacant for extended periods, highlighting concerns over potential viability of the land for housing development which could hinder the delivery of the LDP's growth aspirations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise the precautionary principle to sites which may include priority habitats or are of special biodiversity interest; • Identify previously developed brownfield land in settlements outside the city for potential economic development use. 	<p>continue to assess and manage land contamination through the provisions of CLR11.</p> <p>However, the LDP can encourage sustainable management of contaminated land by directing development to suitable locations.</p>
<p>Cultural & Built Heritage</p>	<p>Belfast has a rich cultural and built heritage, which could potentially be under pressure from new development that is not in keeping with the character of the area.</p> <p>Alongside this, some of Belfast's heritage assets are in neglect and decay, with one fifth of NI's building and monuments recorded on the Built Heritage Risk Register.</p> <p>There is opportunity to seize on the tourism potential of several underutilised heritage assets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to protect, conserve & enhance the historic environment that will allow sympathetic, heritage led development which preserves historic assets (designated & non-designated) & their setting; • Look for opportunities to bring vacant and/or derelict historic buildings back into positive use; • Retention, protection and restoration of heritage assets can in turn facilitate maintenance of craft skills and encourage the use of traditional materials. • Respond to local needs, demands & development pressures on local heritage assets; • Develop a tall buildings policy to retain the environmental & cultural character of the city setting i.e. retaining views of the escarpment and Belfast Hills; 	<p>The SPPS provides some level of protection, particularly through PPS 6.</p> <p>However, without the LDP and supporting evidence, sites that have not been formally designated, such as those on a local list, will have limited protection and could be at risk of inappropriate development. This increases the potential risk of erosion of the historic character and townscape.</p> <p>The number of sites on the Built Heritage at Risk Register is likely to increase. Without the LDP to coordinate the protection and enhancement of sites, it may be difficult to offer enhancements to assets on this register. The updated Listed Buildings Register could also provide additional protection to key buildings.</p>

Themes	Key Sustainability Issues	Implications The LDP should:	Likely Evolution without LDP
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage & promote the sensitive & innovative re-use of existing historic listed & non-listed building stock; • Recognise the character of townscape & landscape; • Raise awareness for developers of potential areas where archaeological works will be required. 	
Landscape	<p>The landscape of the area is subject to limited statutory landscape character and countryside designations, which are under increasing pressure from development and the intrusion of urbanising elements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to protect, conserve & enhance the landscape & townscape character of Belfast; • Consider the natural & cultural components of the landscape & promote opportunities for the enhancement or restoration of degraded landscapes; • Ensure that landscape & townscape characters are protected & development should take cognisance of the landscape / townscape character & form; • Promote an Urban Design Guide; • Strike a balance between renewable energy (wind development) & the Belfast Hills; • Protect the landscape character, setting & local distinctiveness of the city; • Identify & protect key views & vistas; • Promote tree & woodland planting throughout the city; 	<p>The SPPS provides some protection, particularly PPS2 and PPS21.</p> <p>However, the LDP and supporting evidence will allow for local landscape types to be taken into account, ensuring the least sensitive landscapes are promoted through the plan.</p> <p>Without a LDP, local sites unique to Belfast, such as Geodiversity sites, may have limited protection.</p>

Themes	Key Sustainability Issues	Implications The LDP should:	Likely Evolution without LDP
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote high standards of design, maintenance & management. 	
Waste	<p>There are challenges in managing and accounting for all waste streams.</p> <p>It is projected the council may not achieve regional landfill obligations, with increasing pressure to deliver recycling targets set by NI Executive & Europe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare adequately, having regard to the new Council Waste Management Plan & its spatial implications; Facilitate the management of waste facilities as required; Promote & support innovative ways to tackle waste. 	<p>The council have European and Regional targets set to incrementally manage the reduction of waste and encourage recycling in the City. The council will still explore opportunities for further reducing waste including the feasibility of a circular economy approach to generate more value and jobs for the local economy through innovative waste solutions.</p> <p>The LDP may not therefore have much direct impact on waste reduction or management, however it can encourage these opportunities further through the provision of positive land-use planning and allocation.</p>
Climate Change	<p>Rising greenhouse gas emissions are causing an increase in global temperatures, which is giving rise to more intense rainfalls and rising sea levels.</p> <p>Consequently, this will lead to significant threat of flooding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage & support measures to address & adapt to climate change; Avoid areas of highest flood risk when allocating sites for development; Promote natural & man-made flood mitigation schemes which can fulfil flood management functions; Encourage sustainable transport; Encourage sustainable building design & construction standards; Protect, enhance & create new green space. 	<p>The NI Climate Change Adaptation Programme will continue to provide the strategic objectives in relation to climate change adaptation. The Climate Change Risk Assessment will continue as the statutory requirement of the UK Climate Change Act, published every 5years.</p> <p>The Cross Departmental Working Group on Climate Change will continue to review cross departmental action on climate change on an annual basis. The Group will ensure targets for the reduction of greenhouse gases, set out in the Programme for Government are met. However,</p>

Themes	Key Sustainability Issues	Implications The LDP should:	Likely Evolution without LDP
			and notwithstanding the strategic measures above, the threat of flood risk would continue under projected climate trends, and the magnitude and extent of the impact from flood risk is likely to increase. This requires positive management via local response. The LDP and supporting evidence would enable the sequential allocation of sites for development, avoiding the highest risk areas as a first principle.
Renewable Energy	<p>Belfast is still reliant on fossil fuels which contribute to greenhouse gases and poor air quality.</p> <p>The lack of renewable energy interventions could pose a risk to energy security in Belfast, and make the city less competitive in the global market.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the reduction of fossil fuel emissions; • Support renewable & low carbon technologies; • Encourage more sustainable modes of transport & increased green infrastructure to absorb & reduce greenhouse gases, through the implementation of the green & blue infrastructure. 	<p>The existing PPS was formulated in 2009 and was a reactive policy. In its current form it does not fully deal with decentralisation of renewable energy generation, or encourage and promote district heating systems.</p> <p>The draft Programme for Government outlines targets for renewable energy consumption (40% of energy from renewable source and 10% heat from renewable source). The LDP and supporting evidence would provide a strategic framework to deliver these targets through the planning system.</p>

Table 6: Key Sustainability Issues, Implications & Evolution

3.7 The Sustainability Appraisal Framework

- 3.7.1 The SA Framework ensures that the Draft Plan Strategy considers the sustainability needs of the area in terms of its social, economic and environmental effects. It enables the potential effects of the plan to be described, analysed and compared.
- 3.7.2 The framework consists of a list of 'Sustainability Objectives', referred to as the 'SA Objectives'. These derive from the PPP review, the baseline data, and the key sustainability issues, including the environmental receptors set out in Annex I (f) of the SEA Directive¹². They also draw directly from the strategic aims and objectives of the LDP (listed in **Section 2**), however they are tailored further to reflect the specific sustainability issues and characteristics that currently exist in the Belfast area.
- 3.7.3 **Table 7** identifies the 19 SA objectives that make up the SA Framework, and clarifies from which theme and SEA topic they have originated.
- 3.7.5 We have also identified a number of decision-making criteria and indicators to help us understand what each objective hopes to achieve, shown in **Table 8**. These form the basis of the appraisal of each option and alternative, from which we can identify which options may be more preferable than others.

¹² [SEA Directive 2001/42/EC, Annex I \(f\)](#)

Theme	SEA Topic	SA Objective
SOCIAL	Population	1. Reduce deprivation & encourage an inclusive & equal society
	Population Human Health	2. Improve health & wellbeing for an improved quality of life
	Population	3. To provide opportunity for good quality housing & enable people to meet their housing needs
	Population	4. Increase community safety by supporting the reduction of crime & antisocial behaviour
	Population	5. To improve skills & education of residents through providing high quality, accessible lifelong learning opportunities
	Population	6. Retain & enhance access to local services & facilities
ECONOMIC	Population	7. To ensure local residents have access to employment opportunities
	Population	8. Support the economic development of Belfast as a competitive place & contribute to Belfast's roles as a regional economic driver
	Population Air Climatic Factors	9. Promote an integrated transport system & encourage sustainable travel
ENVIRONMENTAL	Biodiversity Flora Fauna	10. Maintain & enhance biodiversity assets & protect habitats & species
	Soil	11. Protect & enhance soil quality
	Cultural Heritage (including architectural & archaeological) Material Assets	12. Protect, conserve & enhance the historic environment, heritage assets & their settings
	Landscape	13. Protect, maintain & enhance the quality of Belfast's distinctive landscape & geodiversity
	Landscape	14. Protect & enhance open space & natural greenspace including Belfast's countryside asset
	Material Assets	15. Promote the sustainable management of waste
	Water Material Assets	16. Promote the quality, efficient use of water resources
	Air	17. Reduce air pollution & ensure continued improvements to air quality
	Climatic Factors	18. Support mitigation efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and transition to a Low Carbon Economy
	Climatic Factors	19. Support measures to mitigate against the impact of climate change, support action to adapt to climate change, and effectively manage flood risk

Table 7: The SA Framework

Sustainability Objective	Target	Potential Indicator	Source(s)
SOCIAL			
1. Deprivation & inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reduce deprivation and social exclusion, in particular in those areas most affected To encourage an inclusive and equal society To promote regeneration, reducing disparity with surrounding areas To increase the ability of people to influence decisions 	Multiple Deprivation Measure	NISRA
		Proportion of people who live in wards that rank within the most deprived 10% and 25% in Belfast/NI	
		Fuel poverty	
		Number of hate motivated crimes	
		Number of interfaces in Belfast	BCC Good Relations Unit / NIHE
		Respect Index	NISRA
2. Health & wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage healthy lifestyles and provide opportunities for sport and recreation To support the reduction of health inequalities To improve physical and mental health To reduce noise levels and concerns To contribute to improving air quality To contribute to improving water quality To encourage access to ecological networks by encouraging green infrastructure, providing walking and 	Life expectancy, gap in health life expectancy between the lowest and highest deprivation quintile	NISRA
		Death rates from cancer, circulatory disease, respiratory illnesses, accidents and suicides	NINIS
		Infant mortality	
		Access to a GP or primary care professional	NISRA
		Proportion of journeys on foot or by cycle	Travel Survey for NI (TSNI)
		Access to the countryside	TSNI
		Multiple Deprivation Measure	NISRA
		Proportion of the population of adults and/or children who are obese	NINIS

Sustainability Objective	Target	Potential Indicator	Source(s)
	cycle routes to heritage and other recreational places of interest	Proportion of people who rank themselves as having high levels of wellbeing	NISRA / ONS
		Proportion of adults participating in moderate exercise at least three days per week	NINIS / DOH
		Number of households in housing stress	NIHE
		Number of GP surgeries, health facilities	BHSCT / Open Data NI
		Noise pollution / nuisance	BCC Environmental Health Data
3. Quality housing & housing need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase access to affordable housing To encourage a range of dwelling type, size and tenure To reduce homelessness To improve housing quality To ensure the housing needs of an ageing population are met To reduce the number of vacant properties 	Homelessness	NIHE
		Temporary accommodation/rough sleepers	
		Affordable housing House price / earnings affordability ratio	
		Housing completion figures	BCC Housing Monitor
		Homes improved for energy efficiency and affordable warmth	NIHE
		Housing growth indicators	DfI
		Annual Housing Need Assessment	NIHE
		Waiting lists and allocations	

Sustainability Objective	Target	Potential Indicator	Source(s)
4. Safety, crime & antisocial behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support a reduction in the actual levels of crime To reduce the fear of crime To promote design out crime principles 	Number of victims of any crime	NISRA
		Number of hate-motivated crimes	
		Proportion of people who feel safe in Belfast	
		Number of antisocial behaviour incidents	
		Number of interfaces in Belfast	
		Respect Index	
5. Education & learning opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve access to high quality educational facilities To improve the level of investment in key community services To make access easier for those without access to a car To improve access to work experience, apprenticeships and training, especially young people To encourage affordable access 	Proportion of population who have attained Level 2 or above	NISRA
		Gap between percentage of school leavers and percentage of Free School Meals school achieving at Level 2 or above including English and Maths	
		Proportion of children who have reached attainment at Key Stage 2 (up to 11 years)	
		Percentage of working age population (16 to 64) with qualifications to either NVQ Level 3 or 4 or a trade apprenticeship or with no formal qualifications	
6. Access to services & facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage the level of investment in key community services To improve accessibility to key local services (schools, GP surgeries, hospitals, town, district and local centres) and employment opportunities 	Multiple Deprivation Measure	NISRA
		Access to a GP or primary care professional and other primary care facilities	
		Access to a primary school	DfE / Open Data NI

Sustainability Objective	Target	Potential Indicator	Source(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage affordable access To make access easier for those without access to a car To protect the shopping and community services function of local service centres 	The provision of public transport routes	Translink
ECONOMIC			
7. Employment opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help to reduce short and long-term local unemployment To encourage job opportunities for those most in need of employment particularly those in areas of high unemployment deprivation 	Claimant count Proportion of people of working age who are in work Proportion of people of working age who are economically inactive	NISRA
8. Economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage new business start-ups and opportunities for local people To encourage business development and enhance productivity To encourage the resilience of business and the local economy To promote growth in key sectors To promote growth in key clusters To enhance the image of the area as a business location To encourage indigenous business To encourage inward investment 	Percentage change in the total number of VAT registered businesses including start up's	NISRA
		Vacancy rates	BCC
		Investment into Belfast by externally owned businesses	Invest NI
		Performance of the Belfast Urban Area economy	Centre for Cities Metrics
		Number of business by broad industry group	Invest NI Belfast Regional Briefing
		Uptake of zoned land	BCC
		VAT registrations in rural areas	

Sustainability Objective	Target	Potential Indicator	Source(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make land and property available for business development To encourage tourism investment To maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the City Centre 	Number of planning consents for business premises in rural areas	
		Comparative industrial and office rental costs	Centre for Cities
		Proposed development of key economic sites	BCC
		Employment land availability	
		Number of business applications granted planning consent	
Number of hotel rooms	NISRA		
9. Sustainable transport & travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support the reduction of traffic volumes and congestion To encourage the proportion of journeys using modes other than the car To encourage walking and cycling To support the reduction of commuting To improve accessibility to work by public transport; walking and cycling To improve access between key employment areas and key transport interchanges To encourage rail and water based freight movement 	Average distance travelled to work or school	TSNI
		Location of jobs in proximity to residents	TSNI
		Proposed development/improvements of key infrastructure/services	DfI
		Travel to work by sustainable modes of transport	TSNI
		Traffic congestion	
		Heavy goods vehicle mileage intensity	

Sustainability Objective	Target	Potential Indicator	Source(s)
ENVIRONMENTAL			
10. Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To conserve and enhance habitats of international, regional and/or local importance and create habitats in areas of deficiency To conserve and enhance species diversity; and in particular avoid harm to protected species To conserve and enhance sites designated for their nature conservation interest at the regional or national level To protect and enhance woodland cover and trees and promote their management To improve access to and promote the educational value of sites of biodiversity value To protect and enhance geodiversity To enhance the wider ecological network and seek to minimise the fragmentation of nature corridors and networks 	Number of international, regional and local sites of natural importance	NIEA/SES
		Achievement of Biodiversity Action Plan Targets	BCC
		Native species at risk especially protected species	NIEA
		Number of Tree Preservation Orders	BCC
		Programme for Government indicator on Biodiversity	Measurement annex in development NISRA

Sustainability Objective	Target	Potential Indicator	Source(s)
11. Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To minimise development on Greenfield sites To ensure that, where possible, new development occurs on derelict; vacant and underused previously developed land and buildings To ensure contaminated land is remediated as appropriate To minimise the loss of soils to development and maintain and enhance soil quality To reduce the risk of subsidence To increase the amount of development on previously developed land 	Proportion of development within the Urban Footprint	BCC
		Proportion of development on brownfield sites	
		DAERA classifications of land quality via Agricultural Land Classifications NI	DAERA
		DAERA data on Areas of Natural Constraint	
12. Built & historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To protect and enhance Conservation Areas and other sites, features and areas of historical and cultural value To protect listed buildings and their settings To help preserve, enhance and record archaeological features and their settings To help to protect and enhance historic buildings through sensitive adaptation and reuse To enhance the quality of priority areas for townscape and public realm enhancements 	Number of Conservation Areas, Areas of Townscape Character. Listed buildings, archaeological sites	BCC / DAERA / DFC
		Number of Buildings at Risk on BHARNI	BHARNI
		Loss or damage of listed buildings/monuments/historic landscapes and their settings	HED/ NIEA
		Number of ASAs, AAP, and Historic Parks and Gardens	HED
		Number of scheduled monuments in poor condition or at high risk	

Sustainability Objective	Target	Potential Indicator	Source(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To protect and enhance local distinctiveness and sense of place To encourage and support the articulation of statutory requirements in relation to Scheduled Historic Monuments (i.e. requirement for consent) To recognise and work to preserve and enhance the historic townscape To foster Heritage Led Regeneration To promote heritage based, sustainable tourism 		
13. Landscape & geodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve the landscape character and visual amenity of open spaces To protect and enhance sensitive landscapes To minimise visual intrusion and protect views 	New homes built on previously developed land Vacant land, properties and derelict land Areas of landscape quality Number of Townscape Character Areas/Areas of Village Character Local Landscape Policy Areas	BCC
14. Open space & natural greenspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure adequate access to public open space within a reasonable walking distance from people's homes To promote access to green infrastructure and ecological networks To create new areas of open space and natural greenspace 	Living Environment Deprivation – Outdoor Physical Environment Number of council areas of open space, sport and recreation Number of greenways	NISRA OSS BCC

Sustainability Objective	Target	Potential Indicator	Source(s)
15. Sustainable waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To lead to reduced consumption of materials and resources To encourage the reduction of household waste To support the increase waste recovery and recycling and improve facilities To support the reduction hazardous waste To support the reduction of waste in the construction industry 	Waste arising and management	BCC Waste Management Plan
		Household waste arising	
		Recycling rate of household waste	
		% Materials recycled	
		Percentage of the tonnage of household waste arising which have been (a) recycled (b) composted (c) used to recover heat, power and other sources of energy (d) land filled	
		Construction and demolition waste rate	
16. Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support the improvement of the quality of surface and ground water To encourage the reduction of water consumption and improve water efficiency To encourage the efficient use and management of water To incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems as part of the design where appropriate To incorporate new green space and habitat creation helping to mitigate flood risk 	Frequency of flood events	Rivers Agency NI Water
		Development in the flood plain	BCC
		Development in areas at risk of flooding	BCC
		Numbers of people and properties affected by flood events	Rivers Agency NI Water
		Numbers of flood management systems including SuDs	Rivers Agency NI Water
		National water quality figures	NIEA
		NI Water quality data	NI Water
		Water consumption data	

Sustainability Objective	Target	Potential Indicator	Source(s)
17. Air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support the improvement of air quality To help achieve the objectives of the Air Quality Management Plan To reduce emissions of key pollutants 	Population living in Air Quality Management Areas	BCC
		Air Quality data	
18. Greenhouse gas & low carbon economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage renewable energy production To reduce emissions of greenhouse gases To support the development of a Circular Economy To support the digital economy To help to reduce our energy consumption 	Energy Consumption	NISRA
		Energy Consumption and Renewable Generation Statistics	DFE
		Energy in Northern Ireland Report	
		Greenhouse gas emissions indicator	BCC
19. Climate change & flood risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help reduce the impact of increased urban temperatures on people and property To promote sustainable design and construction measures To support development located outside areas of high flood risk To reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by reducing energy consumption and the need to travel To support an increased proportion of energy needs being met from renewable sources 	Proportion of energy supplied from renewable sources	DfE Electricity Consumption and Renewable Generation Statistics
		Energy use by type (gas, oil and electricity)	DFE
		Percentage of land at 'significant flood risk'	BCC Rivers Agency NI Water
		Frequency of flood events	
		Numbers of people and properties affected by flood events	
Carbon Dioxide Emissions per capita	BCC Air Quality Management Plan		

Sustainability Objective	Target	Potential Indicator	Source(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce emissions of ozone depleting substances • To minimise the risk of flooding from rivers and watercourses to people and property • To reduce the risk of damage to property from storm events • To support building designs and a green infrastructure that is adapted to climate change 		

Table 8: The SA Framework – Decision Making & Indicators

3.8 Testing the compatibility of the SA Objectives

- 3.8.1 As part of the process in developing the SA objectives, the internal compatibility of the objectives has been tested to identify any potential conflict or tensions. This provides an early opportunity for mitigation or alternatives to be considered.
- 3.8.2 There will inevitably be some elements of conflict between the internal workings of the SA objectives. In response, the planning system tries to balance competing priorities using a precautionary approach where appropriate, whilst exploring the needs of communities and weight of community benefit or overriding public interest.
- 3.8.3 This tension or conflict should be acknowledged, and any detailed policies in the LDP should ensure that the environment is safeguarded and where unavoidable effects are identified, these should be mitigated against. Some tensions or conflicts will always exist between safeguarding the environment and economic development; however both are required to ensure sustainable development.
- 3.8.4 **Table 9** presents the compatibility appraisal of the SA Objectives. Each objective is appraised against the other, and a colour coded score has been applied to each. Within this appraisal, consideration is given to compatibility, potential conflict or the potential for mixed effects.
- 3.8.5 Due to the strategic nature of the objectives, it is difficult to make a determination on the compatibility of some objectives and where this is the case, the results are identified as being 'neutral' or having no relationship. The following key shows how the results are presented:

-	?	+/-	0	+
Potential Conflict or Tension	Uncertain Effect	Mixed Effects	Neutral / No Relationship	Compatible

Figure 2: Appraisal Scoring

↓ SA OBJECTIVES →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
1. Reduce deprivation and encourage an inclusive and equal society																				
2. Improve health and wellbeing for an improved quality of life.	+																			
3. To provide opportunity for good quality housing and enable people to meet their housing needs	+	+																		
4. Increase community safety by supporting the reduction of crime and antisocial behaviour	+	+	+																	
5. To improve skills & education of residents by providing high quality, accessible lifelong learning opportunities	+	+	0	+																
6. Retain and enhance access to local services and facilities	+	+	+	+	+															
7. To ensure local residents have access to employment opportunities	+	+	+	+	+	+														
8. Support economic development of Belfast as a competitive place& contribute to its role as a regional economic driver	+	+	+	+	+	+	+													
9. Promote an integrated transport system and encourage sustainable travel	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+												
10. Maintain and enhance biodiversity assets, protect habitats and species	0	+	-	0	0	0	0	+/-	+											
11. Protect and enhance soil quality	0	+	+/-	0	0	0	0	+/-	+	+										
12. Protect, enhance & manage the quality of the built & historic environment	+	+	+/-	0	0	+	0	+/-	+	+	0									
13. Protect, maintain & enhance the quality of Belfast's distinctive landscape & geodiversity.	0	+	-	0	0	0	0	+/-	+	+	+	+								
14. Protect and enhance open space and natural greenspace including Belfast's countryside asset	0	+	+/-	0	0	+	0	+/-	+	+	+	+	+							
15. Promote the sustainable management of waste	0	+	+/-	0	0	+	0	+/-	0	+	+	0	0	0						
16. Promote the quality and efficient use of water resources	+	+	+/-	0	0	0	0	-	0	+	+	0	0	+	+					
17. Reduce air pollution and ensure continued improvements to air quality	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	-	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	0				
18. Support the transition to a Low Carbon Economy	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	+	0	0	0	+	+	+			
19. Support the adaptation to Climate Change and effectively manage flood risk	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	-	+	+	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+		

Table 9: Compatibility of the SA Objectives

Conflicts

3.8.6 The possible conflicts between objectives have been identified as follows:

- ▶ Growing the population and the need to provide additional housing has the potential to cause tension when balanced against the need to maintain and enhance biodiversity assets, and to protect habitats and species. It is assumed new housing could be provided on brownfield sites that may have developed into sites of Open Mosaic Habitats in Previously Development Land (note, not all brownfield sites support Open Mosaic Habitats).
- ▶ Similarly, housing growth could cause tension with protecting, maintaining and enhancing the quality of Belfast's distinctive landscape and geodiversity.
- ▶ Tensions may also arise between supporting the economic development of Belfast and maintaining good air quality standards; as additional development across various sectors could increase traffic and congestion.
- ▶ Supporting the economic development of Belfast as a competitive place and promoting its role as regional economic driver could encourage further pressure of flood risk as well as adding to the factors of climate change. As a result there could potentially be conflict between the demand for development and the need to avoid floodplain development.

Mixed Effects

3.8.7 Due to their strategic nature, a number of the SA objectives identified mixed effects in terms of providing adequate housing and supporting the economic development of Belfast as a competitive place and contributing to its role as an economic driver. These are summarised below.

- ▶ Protecting and enhancing soil quality, and the need to balance economic and housing development with the natural environment is

clear. Whilst there could be a potential risk of loss, fragmentation or cumulative effect of development, there is also potential to link ecological networks to green tourism.

- ▶ Whilst new economic and housing development could help to remedy soil contamination and bring sites back into use, it may put pressure on developing on greenfield sites.

- ▶ The construction of new housing and economic development within the City Centre may have a positive impact on the sustainable reuse of existing buildings. However, the City Centre is currently designated as an 'Area of Archaeological Potential', and additional development may remove previously unrecorded archaeological sites.

- ▶ Depending on the scale of the development, there could be implications on both the landscape and townscape of Belfast. New sites of economic and housing development could put pressure on areas of open space, however it is possible that the impact of development could be offset to retain, create and or enhance open space particularly in the city centre where open (green) space is lacking, through the use of Section 76 Developer Contributions. There is also potential for new housing to provide additional opportunities for the creation of open space, including in city centre sites.

- ▶ Whilst the plan could encourage better design of new development incorporating sustainable waste management, it is inevitable that more waste will be created with additional development. However, new economic development could potentially bring new innovative ideas to managing waste whilst also providing jobs.

- ▶ Provision of new development could put additional pressure on water sources including water waste treatment works, however the LDP can seek to ensure that housing is provided through a phased approach. Measures to mitigate water stress can also be planned for with the appropriate statutory body.

3.8.8 The conflicts and the mixed effects identified above have been fully considered when preparing and appraising the draft policies of the Draft Plan Strategy, to ensure any significant environmental and sustainable policies are safeguarded against, and where this is unavoidable; to identify suitable and appropriate mitigation measures.

4 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 As described in **Sections 1** and **2.8**, the Scoping Report is subject to consultation with the Consultation Body in line with the requirements of the SEA Directive.
- 4.2 In Northern Ireland the function of the Consultation Body is delivered by the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), led by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). Other bodies such as Historic Environment Division (HED) and the public are also consulted on all sustainability issues within the SA.
- 4.3 The purpose of this consultation process is to obtain views relating to the scope and level of details to be included in the SA Report.
- 4.4 In line with the appropriate stages of the SA, the Scoping Report has been produced for consultation on two separate occasions to date, which are highlighted in grey below. The third stage, highlight in blue, represents the current stage:

Stage	Plan Document	Consultation Period / Dates
Scoping	SA Scoping Report	5 weeks 15/11/16 – 20/12/16
Draft Plan Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LDP Preferred Options Paper SA Interim Report SA Scoping Report 	12 weeks 26/01/17 – 20/04/17
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LDP Draft Plan Strategy SA Report SA Scoping Report 	12 weeks total
		23/08/18 – 20/09/18 (4 week review)
		20/09/18 – 15/11/18 (8 weeks statutory consultation)

Table 10: Consultation Stages

4.5 For this and each previous stage, the consultees are asked to consider the following series of questions:

1	Are there other relevant policies, plans and programmes that will affect or influence the Local Development Plan/Sustainability Appraisal, which have not been included in the list?
2	Do you think that the baseline data collected is appropriate i.e. at the right level and sufficient coverage with nothing missing?
3	Have we got the Sustainability Issues right?
4	Are there any other Sustainability Issues that should be included?
5	Have we got the Sustainability Objectives correct?
6	Are there any other objectives that should be included (bearing in mind the need to keep the number of objectives manageable)?
7	Should any objectives be re-worded or removed?
8	Are there any alternatives that, in your opinion, are not viable?
9	Are there any viable alternatives that may have been missed?
10	Are the mitigation measures identified appropriate?
11	Are the monitoring arrangements and indicators correct?
12	Is there any information not present in the SA/SEA that, in your opinion, would be beneficial to monitor and could be monitored?
13	Do you have any other comments on the SA/SEA Interim Report?

4.6 The comments and responses received from both previous consultation stages have been fully considered, and the report has been updated and revised accordingly. **Appendix 24** presents all the comments received and describes how each has been addressed and reflected in this version of the Scoping Report.

4.7 The next stage of the process involves consultation on the Draft Plan Strategy and the SA Report. Both are being published along with this version of the Scoping Report, for a statutory period of eight weeks from **20 September to 15 November 2018**.

4.8 Representations can be submitted by e-mail to:

localdevelopmentplan@belfastcity.gov.uk

4.9 Written submissions should be sent to:

**Belfast Planning Service
Cecil Ward Building
4-10 Linenhall Street
BELFAST
BT2 8BP
02890 500510**

4.10 All relevant documents are available to view on our [Local Development Plan webpage](#), whilst a hard copy is available to view at the above address.

4.11 As noted in the table above, they can be reviewed for an additional period of **4 weeks** prior to the statutory consultation period, from **23 August** to **20 September 2018**.

5 APPENDICES

Appendix	Title
1	Plans, Policies and Programme Review
2	Open Space, Sport and Recreation in Belfast
3	List of Priority Species in Northern Ireland
4	List of Priority Species in Belfast
5	Natural Heritage Designations
6	List of Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCI's) and Geodiversity Sites
7	Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPA's)
8	Tree Preservations Orders (TPO's) in Belfast
9	Belfast Harbour Seascape Character Area
10	2015 Status of Surface Water Bodies
11	2015 Overall Status for Groundwater
12	Scheduled Zone
13	Sites and Monuments Record
14	Listed Buildings
15	List of Buildings at Risk in Belfast
16	Location of Conservation Areas, Areas of Townscape Character/Village Character
17	Areas of Significant Archaeological Interest and Areas of Archaeological Potential
18	List of Regulated Historic Parks, Gardens, Demesnes
19	Defence Heritage Sites in Belfast
20	Industrial Heritage Records in Belfast
21	Shipwreck Database
22	Quarries within the Belfast City Council and Surrounding Council Areas
23	Belfast Lough and Tidal Lagan Local Flood Management Area and Belfast SFRA
24	Baseline Data
25	Response from Consultation Bodies January 2017

Belfast Planning Service

Belfast City Council
Cecil Ward Building
4-10 Linenhall Street
Belfast BT2 8BP

 www.belfastcity.gov.uk/LDP

 planning@belfastcity.gov.uk

 028 9050 0510

 @belfastcc

 @belfastcitycouncil

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