



# Belfast Local Development Plan

**Draft Plan Strategy – Post Independent Examination  
consultation report  
April 2023**

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# Introduction



## Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose of this report

1.1.1 This report summarises the responses received in relation to the consultation on modifications to the draft Plan Strategy including the Addendum to the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). It provides a summary of the key issues raised through the consultation process and should be read alongside a number of background documents. These documents have been added to the [Post Examination Modifications](#) section of the Local Development Plan (LDP) Document Library on the Belfast City Council website. They include the:

- Independent Examination Report of Belfast City Council’s Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy – this report, submitted to the Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) by the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) on the 29th September 2021, comprises a detailed review of the Independent Examination (IE) process alongside the PAC’s consideration of the issues raised. It includes a summary of 78 Required Amendments in respect of changes or potential additions to the draft Plan Strategy.
- Section 12 Direction - Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and Planning (LDP) Regulations (NI) 2015 (hereafter “the Planning Act”) to Belfast City Council – this statutory direction, issued by the Dfi on the 4th February 2022, requires the Council to adopt the draft Plan Strategy with specified modifications and includes requirements for the Council to carry out further consultation and introduce additional policy provisions.
- Letter from Dfi – this correspondence encloses the formal direction from the Dfi; sets out added requirements relating to modification references MOD05, MOD06 and MOD11; presents additional matters concerning the draft Plan Strategy reliance on draft the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG); and offers information and advice in relation to plan monitoring and review.

1.1.2 All other LDP documents together with documents and matters arising from the IE can be accessed using the following link: [https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/local-development-plan-\(1\)/local-development-plan](https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/local-development-plan-(1)/local-development-plan).

1.1.3 Following receipt of representations as part of this consultation exercise, the Council have considered all comments received and made amendments to the proposed policy and associated justification and amplification text. The revised wording is outlined in Appendix A, with the changes made to the policy referred to within our responses to the issues raised in Chapter 2 of this report.

## 1.2 Background to the consultation

- 1.2.1. In August 2019, as part of the process of developing the new LDP for Belfast, the Council formally submitted the draft Plan Strategy to DfI. The DfI subsequently appointed the PAC to conduct an Independent Examination of the draft Plan Strategy, which was held over two sessions between November 2020 and March 2021.
- 1.2.2. The PAC made its recommendations under section 10(8) of the Planning Act and presented these as recommended amendments as part of its Report to the DfI in September 2021 in which it concluded the draft Plan Strategy was, subject to modifications, “sound”.
- 1.2.3. In February 2022, following consideration of the PAC Report, the DfI in exercise of the powers conferred on it by section 12(1)(b) of the Planning Act, issued a Direction to the Council. This directed the Council to address the requirements set out in the Schedule 1 of the Direction, along with any necessary engagement and consultation, prior to formal adoption of the Plan Strategy.
- 1.2.4. To fulfil the obligations set out in the Direction the Council is required to modify the draft Plan Strategy to include all modifications detailed in Schedule 1 of the Direction. The Council was required to undertake public consultation in relation to changes considered necessary to address the modifications referenced as MOD05, MOD06 and MOD11.
- 1.2.5. In addressing the modification references MOD05, MOD06 and MOD11, the Council, following engagement, compiled a proposed response to the requirements comprising:
  - an additional strategic policy with justification and amplification, to be included within the Strategic policies section of the draft Plan Strategy. The additional policy, entitled “Policy SPA1 – Managing growth and supporting infrastructure delivery” was shown in Appendix A of the consultation document, and was proposed to replace paragraph 5.1.4 of the draft Plan Strategy.
  - a modification of Policy HOU1 – ‘Accommodating new homes’, within the Shaping a Liveable Place section of the draft Plan Strategy, through the inclusion of additional text from the justification and amplification. The modification to Policy HOU1 is in the form of a new table, was shown in Appendix B of the consultation document, and was proposed to replace the table which currently features in the policy box on page 60 of the draft Plan Strategy.
  - the resultant modification of the existing Figure 7.2 within the Shaping a Liveable Place section of the draft Plan Strategy. The existing Figure 7.2 on page 62 of the draft Plan Strategy was proposed to be replaced by the modified Figure 7.2 shown in Appendix C of the consultation documentation.

## Introduction

1.2.6. In proposing these additions and modifications the Council considered what would be apposite at this stage of the process and what would be more appropriately addressed as part of the Local Policies Plan (LPP). The Council also assessed the potential implications in respect of the associated draft Plan Strategy documentation including the:

- **Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** – this established that the proposed inclusion of the strategic policy required an addendum to the published SA incorporating SEA document which also formed part of the consultation. The addendum to the published SA incorporating SEA for the draft Plan Strategy was also published for consultation on the Post Examinations Modifications webpage.
- **Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)** – a screening exercise was undertaken and concluded that the proposed inclusion of the strategic policy will impact equally on all section 75 categories and this impact will be neutral. In addition, the policy will have no impact on good relations. The Council’s draft Plan Strategy, as published in 2018, was subject to full EQIA at that time and the current proposed additional policy relates to this. The full EQIA will be finalised on the adoption of the Plan Strategy.
- **The Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)** – this has considered the proposed inclusion of the strategic policy and notes that the effect of the policy is already reflected in the draft HRA prepared at draft Plan Strategy stage. It concluded that there is no further effect of the additional policy in terms of the HRA. The additional policy will also be considered as part of the overall Plan Strategy in the final HRA at adoption stage.
- **Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)** – this has concluded that the proposed inclusion of the strategic policy, which is not spatially-detailed or site-specific, will apply equally across the City Council area, including the rural areas. However, the likelihood that the strategic policy will have a significant impact on people in rural areas is considered minimal.

1.2.7. Accordingly, the Council sought views on proposed additions and modifications to the draft Plan Strategy and the Addendum to the SA (incorporating SEA).

## 1.3 Overview of the consultation process

1.3.1 As part of the consultation process a public notice relating to the draft Plan Strategy modifications was issued for two consecutive weeks, appearing during the weeks commencing 02 May 2022 and 09 May 2022 in the following newspapers:



- Irish News
- Belfast Telegraph
- News Letter
- Andersonstown News
- Belfast Gazette

1.3.2 The formal consultation period commenced on Thursday 12 May 2022 and closed on Thursday 07 July at 5pm. Two online consultation surveys (and accompanying hardcopy survey forms) were made available during this period for the receipt of representations in respect of the:

- proposed additions and modifications to the draft Plan Strategy; and
- Addendum to the SA (incorporating SEA).

1.3.3 The surveys were accompanied by an overview document outlining the draft Plan Strategy modifications and the “Addendum to draft Plan Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Report”. Both documents were placed online and made available for inspection in Belfast City Hall during normal public opening hours throughout the consultation period. The DfI Direction (with all Required Modifications) and the PAC Report were also made available for inspection alongside other supporting documentation, including in relation to the draft EQIA, HRA and RNIA.

#### **Engagement with DfI and NI Water**

1.3.4 Alongside the formal consultation, in recognition of the need for the final wording to be agreed by DfI prior to adoption, the Council have also engaged directly with the Department. This has involved both meetings, as well as formal and informal correspondence in advance of the consultation on the proposed modification, during the consultation period and as we have sought to make changes following the closure of the consultation. The key meetings and correspondence and the issues discussed are outlined in Appendix C, with a summary of the main issues outlined in Section 2.2.

1.3.5 Although draft Policy SP1A is intended to apply to all forms of infrastructure, modification MOD06 places a particular emphasis on public services and utilities. Given that the main issues identified as part of the PAC’s examination process related to the sewerage network and wastewater treatment capacity, the Council have also sought to engage directly with NI Water in relation to the proposed modifications.



# Overview of Responses

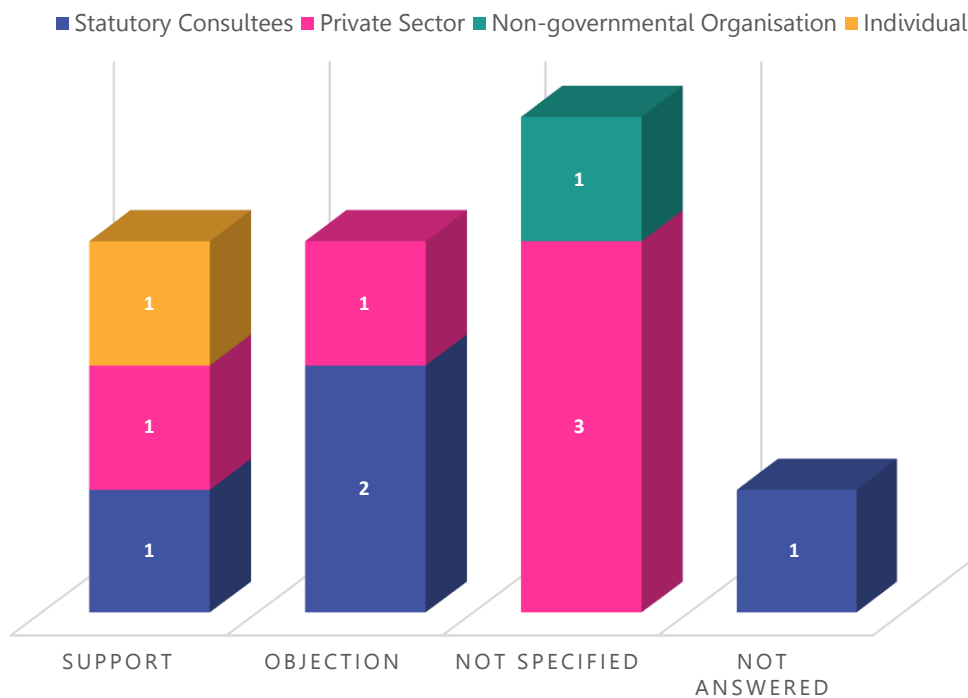


## 2.1 Summary of responses received

### Proposed additions and modifications to the draft Plan Strategy

- 2.1.1 A total of 11 representations were received from respondents to the consultation on the proposed additions and modifications to the draft Plan Strategy. The respondents are broadly categorised as four statutory consultees, five private sector, a non-governmental organisation and an individual. They are listed at Appendix B.
- 2.1.2 Ten respondents provided a response to the proposed Policy SPA. An equal number of those respondents – three each – offered support for and objection to the proposed policy, with the remaining four failing to specify either stance (see Figure 2.1).

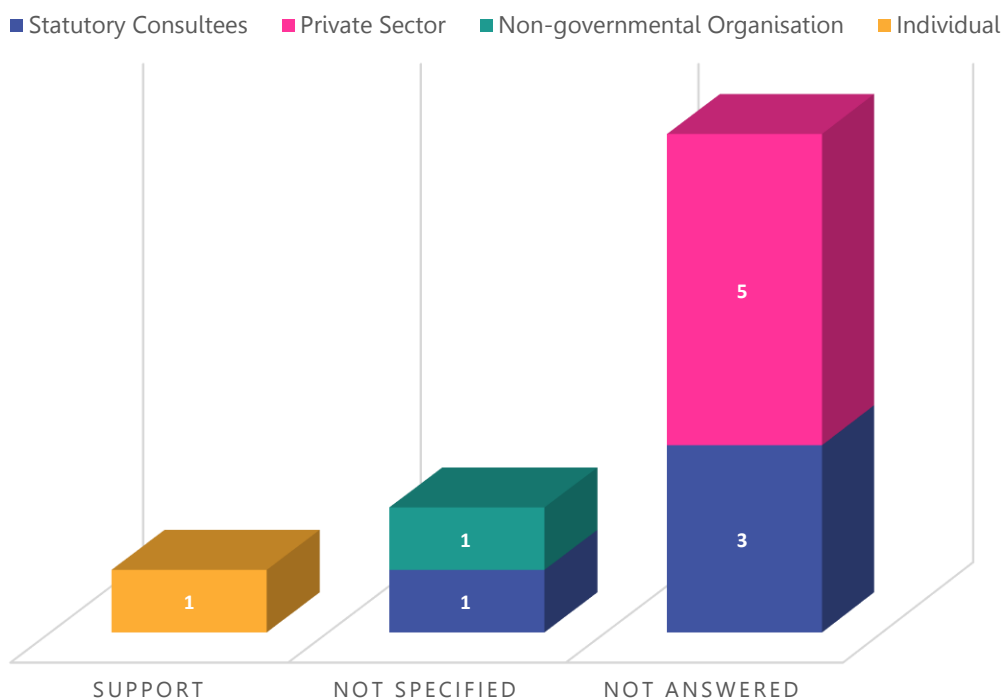
**Figure 2.1: Responses to proposed Policy SP1A**



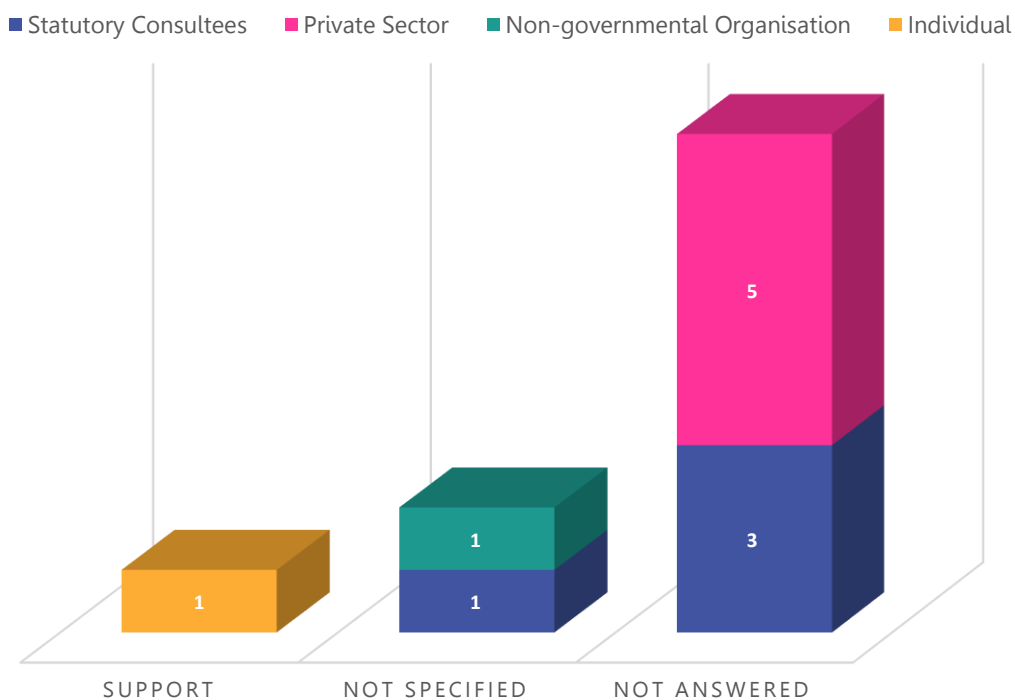
- 2.1.3 Only three respondents provided comments relating to the amendments to Policy HOU1. Two of the respondents did not specify whether they supported or objected to the policy amendments. The remaining respondent declared support for the amendments (see Figure 2.2). This also reflects the outcome in relation to the amendments to Figure 7.2 of the draft Plan Strategy (see Figure 2.3).

## Overview of responses

**Figure 2.2: Responses to amendments to Policy HOU1**



**Figure 3.2: Responses to amendments to Figure 7.2**



### **Addendum to the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

- 2.1.4 A further 2 responses were received from respondents to the consultation on the Addendum to the SA (incorporating SEA). The responses were submitted by a statutory consultee and an individual. However, only the statutory consultee

responded to the actual survey questions and therefore the individual's response has been discounted. The statutory consultee (listed at Appendix B) outlined its disagreement with the conclusions reached in respect of the SA Addendum.

## 2.2 Engagement with Dfl and NI Water

2.2.1 As noted above, in an effort to secure agreement to a revised strategic policy, the Council have engaged directly with Dfl and NI Water as part of the overall consultation process. A summary of the key meetings and correspondence involved, alongside the issues raised in each case are outlined in Appendix C. However, in general terms, the key issues raised as part of this engagement can be summarised as follows:

- Suggestion that the draft policy does not fulfil the requirements of the **PAC recommendations** and that the final wording should closely mirror the language of the PAC report;
- Acceptance that existing **committed development** cannot be subject to phasing;
- Recognition that it may be possible for **other non-committed development** to be permitted during the first phase, in advance of the LPP, where infrastructure is not currently a constraint or where any constraints can be overcome;
- The need for **engagement with NI Water** and other infrastructure providers as part of the LPP process, as well as in relation to planning applications;
- Suggestion that the policy text should explicitly **name the phases**;
- Detailed comments made in relation to the use of **key wording** like 'Development' as opposed to 'land' and meaning of words such as 'allocated', 'assigned' and 'released' in comparison to 'zoned', 'permitted' and 'managed';
- The policy wording needs to provide **indicative timescales** and/or **triggers for the release of land** in each phase;
- Need for greater detail in relation to the **LPP process** and statutory **5-year Plan Review** process;
- The need to reference **key principles** that will help inform the phasing of land at LPP stage; and
- General acceptance that the changes made to **Policy HOU1** and **Figure 7.2** are appropriate.

2.2.2 It should be noted that these comments were received over an extended period of time and that most of the issues raised were also reflected in the submissions received to the formal consultation, which are outlined, alongside the Council's responses, in Section 2.3 below. However, it is worth noting that a significant outcome from this engagement was the re-structuring of the Policy into two component parts.

2.2.3 The first part seeks to 'flag up' the fundamental need for appropriate infrastructure to support development. It also addresses the immediate context in advance of the

## Overview of responses

LPP in which existing committed development can still be brought forward and, where infrastructure is available, new development proposals can also still be considered. The second paragraph, alongside the justification and amplification text, sets the context for the approach and work to be carried out at LPP stage along with the potential policy considerations. It concludes that through the LPP, development will be managed and phased in a manner that ensures the necessary supporting infrastructural needs are addressed (see revised Policy SP1A in Appendix A for further detail).

## 2.3 Summary and response to key issues raised

### Proposed additions and modifications to the draft Plan Strategy

2.3.1 The eleven formal responses submitted in relation to proposed Policy SP1A can be summarised as follows:

- Three respondents offered general **support** for the proposed policy approach;
- A number of respondents suggest that the draft policy does not fulfil the requirements of the **PAC recommendations**;
- It was noted that a **critical infrastructure already exists** with regards to wastewater/sewerage, which lies outside of the control of the Council.
- Respondents referred to the draft **Belfast Infrastructure Study** as an important part of the evidence base for future phasing and zoning;
- There was a broad consensus that existing **committed development** cannot be subject to phasing;
- Several respondents identified **risks associated with a phasing policy** including the risk of stalling development until the Local Policies Plan (LPP) is developed and of slowing down decision making whilst discussing alternative solutions with infrastructure providers as part of the development management process;
- A number of points were made in relation to the broad nature of the **draft Policy wording**;
- Several respondents made suggestions with regards to the **specifics of a more detailed phasing policy**, including naming of phases, timescales for phases and triggers for the **release of land** in later phases. However, it was also recognised by a couple of respondents that the LPP is the appropriate mechanism for zoning and phasing land;
- Recommendations were made as to **key principles** to be considered for the zoning of land at LPP stage, including maintaining a 5-year supply of land for housing, the provision for sufficient land to meet social housing need and the contribution development can make to regeneration, particularly where supported by Development Frameworks/Masterplans;
- Other issues were raised in relation to the **track record of developers** building out schemes and the **sustainability** of the phasing approach proposed.

- Several respondents, including the key statutory bodies, reiterated their commitment to ongoing **engagement** and partnership working with the Council to finalise the Plan Strategy; and
- A number of respondents noted the **next steps** and process in terms of moving the Plan to adoption.

**Responses Received**

Ref.	Respondent
01	Ards & North Down Borough Council
02	Belfast Harbour
03	Clanmil Housing Association
04	Department for Infrastructure
06	MBA Planning

Ref.	Respondent
07	Northern Ireland Water
08	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
09	Participation & the Practice of Rights
10	Titanic Quarter
11	Translink

**Main Issue(s) raised by respondent(s) and Belfast City Council’s response**

Main Issue	Council Response
<b>Support</b>	
General support for the proposed policy was noted by a number of respondents, noting the need for policy framework that enables the delivery of investments and which ensures alignment between land use planning and infrastructure capacity.	Support for the policy approach is noted
<b>Intention of the PAC recommendation</b>	
A number of respondents suggest that the draft policy, as drafted, does not fulfil the requirements of the PAC recommendation with regard to phasing.	<p>The Council acknowledge that there is a critical constraint relating primarily to wastewater infrastructure and sewerage treatment capacity. We also accept that infrastructure constraints are already a significant material consideration for individual planning applications.</p> <p>Paragraph 3.4.2 of the PAC report explains the purpose behind the proposed amendment. It is to “flag up” the “pressing issue of the role that the capacity of the city’s sewerage system has to play in developing the growth strategy” and to “alert developers to the need for infrastructure to be available prior to sites being released for housing and employment.”</p>

## Overview of responses

Main Issue	Council Response
	<p>Similarly, the reference to “a” strategic policy, as opposed to, for example, “the” strategic policy is also significant. “A” strategic policy, denotes a choice in wording, particularly when considered in light of the second sentence’s requirement that <i>“final wording to be agreed with Department”</i>.</p> <p>The wording at paragraphs (a)-(c) is clearly not intended to be prescriptive as the PAC chose the words <i>“could comprise”</i> before setting out the text. Had Dfl intended that the Direction require the Council to draft the policy in the terms set out at paragraph 3.4.2 (a)- (c) this could have been specified within the Direction. However, that is not the case.</p> <p>The Council believe there is a risk with the example wording within the PAC's report that the development of suitable sites could be stymied in the short to medium-term. For example, if a site is in a location that currently has infrastructure capacity available to meet their requirements but is not currently subject to a zoning or planning approval, this would not be permitted as part of the earliest phase. This restriction placed on such sites could on occasions be in contrast to a committed sites which would be permitted, even if there is no realistic prospect of development being delivered during the Plan Period.</p> <p>The Council believe the proposed Policy SP1A, including the justification and amplification text, represents a strategic policy that adequately 'flags up' infrastructure constraints and the need for infrastructure to be available prior to sites being released for development. However, this does so without replicating the PAC wording directly.</p> <p>Policy SP1A, both within the draft published for consultation and the amended version following this consultation, acknowledges the difference between existing <i>“allocations”</i> or <i>“commitments”</i> and <i>“additional development”</i>, noting that development will be phased to ensure alignment with the <i>“necessary supporting infrastructure”</i>.</p> <p>The Council believe the proposed wording strikes an appropriate balance between highlighting the need to align infrastructure investment with delivery of development and preventing inflexible restrictions that can't yet be quantified without</p>



Main Issue	Council Response
	<p>detailed, site specific analysis of the type required to inform the LPP.</p>
<p>As the Draft Policy SP1A wording is based on existing wording within the draft Plan Strategy, it does not allay the concerns raised by the PAC when examining the Plan Strategy wording.</p>	<p>The Council always intended to carry out zoning at the LPP stage, based on more detailed site analysis. Given the need to maintain consistency with the rest of the Plan Strategy, the Council therefore analysed the existing draft Plan Strategy for references to phasing and infrastructure investment to ensure that the new policy aligns with principles already agreed. The draft Plan Strategy already referenced in paragraph 5.1.4 and Paragraph 7.1.9 (Policy HOU1) that phasing may be used to ensure alignment with infrastructure capacity. It is therefore not surprising that the new policy mirrors language of the existing draft Plan Strategy.</p> <p>However, reflecting these provisions in a new strategic policy raises their status from amplification text to explicit policy provision. As noted above, the Council believe that this adequately fulfils the purpose behind the PAC's recommendations, without replicating the wording exactly.</p>
<p>The PAC recommendation does not require the Council to zone land now (that is the role of the LPP)</p>	<p>The Council agree that the zoning of land should be undertaken as part of the LPP and does not propose any zonings as part of the Plan Strategy.</p>
<p>The proposed wording does not provide the required detail, clarity or certainty in relation to how such a phasing policy, which should comprise Phase 1 and Phase 2 zonings, will be implemented through the Local Policies Plan (LPP).</p>	<p>Although there is no requirement to replicate the PAC wording directly, the Council have amended the Policy wording to refer to a <i>"first phase"</i> in advance of the Local Policies Plan, as well as provisions for <i>"new zonings and development capacity"</i> beyond this first phase being managed through the LPP. This recognises at least two distinct phases – the first of which begins in advance of the LPP – without restricting future zoning within the LPP to just two phases.</p> <p>We have also expanded proposed paragraph 5.1.5 to provide greater detail on how such a phasing mechanism will be implemented through the addition of a succinct list of principles upon which future phasing and allocations will be based. This includes achieving the overall objectives of the LPP, the suitability and sustainability of sites, a brownfield first approach in line with regional policy, ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing, opportunities to contribute to regeneration, the need to ensure a 5-year supply of land for housing and employment, and, of course, the requirement for adequate infrastructure.</p>

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Main Issue	Council Response
<b>Infrastructure constraints</b>	
<p>A number of respondents highlighted the critical infrastructure constraint that already exists with regards to wastewater / sewerage. It was also noted that robust evidence is not currently available from NI Water to determine if zoning would cause harm.</p>	<p>The Council acknowledge that there is a critical constraint relating primarily to wastewater infrastructure and sewerage treatment capacity. It is also recognised that this is a broad issue that affects many areas of NI, including across much of the Belfast Metropolitan Area.</p> <p>Given this context, the Council accept the PAC recommendation for a strategic policy on phasing to flag up the issue and help ensure alignment between future development and infrastructure availability.</p> <p>However, the provision of supporting infrastructure in its broadest sense also includes transport, waste, water, energy and community services, amenities and facilities. Policy SP1A seeks to address infrastructure provision in this broader sense, which clearly includes wastewater/sewerage system.</p>
<p>Aligning development with the availability of adequate infrastructure, which includes, but is not limited to, transport, waste, water, energy and digital services provision, can help ensure access to services, amenities and facilities, which are important in the promotion of sustainable communities.</p>	<p>Although the PAC's report focuses on wastewater/sewerage infrastructure and public utilities, the Council have drafted the policy in its broadest sense, to address all infrastructure requirements.</p>
<p>It is recognised that the delivery of infrastructure is outside of BCCs remit. Nevertheless, a strategic policy on phasing is needed.</p>	<p>The Council acknowledge that it is not the body with statutory responsibility for infrastructure and so has little influence on where and when infrastructure investment takes place. However, the Council believe that the statutory development plan for the city should help to inform future decisions with regards to infrastructure investment, to align with locally set objectives.</p> <p>To help address this at LPP stage, the Council is undertaking a Belfast Infrastructure Study, which is intended to help identify where investment may be required and the associated risks for future development. It will help inform the zoning and designation of land at LPP stage, as well as help inform DfI, as the statutory authority responsible for regional infrastructure provision, in the discharge of their duty.</p>
<p>Local Policy Plan (LPP) stage should be informed by an up-</p>	<p>The Infrastructure Study was not intended to be a development plan evidence document, but rather to form a summary of key</p>

Main Issue	Council Response
<p>to-date assessment of committed land supply and any infrastructure investment identified through the Belfast Infrastructure Study. This should focus on what is being delivered on the ground as opposed to the unimplemented permissions for over 20,000 houses and significant levels of commercial floor space across the city.</p>	<p>issues and an overview of the strategic infrastructure requirements to deliver the Belfast Agenda to drive physical and social regeneration.</p> <p>The Study is still at draft stage and has not been subject to public consultation and has not yet been adopted by the Council. However, it will be a broad ranging document, that will consider the infrastructure issues relating to the delivery of development and will help inform the zoning and phasing of land within the Local Policies Plan.</p>
<p><b>Committed development</b></p>	
<p>Existing commitments cannot be subject to phasing and it would be unreasonable for the Council to withhold planning permission for existing committed development across city.</p>	<p>The Council agree that committed development cannot be subject to phasing. This is already acknowledged in Paragraph 5.1.6 of the proposed Policy SP1A. Committed sites are defined as <i>"those which have already gone through the planning process and involved an assessment of wider infrastructural needs in consultation with the relevant statutory authorities."</i> The Council therefore have clearly set out an intention that developments that have valid planning permission cannot and should not be subject to any restrictions as a result of the phasing policy.</p> <p>In addition, Paragraph 5.17 acknowledges that not all existing commitments will be delivered and further changes made in response to the consultation address the risk that the new policy could prohibit development by acknowledging more clearly that consideration of a planning application will always take into account the planning history of sites and existing commitments.</p>
<p><b>Risk of phasing approach</b></p>	
<p>There is a risk that the new policy will prohibit development until the LPP stage of the plan is well advanced/complete. However, if it can be demonstrated through the development management process that infrastructure has sufficient capacity to accommodate development, it would be unreasonable to await the outcome of the zoning (LPP) stage.</p>	<p>The Council recognise that there is a risk with a phasing policy that it could serve to stymie development. For example, with the sample wording within the PAC's report an unintended consequence could be that a site is in a location that currently has infrastructure capacity available to meet their requirements but is not currently subject to a zoning or planning approval, could not be permitted in the short- to medium-term. In contrast, development on a committed site would be permitted, even if there is no realistic prospect of development being delivered during the Plan Period.</p> <p>Draft Policy SP1A, along with the justification and amplification text, seeks to strike an appropriate balance between highlighting</p>

## Overview of responses

Main Issue	Council Response
	<p>the need to align infrastructure investment with delivery of development and preventing inflexible restrictions that can't yet be quantified without detailed, site specific analysis of the type required to inform the LPP. For example, it is acknowledged in Paragraph 5.1.6 of the proposed Policy SP1A that committed sites can't be phased.</p> <p>However, Paragraph 5.1.7 recognises that <i>"There is no automatic assumption that these existing commitments will be delivered, particularly where detailed analysis identifies constraints affecting the availability and deliverability of sites"</i>. Further amendments to the text following this sentence helps address the risk that the new policy could prohibit development until the LPP stage by acknowledging that the assessment of a planning application will always take into account a site's planning history and existing commitments.</p> <p>To try and make this more explicit and to help aid clarity during a transitional period, the wording of Policy SP1A has been expanded and restructured to draw more of a distinction between an initial phase, focussed on <i>"existing allocation and commitments"</i>, and further phases that will be managed through the LPP.</p> <p>The Council have therefore proposed additional text following the first sentence to specifically address the interim context between adoption of the Plan Strategy and that of the Local Policies Plan. This acknowledges explicitly within the policy box that committed development or existing allocations have already been agreed in principle, as well as allowing for additional development as part of this initial phase where infrastructure is not deemed to be a constraint. A new second paragraph has then been added prior to the final sentence which relates exclusively to role of the LPP in reviewing and updating commitments and requirements beyond this first phase.</p>
<p>Concern that engagement with infrastructure bodies to agree temporary/on-site solutions to infrastructure on a site-by-site basis will be part of DM process, rather than to inform the zoning and phasing of land in the LPP</p>	<p>The draft strategic policy on phasing is intended primarily to set the context for the allocation of land for housing and employment use within the Local Policies Plan, rather than acting as an operational policy to be considered in relation to individual applications. Within this context, the references in paragraph 5.1.8 to consultation with the relevant infrastructure bodies on a site-by-site basis would take place as part of the LPP</p>

Main Issue	Council Response
	<p>process, rather than through the Development Management process.</p> <p>Nevertheless, consultation with statutory infrastructure providers is a legal requirement and would still be necessary as part of the Development Management process irrespective of this policy. Infrastructure constraints will therefore still remain a significant material consideration for individual planning applications.</p> <p>As previously noted, to help provide greater clarity in relation to this, we have revised Policy SP1A to draw more of a distinction between an initial phase, focussed on <i>“existing allocation and commitments”</i>; and further phases that will be managed through the LPP.</p> <p>We have also added an additional sentence that acknowledges that other development may be possible <i>“in this first phase”</i> where statutory consultees are content that the necessary supporting infrastructure requirements can be met. This effectively applies the same limitations intended for Phase 1 within the PAC’s proposed wording, acknowledging that it will be considered as part of the Development Management process on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>As situations in which temporary or on-site facilities may be suitable to address infrastructure requirements are likely to be few, consultation with infrastructure requirements on such solutions will be an exception and we wouldn’t anticipate a significant delay to planning applications as a result.</p>
<p>Care should be taken to ensure that phasing does not prevent developers from responding quickly to opportunities to develop a strong pipeline of projects. A number of specific development opportunities were highlighted within the Harbour Estate including Titanic Quarter and City Quays, which have already been assessed with regard to infrastructure provision and which have extant planning approvals.</p>	<p>In the case of Belfast Harbour, especially both Titanic Quarter and City Quays, there are significant commitments that have already been assessed with regards to infrastructure requirements. The Council therefore agree that committed development such as these cannot be subject to phasing.</p> <p>This is acknowledged in Paragraph 5.1.6 of the proposed Policy SP1A. Committed sites are defined as <i>“those which have already gone through the planning process and involved an assessment of wider infrastructural needs in consultation with the relevant statutory authorities.”</i> The Council therefore have clearly set out an intention that developments that have valid planning permission cannot and should not be subject to any restrictions as a result of the phasing policy.</p>

## Overview of responses

Main Issue	Council Response
	<p>To help ensure clarity, the Council have included additional text following the first sentence to specifically address the interim context between adoption of the Plan Strategy and that of the LPP. This acknowledges explicitly within the policy box that committed development or existing allocations cannot be subject to phasing. However, it also allows for the inclusion of additional land as part of this first phase where infrastructure is not deemed to be a constraint.</p> <p>This would ensure that developments such as City Quays and TQ would not be subject to any restrictions following adoption of Policy SP1A, as long as they are delivered in accordance with existing approvals. This would also allow scope for developers to bring forward site specific development proposals outside of the LPP where infrastructure requirements can be met, enabling them to respond to opportunities for investment over the lifetime of the plan. As noted above, amendments to Paragraph 5.17 also acknowledge more clearly that consideration of a planning application will always take into account the planning history of sites and existing commitments.</p> <p>Where changes may be required to existing consents associated with committed development, or for new proposals on land outside of existing allocations or commitments, these will still require a planning application and be subject to the normal development management processes. This will include consultation with the statutory infrastructure providers. The infrastructure requirements can and will therefore be reviewed on a site-by-site basis, taking account of the existing commitment to development on any such sites.</p>
<p>Council should ensure that appropriate land is available at LPP stage to ensure social housing delivery isn't stalled due to lack of infrastructure or an overly restrictive phasing policy.</p>	<p>As noted above, the Council recognise that there is a risk with a phasing policy that it could serve to stymie development. It is the Council's view that the type of policy wording proposed by the PAC would carry a greater risk of this than the wording proposed by the Council. It is important to acknowledge a distinction between 'allocations' or 'commitments', for which infrastructure allowances should already have been made, and 'additional development', for which applications would have to demonstrate that appropriate infrastructure is to be available for delivery.</p>

Main Issue	Council Response
	<p>It is the role of the Department for Communities and NI Housing Executive to oversee the Social Housing Development Programme across the Region. This will include ensuring that there is a suitable pipeline of development proposals to provide for social housing where it is needed. However, an assessment of the contribution sites are likely to make to the social housing supply in areas of high need will form part of the detailed site assessment work that will inform the zoning and phasing of sites within the LPP. This analysis will, of course, be taken forward in partnership with NIHE.</p> <p>The draft Plan Strategy requires that 20% of units in residential developments of 5 units or more, or on sites greater than 0.1Ha, are provided as 'affordable housing' (HOU5). The broad definition of affordable housing includes social housing as well as other intermediate homes for sale and for rent. Accordingly, every housing site that is likely to be zoned within the LPP should be able to contribute to affordable housing need. There should therefore be no restriction specifically on the development of social housing regardless of phasing. Where infrastructure constraints exist, they will be equally relevant to all tenures of housing.</p>
<b>Policy wording</b>	
<p>The generalised language and structure of the policy doesn't provide clarity or certainty as to how the release of additional land will be managed in LPP or any certainty to prospective developers as to whether development will be permitted in advance of the LPP.</p>	<p>As noted above, to help provide additional clarity in relation to the release of land, both in advance of the LPP and in later phases, the Council have expanded and restructured the Policy. A new first paragraph, refers to the situation <i>"In advance of the Local Policies Plan"</i> with reference to <i>"the first phase"</i>. This includes existing allocations and committed development, as well as additional development where supporting infrastructure requirements can be met. A second paragraph then refers to the role of the LPP in reviewing and updating <i>"existing first phase commitments"</i> and in managing and releasing <i>"new zonings and development capacity"</i>.</p> <p>We have also amended proposed paragraph 5.1.9 to reference both the Local Policies Plan process and the required plan review processes.</p>
<p>The open and broad nature of policy as drafted may have unintended consequences, such as 'new' sites with constraints being released for development.</p>	<p>The Council disagree that the proposed policy could lead to the release of land with known constraints. In fact, it is more likely with the more precise wording outlined in the PAC report that committed sites that have constraints will be given preference</p>

## Overview of responses

Main Issue	Council Response
	<p>over more suitable, available and deliverable sites where infrastructure capacity is not a constraint.</p> <p>The proposed Council wording already ensures at paragraph 5.1.7 that <i>"all uncommitted land to be developed during the plan period will be subject to the availability of adequate infrastructure"</i> in its broadest sense.</p> <p>However, we have also sought to make this more explicit through the addition of a new sentence within the new first paragraph of the proposed policy box that, in advance of the LPP, additional development will only be permitted where <i>"it can be demonstrated that the necessary supporting infrastructure requirements can be met, having due regard to the views of the relevant statutory consultees."</i></p> <p>We have also sought to remove any ambiguity from the phasing of land as part of the LPP process through the deletion of the words <i>"where appropriate"</i> from the final sentence of the policy box, as well as at the start of paragraph 5.1.8.</p>
<p>The Policy provides flexibility by stating "where appropriate".</p>	<p>The Council agree that flexibility is important within this 'strategic' policy. As noted above, it is intended to <i>"flag up"</i> the <i>"pressing issue of the role that the capacity of the city's sewerage system has to play in developing the growth strategy"</i> and to <i>"alert developers to the need for infrastructure to be available prior to sites being released for housing and employment"</i> (Paragraph 3.4.2 of the PAC report).</p> <p>As the Council have not yet completed the site-specific analysis of the type required for the zoning of land, it is critical that the provisions of the strategic phasing policy within the Plan Strategy are appropriately worded to provide sufficient flexibility to respond to the evidence at this later stage.</p> <p>However, as noted above, concerns have also been raised through this consultation that the draft policy wording is too open and broad natured, leading to a lack of clarity and uncertainty. We have therefore sought to remove any ambiguity from the final sentence of the policy box through the deletion of the words 'where appropriate'. This, combined with other changes that make clear that other sites could come forward during any phase where the necessary infrastructure</p>



Main Issue	Council Response
	<p>requirements can be met, help provide additional clarity, whilst retaining the necessary flexibility.</p>
<p><b>Phasing specifics</b></p>	
<p>The policy should be amended to specify the different phases by name. Most logically this would follow the example offered by the IE report which identifies Phase 1 and Phase 2, etc. The role and function of each phase should be made clear.</p>	<p>There is no requirement within the PAC Report or Dfl's Direction to specifically name the phases beyond Phase 1 and Phase 2.</p> <p>However, as noted above, the policy has been revised to draw more of a distinction between <i>"the first phase"</i>, which focusses on <i>"existing allocation and commitments"</i> and <i>"new zonings or development capacity"</i> that will be <i>"managed and released in accordance with provisions to be set out within the Local Policies Plan"</i>. This recognises at least two distinct phases, the first of which begins in advance of the LPP, without restricting future zoning within the LPP to just two phases.</p> <p>The draft of the policy issued for consultation, already outlined the overall purpose of phasing in the last sentence of the policy box, namely <i>"ensures the necessary supporting infrastructural needs are addressed."</i>. This has been made even more explicit through revision to the final sentence to remove any ambiguity through deletion of the phrase "Where appropriate..." and to summarise the outcome of the policy approach.</p>
<p>The Council should consider assigning time periods to each phase in order to clarify the period of the plan each phase relates to.</p>	<p>It is not possible to assign time periods to phases at this stage given that there is no firm indication as to when the appropriate infrastructure is likely to receive investment. The Council have also not yet completed the site-specific analysis of the type required to inform the LPP, to be able to determine the availability and deliverability of sites relative to each other, or likely timescales for delivery.</p> <p>However, Policy HOU1 (as amended) and Figure 7.2 (as amended) provide a broad indication of the timescale for the delivery of housing. Although this is not a formal phasing plan, it provides an indication of timescales for the delivery of housing development over the plan period. As recognised by Dfl within their response, this sets out the Council's expectation that the majority of the housing growth will take place toward the end of the plan period.</p> <p>Whilst this is not a phased approach to the release of housing land, any phasing provisions within the LPP would have to be consistent with the provisions of this table. This is because the</p>

## Overview of responses

Main Issue	Council Response
	<p>inclusion of the three time periods within the policy box now means that the illustrative timescales have now been elevated to requirements that housing growth <i>"will be delivered in accordance with"</i>.</p> <p>Furthermore, it is worth noting that existing commitments of up to 28,195 units, as outlined within the Housing Baseline Report (SD006B), would account for the overall housing numbers well into the third time period (2031-2035) - the first two periods combined reaching a total of 17,430. The LPP will therefore build upon this initial work to provide a more detailed breakdown of suitable sites, appropriately phased to align with infrastructure capacity and investment, and taking account of existing commitments in order to deliver the Plan's growth objectives.</p>
<p>Phasing of sites can be done at the LPP stage, based on a more complete understanding of sites that can be considered for housing and employment purposes.</p>	<p>As noted above, the Council have not yet completed the site-specific analysis of the type required for the zoning of land. We intend to complete this in consultation with all key stakeholders, including the infrastructure providers, to provide the appropriate evidence base to inform the formulation of the LPP. It is therefore critical that the provisions of the strategic phasing policy within the Plan Strategy are appropriately worded to provide sufficient flexibility to respond to the evidence at this later stage.</p>
<p><b>Land release</b></p>	
<p>The policy as presently drafted provides no indication of the process that would trigger the release of Phase 2 sites. There is no indication that sites will be released for development when it is established that sewerage capacity is no longer a limiting issue.</p>	<p>As noted above, it is not possible to provide a firm indication at this stage of when later phased sites may be released, given that there is no firm indication as to when the appropriate infrastructure is likely to receive investment. The Council will continue to liaise with infrastructure providers to ensure that phasing proposed as part of the LPP process will take account of the timing of infrastructure investment.</p> <p>In advance of the LPP, a new sentence added within the first paragraph of the Policy box makes explicit that additional development may be permitted as part of the first phase in advance of the LPP where <i>"it can be demonstrated that the necessary supporting infrastructure requirements can be met, having due regard to the views of the relevant statutory consultees."</i> In effect, this allows for the assessment of proposals at any stage where it can be demonstrated that there are no infrastructure constraints.</p>

Main Issue	Council Response
	<p>We have also included a sentence at the start of the new second paragraph to explain that <i>“new zonings or development capacity identified will be managed and released in accordance with provisions to be set out within the Local Policies Plan”</i>. As part of the LPP, the Council could therefore include specific timescales for each phase or an outline of the conditions that must be met to trigger the release of sites.</p> <p>The final sentence within the policy box (including some minor modification from the original consultation draft) ensures that all development will be <i>“phased in a manner that ensures the necessary supporting infrastructural needs are addressed”</i>. The justification and amplification text also ensures at paragraph 5.1.7 that <i>“all uncommitted land to be developed during the plan period will be subject to the availability of adequate infrastructure”</i>.</p>
<p>There was general agreement that ‘new’ development could be included as part of the first phase where the characteristics of a particular site are assessed as being suitable to provide a temporary or on-site solution to any wider infrastructure constraints. The possibility of temporary solutions should be expanded to provide a more detailed explanation of what such solutions may entail. However, it was also suggested that this would not be suitable for the majority of sites.</p>	<p>We welcome the recognition that it may be appropriate to include ‘new’ sites within the earliest phase where a specific site can address wider strategic infrastructure constraints in a sustainable way. This may include locations where infrastructure capacity is not currently constrained, as well as situations where temporary or on-site proposals can adequately address any constraints. However, we accept that this will not be a viable solution in many cases.</p> <p>Although this was already referenced within Paragraph 5.1.8, in line with the PAC’s proposed wording, we have also made this more explicit within the Policy box as noted in the Council response above. Additional development can therefore be permitted at any stage <i>“where it can be demonstrated that the necessary supporting infrastructure requirements can be met”</i>.</p> <p>As temporary/on-site solutions are likely to vary from case to case, based on both site characteristics and the type of constraint identified, it is not possible at this stage to be prescriptive about what an acceptable solution may entail. An appropriate solution would have to be developed in consultation with the relevant infrastructure provider, as the statutory authority, and be accepted as a viable solution. However, it is noted that this is likely to be an exception, rather than the norm, as it is unlikely that temp/on-site solutions will be appropriate in the majority of cases. It is also undesirable for</p>

## Overview of responses

Main Issue	Council Response
	'strategic' infrastructure needs to be met in such ways across multiple developments.
<b>Zoning principles</b>	
<p>The inclusion of a strategic phasing policy provides an opportunity to highlight other principles that might inform the assignment of land to Phases. It was suggested that these could include the sequential approach set out in the RDS; the need to coordinate site development with infrastructure generally; the need to deliver the plans overall housing requirements and the need to ensure a 5-year supply of developable sites is maintained.</p>	<p>Paragraph 5.1.5 proposed as part of the consultation sets out a number of key principles for the zoning and phasing of land within the LPP. However, this has been made more explicit, by converting the final sentence to a bullet point list.</p> <p>This provides greater detail on how such a phasing mechanism will be implemented through the addition of a succinct list of principles upon which future phasing and allocations will be based. This includes ensuring the overall objectives of the plan can be met, considerations of suitability and sustainability, a brownfield first approach in line with regional policy, ensuring a supply of affordable housing, contributing to regeneration, maintaining a 5-year supply of land and availability of infrastructure.</p>
<p>The importance of preventing restrictions to the provision of social housing, in response to up-to-date evidence of need, needs to be prioritised when phasing/zoning land. There also needs to be sufficient land to meet social housing need as part of the first phase</p>	<p>The Council recognise that ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing is important in delivering the LDP's objectives. The draft Plan Strategy clearly sets out the overall need in terms of housing units within Policies SP1 and HOU1, as well as the quantum of affordable units being embedded within Policy HOU5. This was developed in response to a significant evidence base relating to housing need, including NIHE Housing Market Analysis (LDP document DPS024) and a specific Housing Growth Study (LDP document POP006).</p> <p>It is the role of the LPP to ensure that the LDP objectives are embedded throughout the land allocation process, including the phasing of development where required. As part of the LPP process a more detailed Urban Capacity Study (UCS) will be undertaken in order to determine, based on the latest information available at that time, the suitability, availability and achievability of each site. This assessment process will include reference to the most up to date information available on prevailing housing need and will form an important part of the evidence base for future zonings and their allocations to phases.</p> <p>As noted above, we have expanded paragraph 5.1.5 to provide greater detail on the principles to be applied in future phasing and allocations. To make addressing affordable housing need more explicit, this list includes a specific principle referring to</p>

Main Issue	Council Response
	<p><i>"an adequate supply of affordable housing"</i>, as well as reference to <i>"supporting the objectives of the Plan Strategy"</i>, which include the need <i>"to address current and future residential needs"</i> and managing <i>"the supply of housing, including affordable housing, in response to changing housing need"</i>.</p> <p>However, infrastructure constraints will still remain in some locations regardless of whether a particular site is proposed for social housing or not.</p>
<p>The supporting justification and amplification text should be amended to refer to zoned and committed sites, particularly where these are supported by Development Frameworks/Masterplans.</p>	<p>The Council acknowledge that there are significant commitments within the City that are supported by Development Frameworks/Masterplans, which have already been assessed with regards to infrastructure requirements. The Council therefore agree that such locations, where Regeneration plans are linked to a planning approval, should be considered committed development that cannot be subject to phasing. This is acknowledged in Paragraph 5.1.6 of the proposed Policy SP1A.</p> <p>In addition, as noted above, we have also expanded paragraph 5.1.5 to include key principles that future phasing and allocations will be based on, which includes a specific criterion to take account of the ability of sites to contribute <i>"to regeneration in line with regeneration frameworks and masterplans."</i></p>
<p><b>Other</b></p>	
<p><b>Track record</b> When determining infrastructure capacity, the Council should have regard to the track record of delivery of development by strategic investors, in contrast to the accumulation of permissions for development that will not be delivered.</p>	<p>As part of the LPP process an updated and more detailed UCS will be undertaken in order to determine, based on the information available, the suitability, availability and achievability of each site. This will be supported through a formal 'call for sites' that may help give an indication of an owner's intentions, which will be important when considering unimplemented and potentially lapsed permissions. Following the robust UCS process will prioritise sites that are achievable over sites that are unlikely to be delivered.</p>
<p><b>Sustainability</b> Allocating development land should ensure that development will be directed to the most suitable and sustainable locations. SP1A will also allow brownfield land and land within the urban footprint, to be</p>	<p>Noted. An amendment has been made to the draft Policy at paragraph 5.1.5 to make the key principles for phasing and allocation of sites more explicit. This list includes the issues highlighted within this response, namely the most suitable and sustainable locations and the priority of brownfield land over greenfield.</p>

## Overview of responses

Main Issue	Council Response
<p>prioritised, reducing the requirement for greenfield development.</p>	
<p><b>Engagement</b></p>	
<p>A number of statutory bodies reiterated their commitment and willingness to continue engagement with Belfast City Council regarding the finalisation of the Plan Strategy, as well as the subsequent LPP process.</p>	<p>The Council remain committed to meaningful engagement with all stakeholders as appropriate as part of the LDP process. A similar commitment to partnership working from other statutory bodies would therefore be welcomed.</p>
<p><b>Next steps</b></p>	
<p>It is necessary for DfI to agree the new policy wording before adoption of the Plan</p>	<p>The Council intend to submit the revised Plan Strategy including the changes required through the Direction and the changes made as a result of this consultation process to the Department for Infrastructure for approval as soon as practically possible following completion of the consultation analysis and the necessary Council approval processes.</p>
<p>BCC has not complied with Section 12(3) of the Planning Act 2011</p>	<p>Section 12 of the Planning Act relates to the adoption of LDP documents. Section 12(3) requires the Council to comply with the Direction given by the Department under section 12(1). The Council believes that the changes proposed comply fully with the Department's Directive and therefore the legislative provisions. In accordance with the Direction, following completion of the required consultation, the Council will submit the revised Plan Strategy to the Department for approval prior to adoption.</p>
<p>Respondents reserve the right to make representations to DfI to exercise their powers under Section 16 of the Planning Act 2011.</p>	<p>Section 16 of the Planning Act relates to the Department's powers to prepare or revise a LDP document if it thinks that a Council is failing or omitting to do anything it is necessary for it to do in connection with the preparation of the LDP. However, if doing so, the Department would be required under Section 16(4) to cause an independent examination to be carried out. At that stage, all parties would be within their rights to make further representations.</p> <p>Whilst stakeholders have the right to discuss this option with DfI directly, the Council do not anticipate this being required as the Council are fully committed to carry out all work necessary to see the adoption of the full LDP within a reasonable timescale. As noted above, we believe that the Plan Strategy as now proposed taking account of the revisions made following this</p>

Main Issue	Council Response
	consultation process fully comply with the Department’s Direction and therefore the legislative provisions. In accordance with the Direction, following completion of the required consultation, the Council will submit the revised Plan Strategy to the Department for approval prior to adoption.
Respondents reserve the right to challenge the lawfulness of the plan should policy be adopted as proposed.	Whilst the Council believe the adoption of the draft policy proposed as part of this consultation exercise would be fully legal, a number of changes have been made that will hopefully allay any remaining concerns.

### Policy HOU1

2.3.2 The three responses submitted in relation to amendments to Policy HOU1 can be summarised as follows:

- Noting that the revised table now includes an indication of growth across three time periods, but this **isn’t considered a phasing of land**, but rather one possible growth trajectory; and
- A number of other issues were raised in relation to **housing need** and the need to revise the Settlement Development Limits, meeting **unmet social housing needs** and the potential **implication of changes to draft Policy SP1A** on Policy HOU1

### Responses Received

Ref	Respondent
04	Department for Infrastructure
05	Individual

Ref	Respondent
09	Participation & the Practice of Rights

### Main Issue(s) raised by respondent(s) and Belfast City Council’s response

Main Issue	Council Response
<b>Phasing</b>	
The revised table within Policy HOU1 breaks down the Council’s housing requirement across settlement areas, as before, but also now indicates a growth trajectory across three time periods. This illustrates the Council’s expectation that the majority of the housing growth will take place toward the end of the plan.	<p>Policy HOU1 (as amended) provides a broad indication of the timescale for the delivery of housing. Although we accept that this is not a formal phasing plan, it provides an indication of timescales for the delivery of housing development over the plan period. As recognised by DfI within their response, this sets out the Council’s expectation that the majority of the housing growth will take place toward the end of the plan period.</p> <p>Whilst this is not a phased approach to the release of housing land, any phasing provisions within the LPP would have to be consistent with the provisions of this table. This is because the inclusion of the three time periods within the policy box now</p>

## Overview of responses

Main Issue	Council Response
<p>Importantly this is not a phased approach to the release of housing land but is instead an indication of one possible growth trajectory based upon anticipated annual average build rates.</p>	<p>means that the illustrative timescales have now been elevated to requirements that housing growth <i>"will be delivered in accordance with"</i>.</p> <p>Furthermore, it is worth noting that existing commitments of up to 28,195 units, as outlined within the Housing Baseline Report (SD006B), would account for the overall housing numbers well into the third time period (2031-2035) - the first two periods combined reaching a total of 17,430. The LPP will therefore build upon this initial work to provide a more detail breakdown of suitable sites, appropriately phased to align with infrastructure capacity and investment, and taking account of existing commitments in order to deliver the Plan's growth objectives.</p> <p>Although we have not made any changes to Policy HOU1 as a result of this comment, we have amended paragraph 5.1.9 in the justification and amplification text of the new strategic Policy SP1A to reflect this comment.</p>
<p><b>Other</b></p>	
<p><b>Need for new homes</b></p> <p>Agreed that new homes are needed and more land should be used for Accommodating new homes. The city Development Limit has restricted new homes from being built, causing a supply and demand issue and over inflating the housing market in Belfast.</p> <p>Land is available to accommodate new homes beside existing housing developments, with transport connections already in place.</p>	<p>Whilst Policy HOU1 of the Plan Strategy sets out the overall requirement for new homes over the plan period, The LPP process is the appropriate mechanism to review existing designations and zonings. This will include a review of the settlement development limit as well as the zoning of land for housing and employment, etc.</p> <p>As part of this process, the Council plan to carry out a formal 'Call for sites' which will allow landowners and developers to promote sites for a range of uses. A detailed UCS will then be undertaken in order to determine, based on the latest information available at that time, the suitability, availability and achievability of each site. As part of this robust assessment, the intentions of owners and developers can be taken into account. This work will form a crucial part of the evidence base to help inform the designating land for different uses within the LPP.</p>



Main Issue	Council Response
<p><b>Housing need</b></p> <p>The Plan Strategy should use current and up-to-date figures on unmet housing need and set out how homelessness and those in housing stress will be addressed.</p>	<p>The Council recognise that ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing is important in delivering the LDP's objectives. The draft Plan Strategy clearly sets out the overall need in terms of housing units within policies SP1 and HOU1, as well as the quantum of affordable units being embedded within Policy HOU5. This was developed in response to a significant evidence base relating to housing need, including NIHE Housing Market Analysis (LDP document DPS024) and a specific Housing Growth Study (LDP document POP006).</p>
<p><b>Amendment</b></p> <p>If the Council revises policy SP1A to take account of comments received, this will require consequential amendments to HOU1 in order to align with the recommended approach to phasing.</p>	<p>The Council do not believe that any of the proposed changes made to draft Policy SP1A necessitate any further amendments to Policy HOU1.</p>

**Figure 7.2**

2.3.3 Only the Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) submitted any comments directly in relation to Figure 7.2. It noted the amendment to the table to include an additional statement clarifying the relationship of the Table with new Policy SP1A. However, there was no evaluative comment relating to the proposed change.

## Overview of responses

### Addendum to the SA (incorporating SEA)

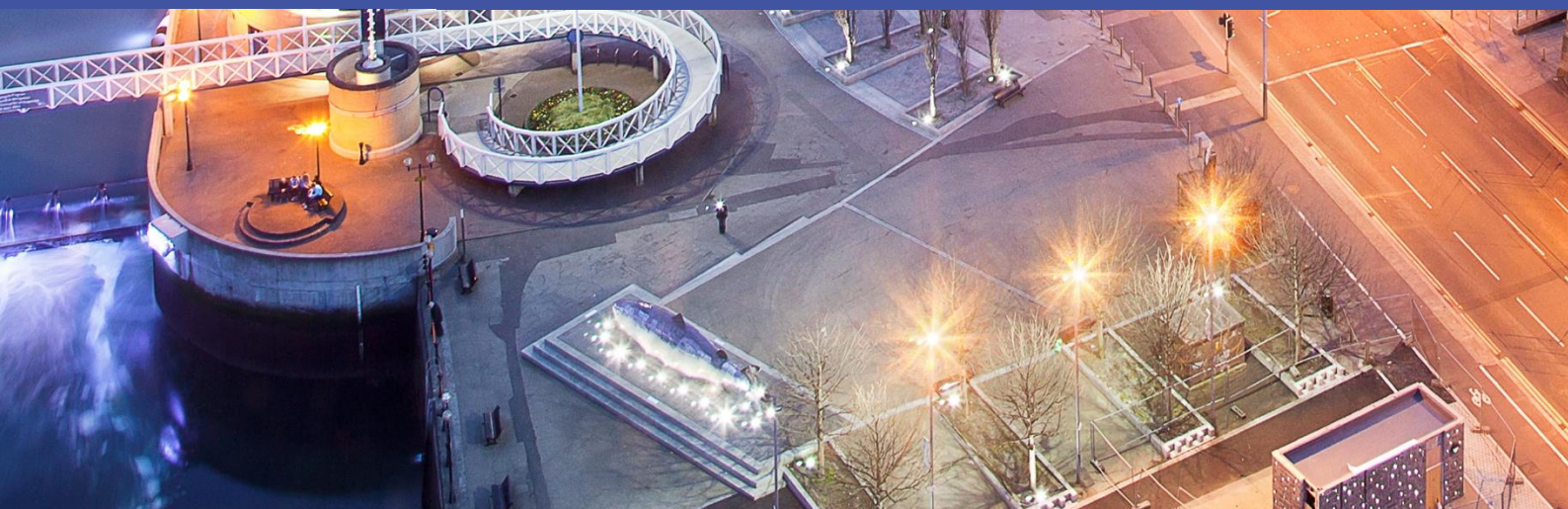
2.3.4 Only the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) submitted any comments directly in relation to the Addendum to the SA. These comments, alongside the Council's responses, can be summarised as follows:

#### Main Issue(s) raised by respondent(s) and Belfast City Council's response

Main Issue	Council Response
The Department disagree with the Council's conclusions regarding the minor positive scoring of Option 2 (the Council's proposed wording) and its performance against the total minor negative scoring recorded for Option 1 (based on the PAC approach). The Department would disagree with the statement that Option 2 has a similar effect to the PAC's suggested wording.	The full rationale for the detailed summarised scoring is set out in the Addendum to the SA and the conclusions by the Council followed a review of these in the context of the revised version of strategic Policy SP1A, as amended in response to this consultation. The DfI view is noted.
In the event that the Council introduced further amendments to SP1A as a result of this public consultation this will necessitate a revised SA.	The Council agree that, having introduced further amendments to SP1A as a result of the public consultation, a revised SA was required. This was carried out and the results are presented in the SA Second Addendum April 2023.



# Conclusion



## Conclusion

### 3.1 Summary of policy amendments

3.1.1 As explained in Section 2, there were a number of issues and requests for more clarity raised as part of the consultation process that have resulted in changes to the draft strategic Policy SP1A. These are outlined in detail within the preceding chapter, but for clarity, can be summarised as follows:

Changes made	Reasons
<p>Within Policy box:</p> <p><b>Policy SP1A – Managing growth and supporting infrastructure delivery</b></p>	<p>To align with all other policy headings throughout the Plan Strategy.</p>
<p>The allocation of land and development to deliver the Council’s growth strategy should be supported by the appropriate infrastructure. <del>New zonings or development capacity will normally be managed through</del> <del>In advance of the Local Policies Plan taking account of the first phase will comprise</del> existing allocations and commitments.</p>	<p>Addresses ambiguity during a transitional period in advance ‘new zonings’ in the LPP. This acknowledges explicitly within the policy box that committed development or existing allocations cannot be subject to phasing.</p> <p>The specific reference to a ‘first phase’ comprising of existing allocations and commitments, mirrors the PAC’s proposed wording.</p>
<p>The allocation of land and development to deliver the Council’s growth strategy should be supported by the appropriate infrastructure. <del>In advance of the Local Policies Plan the first phase will comprise existing allocations and commitments. Additional development may be permitted in this first phase where it can be demonstrated that the necessary supporting infrastructure requirements can be met, having due regard to the views of the relevant statutory consultees.</del></p>	<p>Acknowledges that other ‘additional’ development can take place within the first phase where infrastructure is not a limiting factor. This effectively applies the same limitations intended for Phase 1 within the PAC’s proposed wording.</p> <p>Also acknowledges the important role of statutory consultees in relation to the consideration of additional development.</p>
<p><del>...having due regard to the views of the relevant statutory consultees.</del></p> <p><del>The Local Policies Plan will review and update the existing first phase development commitments and assess projected requirements beyond this first phase.</del></p>	<p>Draws a distinction between at least two phases – the initial phase ‘In advance of the LPP’ (see above) and the policy to be set out within the LPP ‘beyond this first phase’.</p>

Changes made	Reasons
<p>The Local Policies Plan will review and updated the existing first phase development commitments and assess projected requirements beyond this first phase. Any new zonings or development capacity identified will be managed and released in accordance with provisions to be set out within the Local Policies Plan.</p>	<p>Makes the role of the LPP more explicit in recognising that the LPP can set out further provisions that can address some of the issues raised as part of the Plan Strategy process, but also in response to further issues raised as part of future consultation on the LPP.</p> <p>Please note this mirrors wording from the second sentence of the consultation draft policy wording, but excludes the word 'normally' between 'will' and 'be' to remove any ambiguity and make the role of the LPP more explicit.</p>
<p>Any new zonings or development capacity identified will be managed and released in accordance with provisions to be set out within the Local Policies Plan. <del>Where appropriate, additional</del> Development will therefore be phased in a manner that ensures the necessary supporting infrastructural needs are addressed.</p>	<p>Removes any ambiguity from the policy text. All development needs to address support infrastructure as a result of this policy.</p>
<p>Paragraph 5.1.5:</p> <p>...The delivery of new homes, jobs, infrastructure, and community facilities must comply with the Spatial Development Strategy. <del>This means that development</del> The phasing or allocation of sites will be <del>directed to</del> based on principles to be brought forward through the Local Policies Plan, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supporting the objectives of the Plan Strategy;</li> <li>• identifying the most suitable and sustainable locations, <del>taking account of existing commitments and</del>;</li> <li>• prioritising 'brownfield' land within the urban footprint in accordance with the sequential approach set out in the SPPS;</li> <li>• ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing;</li> <li>• contributing to regeneration in line with regeneration frameworks and masterplans;</li> </ul>	<p>Places greater emphasis on the role of the LPP in relation to phasing and allocation of land for development and provides greater detail on how such a phasing mechanism will be implemented in the LPP by expanding the list of principles to be considered at that later stage in response to suggestions raised by respondents to the consultation.</p>

## Conclusion

Changes made	Reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maintaining a 5-year supply of land for residential and employment use; and</li> <li>the timing, availability or provision of adequate infrastructure.</li> </ul>	
<p>Paragraph 5.1.7:</p> <p>...There is no automatic assumption that these existing commitments will be delivered, particularly where detailed analysis identifies constraints affecting the availability and deliverability of sites <del>and as such regard</del>. <del>Regard</del> will be had to <del>the site history, including existing commitments,</del> when assessing <del>an applications</del> and <del>their</del> <del>its</del> infrastructure needs. This will take account of the requirement that all uncommitted land to be developed during the plan period will be subject to the availability of adequate infrastructure...</p>	<p>This change helps address the risk that the new policy could prohibit development until the LPP stage of the plan is well advanced/complete. It acknowledges that assessment of a planning application will always take into account the planning history and existing commitments.</p>
<p>Paragraph 5.1.8:</p> <p><del>Where appropriate,</del> Delivery of development may be phased to ensure alignment with infrastructure investment and taking account of projected lead in times for the forms of development proposed...</p>	<p>Reflects a similar change within the Policy box to remove any ambiguity. All development needs to address support infrastructure as a result of this policy.</p>
<p>Paragraph 5.1.9:</p> <p>The strategy recognises that growth should be delivered in a phased manner. <del>with</del> <del>The allocation of sites to phases shall reflect the expectation that the majority of that growth occurring will occur</del> later in the plan period.</p>	<p>Reflects the comments made in relation to Policy HOU1 that the three time periods to not provide a formal phasing plan, but rather the Council's expectation that the majority of the housing growth will take place toward the end of the plan period.</p>
<p>...The allocation of sites <del>to phases shall reflect the expectation that the majority of that growth will occur later in the plan period.</del> <del>Therefore</del> <del>In addition</del>, tailored policies and/or the application of key site requirements will be brought forward through the LPP process...</p>	<p>Removes the causal effect from the introduction of this new Policy on the LPP process, instead making clear that the LPP can introduce further policies and key site requirements associated with the allocation of land to help manage growth, alongside the use of phasing.</p>

Changes made	Reasons
<p>In addition, tailored policies and/or the application of key site requirements will be brought forward through the LPP process having regard to the principles of Sustainable Development, including the appropriate infrastructure considerations set out above.</p>	<p>Refers to the new set of principles set out in paragraph 5.1.5, which includes the principle of sustainable development.</p>
<p>...This aspect of the LPP will be underpinned by the ongoing monitoring required to support the maintenance of an effective land supply in accordance with the provisions of the SPPS and taking account of the required plan review process.</p>	<p>Highlights the role the statutory 5-year plan review process could play in managing the release of land in later phases for development, based on continuous monitoring of delivery of development against plan objectives.</p>

- 3.1.2 A copy of the revised version of Policy SP1A, which incorporates all of the changes outlined above, is available in Appendix A. The proposed versions of changed Policy HOU1 and Figure 7.2 are also contained in Appendix A, although no further changes have been proposed to the provisions as a result of this consultation.
- 3.1.3 The changes made to the draft Policy SP1A are providing additional clarity as requested through the consultation process and do not change the original intent or effect of the Policy. There are therefore no further changes required to the related SA (incorporating SEA) assessment as a result of any of the changes as they are presented in the SA Second Addendum April 2023 (see 2.3.4 above).
- 3.1.4 It should be noted that a number of additional comments were made that did not require changes to the draft policy. Those issues can be addressed at the LPP stage when detailed work will be undertaken to inform the zoning and allocation of land. The LPP process will also involve further engagement with key stakeholders and public consultation as well as a further independent examination before being adopted.
- 3.1.5 At this stage, the Council are content that the modifications outlined in Appendix A, ensure that the proposed Policy and associated justification and amplification represent an appropriate response to the consultations and should be incorporated within the final plan alongside the other changes set out in the PAC Report and DfI Direction.

### Appendix A: Revised wording following consultation

#### A1. Policy SP1A

In response to the representations made as part of this consultation, as outlined in this report, we have made a number of changes to Policy SP1A and supporting Justification and Amplification text. The amended text below will therefore replace paragraph 5.1.4 of the dPS:

~~5.1.4 Land will be zoned for housing, employment uses and mixed-use sites within the Local Policies Plan to deliver the council's growth aspirations. The delivery of employment space and homes will be phased to align with infrastructure capacity and investment over the plan period.~~

5.1.4 As set out in the Policy Context and Strategic Aims the LDP is one of the key spatial tools to shape the physical form of Belfast through a sustainable approach that delivers the growth aspirations of the Belfast Agenda and RDS. The aims of the LDP are to build stronger communities by protecting and improving social, economic, green, digital and physical infrastructure through supporting its development and enhancement. The allocation of land and development to deliver the growth strategy will require new or enhanced infrastructure.

#### Policy SP1A – Managing growth and supporting infrastructure delivery

**The allocation of land and development to deliver the Council's growth strategy should be supported by the appropriate infrastructure. In advance of the Local Policies Plan the first phase will comprise existing allocations or commitments. Additional development may be permitted in this first phase where it can be demonstrated that the necessary supporting infrastructure requirements can be met, having due regard to the views of the relevant statutory consultees.**

**The Local Policies Plan will review and update the existing first phase development commitments and assess projected requirements beyond this first phase. Any new zonings or development capacity identified will be managed and released in accordance with provisions to be set out within the Local Policies Plan. Development will therefore be phased in a manner that ensures the necessary supporting infrastructural needs are addressed.**

5.1.5 Land will be zoned for housing, employment uses and mixed-use sites within the LPP to deliver the council's growth aspirations. The delivery of employment space and homes will be phased to align with infrastructure capacity and investment over the plan period. The delivery of new homes, jobs, infrastructure, and community facilities



must comply with the Spatial Development Strategy. The phasing or allocation of sites will be based on principles to be brought forward through the Local Policies Plan, including:

- supporting the objectives of the Plan Strategy;
- identifying the most suitable and sustainable locations;
- prioritising 'brownfield' land within the urban footprint in accordance with the sequential approach set out in the SPPS;
- ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing;
- contributing to regeneration in line with regeneration frameworks and masterplans;
- maintaining a 5-year supply of land for residential and employment use; and
- the timing, availability or provision of adequate infrastructure.

- 5.1.6 The zoning of land to deliver the Council's growth aspiration will be considered through the LPP process. This will, where appropriate, phase the delivery of that development to align with infrastructure capacity and planned investment over the plan period. Existing commitments are those which have already gone through the planning process and involved an assessment of wider infrastructural needs in consultation with the relevant statutory authorities. As the sites are committed, they cannot be subject to phasing.
- 5.1.7 The scale of existing housing, employment and mixed-use commitments across the City is recognised and set out within the provisions of EC2 and HOU1. There is no automatic assumption that these existing commitments will be delivered, particularly where detailed analysis identifies constraints affecting the availability and deliverability of sites. Regard will be had to the site history, including existing commitments, when assessing an application and its infrastructure needs. This will take account of the requirement that all uncommitted land to be developed during the plan period will be subject to the availability of adequate infrastructure, which would include but not be limited to that supporting transport, waste, water, energy and digital services provision.
- 5.1.8 Delivery of development may be phased to ensure alignment with infrastructure investment and taking account of projected lead in times for the forms of development proposed. It may also be possible to consider temporary solutions or the provision of on-site facilities by a developer that could allow a development to proceed, but this will be considered on a site-by-site basis in consultation with the relevant infrastructure body.
- 5.1.9 The strategy recognises that growth should be delivered in a phased manner. The allocation of sites to phases shall reflect the expectation that the majority of that growth will occur later in the plan period. In addition, tailored policies and/or the application of key site requirements will be brought forward through the LPP

## Appendix A

process having regard to the principles set out above. This aspect of the LPP will be underpinned by the ongoing monitoring required to support the maintenance of an effective land supply in accordance with the provisions of the SPPS and taking account of the required plan review process.

### A2. Policy HOU1

There have been no further changes made in relation to the proposed changes to Policy HOU1 as a result of this consultation. The proposed new wording therefore remains the replacement of the table which currently features in the policy box on page 60 of the dPS with the new table as follows:

<b>Policy HOU1 – Accommodating new homes</b>		
<b><del>There is a requirement for 31,660 new homes in Belfast over the period 2020-2035. This will be delivered in accordance with the requirements set out in the following table.</del></b>		
<b>Settlement / Area</b>		<b>Net additional dwellings (2020-2035)</b>
<b>Belfast city</b>	<b>Belfast city centre</b>	<b>8,000</b>
	<b>Belfast Harbour estate</b>	<b>3,500</b>
	<b>Rest of Belfast city</b>	<b>18,100</b>
	<b><i>Belfast city Total</i></b>	<b><i>29,600</i></b>
<b>Small Settlements</b>	<b>Edenderry</b>	<b>40</b>
	<b>Hannahstown</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Loughview</b>	<b>20</b>
	<b><i>Small settlements total</i></b>	<b><i>60</i></b>
<b>Windfall</b>		<b>2,000</b>
<b><del>The housing requirement will be delivered in accordance with the following indicative average annual rates:</del></b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><del>• 2020/21–2024/25 – an average of 1,100-1,300 dwellings completed per annum</del></li><li><del>• 2025/26–2029/30 – an average of 2,100-2,300 dwellings completed per annum</del></li><li><del>• 2030/31–2034/35 – an average of 2,700-2,900 dwellings completed per annum</del></li></ul>		

### Policy HOU1 – Accommodating new homes

There is a requirement for 31,660 new homes in Belfast over the period 2020-2035. This will be delivered in accordance with the requirements set out in the following table.

Settlement / Area	2020-2025	2026-2030	2031-2035	Total
Belfast city centre	1,600	2,800	3,600	8,000
Belfast Harbour estate	600	1,300	1,600	3,500
Rest of Belfast city	3,600	6,400	8,100	18,100
Small settlements total	-	30	30	60
Windfall	400	700	900	2,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,200</b>	<b>11,230</b>	<b>14,230</b>	<b>31,660</b>
Indicative Annual Average Rates	1,100-1,300	2,100-2,300	2,700-2,900	2,000-2,200

#### A3. Figure 7.2

There have been no further changes made in relation to Figure 7.2 as a result of this consultation. The proposed new wording therefore remains the replacement of existing Figure 7.2 on page 62 of the dPS with the modified version as follows:

Settlement / Area	2020-2025	2026-2030	2031-2035	Total
<b>Belfast city</b>				
Belfast city centre	1,600	2,800	3,600	8,000
Belfast Harbour estate	600	1,300	1,600	3,500
Rest of Belfast city	3,600	6,400	8,100	18,100
<b><i>Belfast city Total</i></b>	<b>5,800</b>	<b>10,500</b>	<b>13,300</b>	<b>29,600</b>
<b>Small settlements</b>				
Edenderry	-	20	20	40
Hannahstown	-	-	-	-
Loughview	-	10	10	20
<b><i>Small settlement total</i></b>	<b>-</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Windfall allowance</b>				
<b>Windfall housing supply</b>	400	700	900	2,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,200</b>	<b>11,230</b>	<b>14,230</b>	<b>31,660</b>
<b>Annual average</b>	<b>1,100-1,300</b>	<b>2,100-2,300</b>	<b>2,700-2,900</b>	<b>2,000-2,200</b>

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Settlement / Area	2020-2025	2026-2030	2031-2035	Total
<b>Belfast city</b>				
Belfast city centre	1,600	2,800	3,600	8,000
Belfast Harbour estate	600	1,300	1,600	3,500
Rest of Belfast city	3,600	6,400	8,100	18,100
<b><i>Belfast city Total</i></b>	<b>5,800</b>	<b>10,500</b>	<b>13,300</b>	<b>29,600</b>
<b>Small settlements</b>				
Edenderry	-	20	20	40
Hannahstown	-	-	-	-
Loughview	-	10	10	20
<b><i>Small settlement total</i></b>	<b>-</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Windfall allowance</b>				
<b>Windfall housing supply</b>	400	700	900	2,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,200</b>	<b>11,230</b>	<b>14,230</b>	<b>31,660</b>
<b>Annual average</b>	<b>1,100-1,300</b>	<b>2,100-2,300</b>	<b>2,700-2,900</b>	<b>2,000-2,200</b>

The average figures above set out the quantum of development projected to deliver the growth strategy over the plan period. The phasing will have regard to the provisions set out in strategic Policy SP1A and will be established through the Local Polices Plan, taking account of the existing committed development with their associated infrastructure provision.

## Appendix B: Respondents

The following organisations / individuals provided a response to the consultation on the proposed additions and modifications to the draft Plan Strategy:

### **Statutory Consultees**

- Ards and North Down Borough Council
- Department for Infrastructure
- Northern Ireland Water
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive

### **Private Sector**

- Belfast Harbour Commissioners
- Clanmil Housing Association
- MBA Planning
- Titanic Quarter and Belfast Harbour
- Translink

### **Non-governmental organisation**

- PPR Project

### **Individual**

- Anonymous

The following organisation provided a response to the consultation on the Addendum to the SA (incorporating SEA):

- Department for Infrastructure

## Appendix C: Summary of engagement with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI)/NI Water (NIW)

The following table summarises the key engagement undertaken with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and NI Water (NIW) both formally and informally in advance of the consultation on the proposed modification, during the consultation period and as we have sought to make changes following the closure of the consultation:

Date	Engagement / Consultation / Correspondence
3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2022	Initial Meeting with Strategic Planning (DfI) to notify Council of the proposed Direction to be issued on the 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2022.
<b>PAC Report and DfI Direction issued to Council (4<sup>th</sup> February 2022)</b>	
28 <sup>th</sup> February 2022	Online meeting with Strategic Planning (DfI) to outline the draft approach to proposed Modification and associated processes.
3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2022	Online meeting with Northern Ireland Water (NIW DfI) to discuss the draft approach to proposed Modification and associated processes.
4 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	BCC letters to Director of Strategic Planning (DfI) and Head of Investment Management (NIW) setting out details of draft Proposals for Strategic Policy and proposed work programme to adoption.
29 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	Online meeting with Strategic Planning (DfI) to discuss the detailed draft of Policy, approach to proposed modification and adoption processes.
30 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	Online meeting with Northern Ireland Water (NIW DfI) to discuss the detailed draft of Policy approach to proposed modification.
31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022	DfI Permanent Secretary letter to BCC responding to concerns and proposing further engagement.
20 <sup>th</sup> April 2022	Workshop with Strategic Planning (DfI) to discuss the proposed additional Policy and the other required modifications.
<b>Public consultation on Draft Plan Strategy Modifications commences (12<sup>th</sup> May 2022)</b>	
22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2022	Meeting with Strategic Planning (DfI) to discuss the consultation and potential response from DfI.
<b>Public consultation on Draft Plan Strategy Modifications closes (7<sup>th</sup> July 2022)</b>	
10 <sup>th</sup> August 2022	Meeting with Strategic Planning (DfI) to discuss the objection to the proposed policy wording to secure potential for compliance with the Direction.
17 <sup>th</sup> August 2022	Meeting Director of Planning & Building Control with Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning (DfI) on proposed wording approved at August Planning Cttee.
16 <sup>th</sup> September 2022	Meeting with Strategic Planning (DfI) to outline basis for August proposal and discuss remaining issues and proposed further additional revisions requested by DfI
5 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	DfI provide a copy of the final draft for "Development Practice Note 11- Receipt of Independent Examination Report and Adoption of a Development Plan Document (DPPN11)" that proposes to deal with the PAC Report and adoption.

Date	Engagement / Consultation / Correspondence
12 <sup>th</sup> & 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	DfI consultation with PAC on potential for clarification in respect of the Commission Report on the Belfast Plan Strategy Examination
1st December 2022	Planning Committee offers further engagement to explain revised wording for SP1A and invites DfI to attend future meeting of the Committee.
6 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	Director Planning & Strategic Planning (DfI) meeting to discuss outstanding issues raised by DfI.
13 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	Director Planning & Strategic Planning (DfI) meeting to discuss further clarification and changes raised by DfI.
30 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	Submission of further revised Draft SP1A wording with proposed Justification and Amplification text to DfI.
7 <sup>th</sup> February 2023	In principle approval based on a further revised wording for both SP1A and proposed Justification & Amplification text

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