



# Belfast Local Development Plan

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

**Sustainability Appraisal Report** August 2018 - **APPENDICES 1 to 6**



**Belfast**  
City Council

Energising  
**Belfast**



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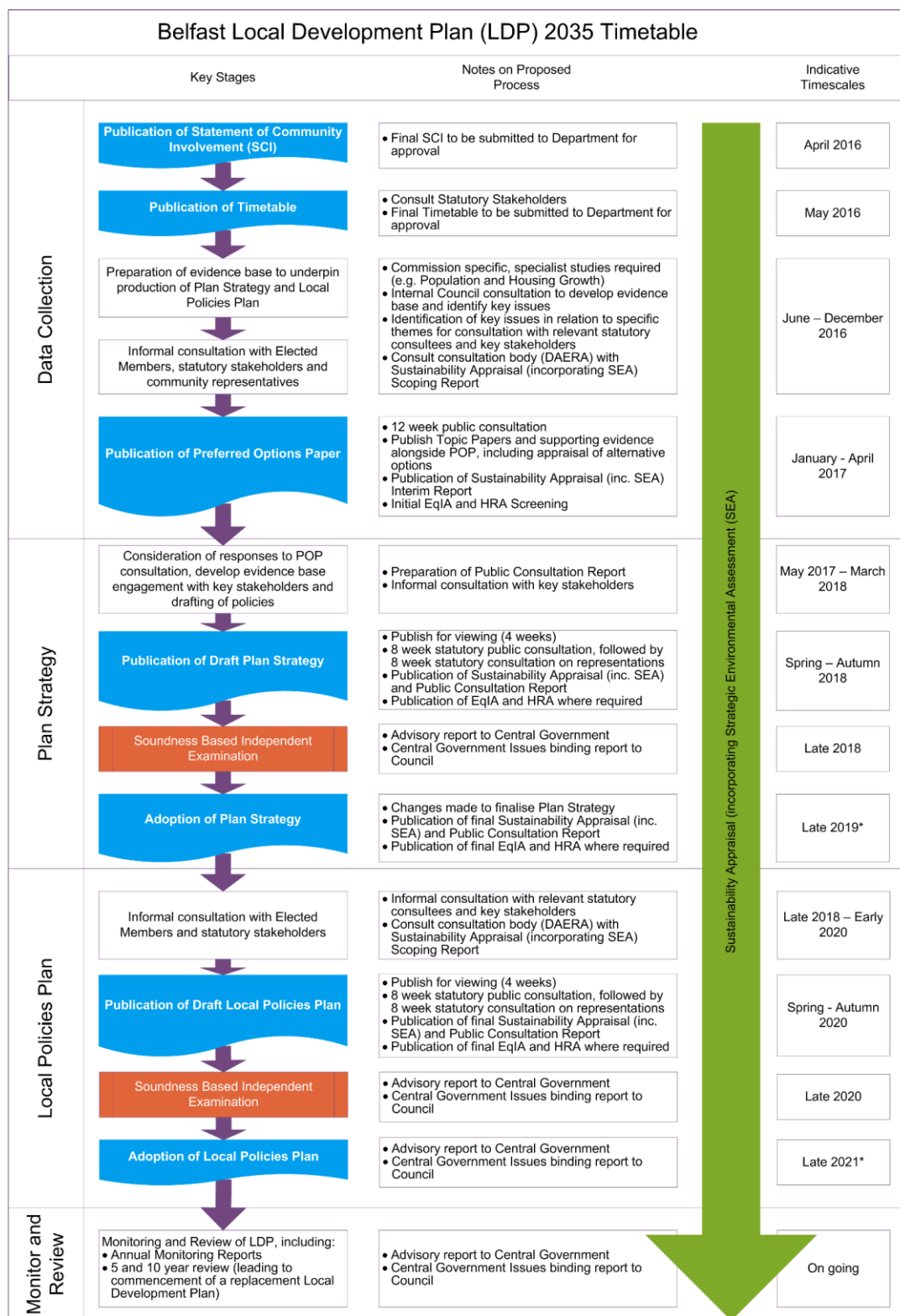
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# APPENDIX 1

## BELFAST LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN TIMETABLE



\* May require a longer period depending on changes required following Independent Examination





## APPENDIX 2

### CHECKLIST: DEVELOPMENT PLAN PRACTICE NOTE 04: ANNEX 9

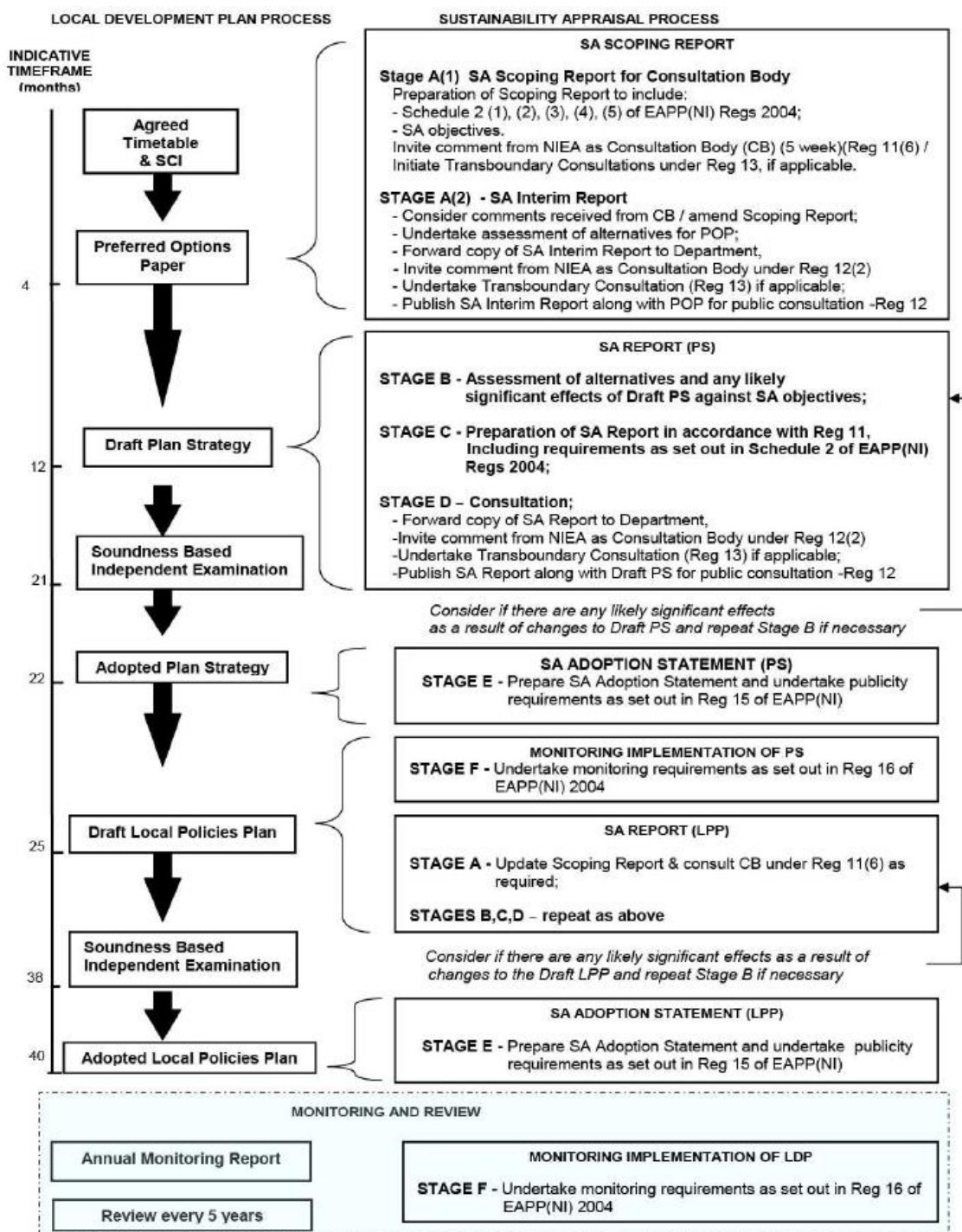
Structure of Report	Information to include	Location
<b>Components making up Environmental Report</b>	Table sign-posting the components of the SA Report which make up the Environmental Report for the purposes of the SEA Directive	Section 2.4
<b>1 Summary &amp; Outcomes</b>	1.1 Non-technical summary	Non-technical Summary
	1.2 A statement of the likely significant effects of the plan	Section 5 Section 7
	1.3 Statement on the difference the process has made to date	Section 1 Section 3 Section 4
	1.4 How to comment on the report	Non-technical Summary Section 2 Section 7
<b>2 Appraisal Methodology</b>	2.1 Approach adopted to the SA	Section 2 Section 3 Appendix 1 Appendix 3
	2.2 When the SA was carried out	
	2.3 Who carried out the SA	
	2.4 Who was consulted, when and how	
	2.5 Difficulties encountered in compiling information or carrying out the assessment.	
<b>3 Background</b>	3.1 Purpose of the SA and the SA Report	Section 2
	3.2 Plan objectives and outline of contents	
	3.3 Compliance with the SEA Directive/Regulations	

Structure of Report	Information to include	Location
<b>4 Sustainability Objectives, Baseline &amp; Context</b>	4.1 Links to other policies, plans & programmes, sustainability objectives and how these have been taken into account	Section 3 Appendix 4 Appendix 5 Appendix 6
	4.2 Description of the social, environmental and economic baseline characteristics and the predicted future baseline	
	4.3 Main social, environmental and economic issues and problems identified	
	4.4 Limitations of the information, assumptions made etc.	
	4.5 The SA framework, including objectives, targets and indicators	
<b>5 Plan Issues &amp; Options</b>	5.1 Main strategic options considered and how they were identified	Section 4 Appendix 7 Appendix 8 Appendix 9
	5.2 Comparison of the social, environmental and economic effects of the options	
	5.3 How social, environmental and economic issues were considered in choosing the preferred options	
	5.4 Other options considered, and why these were rejected	
	5.5 Any proposed mitigation measures	
<b>6 Plan Policies</b>	6.1 Significant social, environmental and economic effects of the preferred policies	Section 5 Appendix 10 Appendix 11 Appendix 12
	6.2 How social, environmental and economic problems were considered in developing the policies and proposals	
	6.3 Proposed mitigation measures	
	6.4 Uncertainties and risks	
<b>7 Implementation</b>	7.1 Links to other tiers of plans and programmes and the project level (EIA, design guidance etc.)	Section 6
	7.2 Proposals for monitoring	

Source: Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents, ODPM, 2005

### APPENDIX 3

## LINKS BETWEEN THE BELFAST LDP & SA



Local Development Plan & Sustainability Appraisal Process

Source: Development Plan Practice Note 04: Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (2015) Department of the Environment (pp.8)



## APPENDIX 4

### PLAN, POLICY & PROGRAMME REVIEW

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- 1.1 As noted in **Section 3.2**, the LDP may be influenced in various ways by other plans, policies or programmes (PPPs), or by external sustainability objectives such as those put forward in other strategies or initiatives.
- 1.2 The SEA Directive requires a review of relevant PPP's so that we can determine how the LDP is affected by these, how it may affect them, and to address any inconsistencies and constraints. This allows the council to establish a coherent policy context for the SA and to ensure the emerging LDP reflects and complies with international, national and local policies.
- 1.3 **Section 3.2** presented a high level summary (Table 10) which focussed on a number of key PPP examples, and the implications for both the LDP and SA.
- 1.4 This appendix presents the full, detailed review of key PPP's and strategies that are likely to be relevant to the LDP. It identifies the key objectives and requirements of each PPP, together with any specific sustainability implications for the LDP and SA.
- 1.5 This review is consistently updated as we move through the LDP preparation process. All future iterations will be revised to reflect any new relevant policies which are published between now and the next stage of the process.

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
<b>INTERNATIONAL LEVEL: EUROPEAN</b>		
<p><b>SEA Directive 2001</b> Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.</p>	<p>Provide for a high level of protection of the environment and contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view of promoting sustainable development.</p> <p>The Directive must be applied to plans or programmes whose formal preparation begins after 21 July 2004 and to those already in preparation by that date.</p>	<p>Requirements of the Directive must be met in Sustainability Appraisals.</p>
<p><b>Europe 2020 Strategy</b></p>	<p>Europe 2020 is the European Union's ten year jobs and growth strategy. It was launched in 2010 to create the conditions for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.</p> <p>Five headline targets have been agreed for the EU to achieve by the end of 2020. These cover employment; research and development; climate/energy; education; social inclusion and poverty reduction.</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the five headline targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy.</p>
<p><b>European Spatial Development Perspective (1999)</b></p>	<p>Economic and social cohesion across the community. Conservation of natural resources and cultural heritage. Balanced competitiveness between different tiers of government.</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the SPSS.</p> <p>Includes SA objectives to protect and enhance the natural environment and promote energy efficiency.</p>

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
<p align="center"><b>EU Seventh Environmental Action Plan (2002-2012)</b></p>	<p>The EU's objectives in implementing the programme are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) To protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital;</li> <li>b) To turn the Union into a resource-efficient, green and competitive low-carbon economy;</li> <li>c) To safeguard the Union's citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and wellbeing;</li> <li>d) To maximise the benefits of the Union's environment legislation;</li> <li>e) To improve the evidence base for environment policy;</li> <li>f) To secure investment for environment and climate policy and get the prices right.</li> <li>g) To improve environmental integration and policy coherence;</li> <li>h) To enhance the sustainability of the Union's cities;</li> <li>i) To increase the Union's effectiveness in confronting regional and global environmental challenges.</li> </ol>	<p>Include SA objectives to protect and enhance the natural environment and promote energy efficiency.</p>
<p><b>The Habitats Directive 1992</b></p> <p>Directive 92/43/EEC. Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.</p>	<p>Promote the maintenance of biodiversity taking account of economic, social, cultural and regional requirements. Conservation of natural habitats and maintain landscape features of importance of wildlife and fauna.</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive in the SPSS.</p> <p>Include SA objectives to protect and maintain the natural environment and important habitats.</p>
<p><b>The Birds Directive 2009</b></p>	<p>The preservation, maintenance, and re-establishment of biotopes and habitats shall include the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of protected areas.</li> </ul>	<p>The LDP should make sure that the up keep of recognised habitats is</p>

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
Directive 2009/147/EC is a codified version of directive 79/409/EEC as amended.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upkeep and management in accordance with the ecological needs of habitats inside and outside the protected zones.</li> <li>• Re-establishment of destroyed biotopes.</li> </ul>	<p>maintained and not damaged from development.</p> <p>Avoid pollution of deterioration of habitats or any other disturbances effecting birds.</p> <p>Include SA objectives for the protection of wildlife and habitats.</p>
<b>The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance 1971 (Ramsar Convention)</b>	Intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.	The LDP should take account of the Convention and sites recognised within the Plan Area that are designated.
<b>European Landscape Convention (Florence, 2002)</b>	The convention promotes landscape protection, management and planning.	<p>The LDP should take account of the convention.</p> <p>Include SA objectives to protect the urban and rural landscape and identify opportunities for enhancement.</p>
<b>Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Targets</b>	The Strategic Plan is comprised of a shared vision, a mission, strategic goals and 20 ambitious yet achievable targets, collectively known as the Aichi Targets. The Strategic Plan serves as a flexible framework for the establishment of national and regional targets and it promotes the coherent and effective implementation of the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.	The LDP must take into account the 20 Aichi targets to protect biodiversity.
<b>Renewable Energy Directive</b>	Directive 2009/28/EC establishes an overall policy for the production and promotion of energy from renewable sources in the EU. It sets out rules for the EU to achieve its 20% renewable target by 2020.	<p>The LDP should take account of the convention.</p> <p>Include SA objectives to promote use of renewable energies.</p>



Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
<p><b>Energy Performance of Buildings Directive 2010</b> The energy performance of buildings 2010/31/EU</p>	<p>Aims to promote the energy performance of buildings and building units. It requests that member states adopt either national or regional methodology for calculating energy performance and minimum requirements for energy performance.</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the SPPS.</p> <p>Include SA objective relating to the energy performance/efficiency of existing and proposed buildings.</p>
<p><b>Energy Efficiency Directive 2012</b> Directive 2012/27/EU on energy efficiency</p>	<p>Establishes a set of binding measures to help the EU reach its 20% energy efficiency target by 2020. Under the Directive, all EU countries are required to use energy more efficiently at all stages of the energy chain from its production to its final consumption.</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the SPPS.</p> <p>Include SA objective relating to the energy performance/efficiency.</p>
<p><b>Water Framework Directive 2000</b> Directive 2000/60/EC. Framework for community action in the field of water policy</p>	<p>Protection of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater.</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive in the SPSS.</p> <p>Include SA objectives to protect and minimise the impact on water quality.</p>
<p><b>Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2008</b> Directive 2008/56/EC. Framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy</p>	<p>The Marine Directive aims to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) of the EU's marine waters by 2020 and to protect the resource base upon which marine-related economic and social activities depend.</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the Directive and its role in improving the quality of the marine environments within the Plan Area.</p>

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
<p><b>OSPAR Marine Protection Area</b></p> <p>Established network of marine protected areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To protect, conserve and restore species, habitats and ecological processes which have been adversely affected by human activities:</li> <li>To prevent the degradation of, and damage to, species, habitats and ecological processes, following the precautionary principle.</li> <li>To protect and conserve areas that best represents the range of species, habitats and ecological processes in the maritime area.</li> </ul>	<p>The LDP should take account of the MPAs.</p> <p>Include SA objectives to conserve MPAs.</p>
<p><b>Maritime Spatial Planning Directive</b></p> <p>Directive 2014/89/EU</p>	<p>Sets down a common approach to the planning of maritime areas for EU countries, by introducing a common timeframe and minimum common requirements.</p>	<p>The LDP must adhere to the articles set out.</p>
<p><b>The Industrial Emissions Directive 2010</b></p> <p>Directive 2010/75/EU on industrial emissions (integrated pollution prevention and control)</p>	<p>Lays down rules on integrated prevention and control of pollution arising from industrial activities. It also lays down rules designed to prevent or, where that is not practicable, to reduce emissions into air, water and land and to prevent the generation of waste, in order to achieve a high level of protection of the environment taken as a whole. Furthermore it sets emission limit values for substances that are harmful to air or water.</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the SPPS.</p> <p>Include SA objective for reducing pollution.</p>
<p><b>The Environmental Noise Directive 2002</b></p> <p>Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise.</p>	<p>Defines a common approach to avoid, prevent and reduce the adverse effects due to the exposure to environmental noise.</p> <p>It also provides a basis for developing European wide measures to deal with noise emitted by road and rail vehicles, infrastructure, aircraft and outdoor, industrial and mobile machinery.</p> <p>Principles of the directive include:</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the SPPS.</p>

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring the environmental problems.</li> <li>• Informing and consulting the public.</li> <li>• Addressing local noise issues.</li> <li>• Developing a long –term EU strategy.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>The Waste Framework Directive 2008</b> Directive 2008/98/EC</p>	<p>Prevention or reduction of waste production and its harmfulness. The recovery of waste by means of recycling, re-use or reclamation. Recovery or disposal of waste without endangering human health and without using processes that could harm the environment.</p> <p>Development of clean technology to process waste and promote recycling.</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the SPSS.</p> <p>Include SA objectives that minimise waste production as well as promote recycling.</p>
<p><b>The Landfill Directive 1999</b> Directive 99/3/EC on landfill of waste.</p>	<p>Prevent or reduce negative effects on the environment from the land filling of waste by introducing stringent technical requirements for waste and landfills.</p> <p>Reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill to 75% of the 1995 level by 2010. Reduce this to 50% in 2013 and 35% by 2020.</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the SPSS.</p>
<p><b>The Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive 1994</b> Directive 91/27/EEC concerning urban waste water treatment.</p>	<p>Harmonise the packaging waste system of Member States. Reduce the environmental impact of packaging waste.</p> <p>By June 2001 at least 50% by weight of packaging waste should have been recovered, at least 25% by weight of the totality of packaging materials contained in packaging waste to be recycled with a minimum of 15% by weight for each packaging material.</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the SPSS.</p> <p>Include SA objectives to minimise the environmental impact of waste and promote recycling.</p>

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
<p><b>The Drinking Water Directive 1998</b></p> <p>Directive 98/83/EC on the quality of water intended for human consumption.</p>	<p>Protect human health from the adverse effects of any contamination of water intended for human consumption by ensuring that it is welcome and clean.</p> <p>Member states must set values for water intended for human consumption.</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the SPSS.</p>
<p><b>The Air Quality Framework Directive 1996</b></p> <p>Directive 96/62EC on ambient air quality assessment and management.</p>	<p>Avoid, prevent and reduce harmful effects of ambient air pollution on human health and the environment.</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the SPSS.</p> <p>Include SA objectives to protect and enhance air quality.</p>
<p><b>Air Quality Directive 2008</b></p> <p>Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe.</p> <p>Directive 2004/107/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 relating to arsenic, cadmium, mercury, nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in ambient air</p>	<p>This Directive sets legally binding limits for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead</li> <li>• Nitrogen Dioxide</li> <li>• Sulphur Dioxide</li> <li>• Benzene</li> <li>• Carbon Monoxide</li> <li>• Arsenic</li> <li>• Cadmium</li> <li>• Nickel</li> <li>• Benzo(a)pyrene</li> <li>• Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons</li> </ul>	<p>The LDP should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the SPSS.</p> <p>Include SA objectives to protect and enhance air quality.</p>

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ozone</li> <li>• Particulate Matter</li> </ul> <p>With the aim of minimising harmful effects on human health, paying particular attention to sensitive populations, and the environment as a whole, of airborne arsenic, cadmium and nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, target values should be set, to be attained as far as possible. Benzo(a)pyrene should be used as a marker for the carcinogenic risk of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in ambient air.</p>	
<p><b>EU Adaptation Strategy 2013</b></p>	<p>Aims to make Europe more climate-resilient. By taking a coherent approach and providing for improved coordination, it will enhance the preparedness and capacity of all governance levels to respond to the impacts of climate change, focusing on 3 key objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting action by Member States</li> <li>• 'Climate-proofing' action at EU level</li> <li>• Better informed decision-making</li> </ul>	<p>The LDP should take account of the Strategy.</p> <p>Include SA objectives to encourage and promote climate change with a view of achieving relevant targets.</p>
<p><b>European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valletta, 1992)</b> Division of 1985 Granada Convention.</p>	<p>Protection of the archaeological heritage, including any physical evidence of the human past that can be investigated archaeologically both on land and underwater.</p> <p>Creation of archaeological reserves and conservation of excavated sites.</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the Convention.</p> <p>Include SA objectives to promote protection, conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, heritage, and settings.</p>
<p><b>Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada, 1985)</b></p>	<p>The main purpose of the Convention is to reinforce and promote policies for the conservation and enhancement of Europe's heritage. It also affirms the need for European solidarity with regard to heritage conservation and is designed to foster practical co-</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the Convention.</p> <p>Include SA objectives to promote protection, conservation and</p>

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
	operation among the Parties. It establishes the principles of "European co-ordination of conservation policies" including consultations regarding the thrust of the policies to be implemented.	enhancement of the historic environment, heritage, and settings.
<p><b>Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society</b> (Faro, 2005)</p>	<p>This Convention is based on the idea that knowledge and use of heritage form part of the citizen's right to participate in cultural life as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The text presents heritage both as a resource for human development, the enhancement of cultural diversity and the promotion of intercultural dialogue, and as part of an economic development model based on the principles of sustainable resource use.</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the Convention.</p>
<p><b>European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage</b> (Valletta, 1992) Division of 1985 Granada Convention.</p>	<p>Protection of the archaeological heritage, including any physical evidence of the human past that can be investigated archaeologically both on land and underwater. Creation of archaeological reserves and conservation of excavated sites.</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the Convention.  Include SA objectives to promote protection, conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, heritage, and settings.</p>
<p><b>The EU Floods Directive 2007</b> Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks.</p>	<p>Requires member states to assess if all water courses and coast lines are at risk from flooding, to map the flood extent and assets and humans at risk in these areas and to take adequate and coordinated measures to reduce this flood risk.</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the flood maps produced as a result of the directive.</p>

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
<b>INTERNATIONAL LEVEL: OTHER</b>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development (2002)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to building a humane, equitable and caring global society aware of the need for human dignity for all.</li> <li>• Renewable Energy and energy efficiency.</li> <li>• Accelerate shift towards sustainable consumption and production.</li> <li>• Greater resource efficiency</li> <li>• New technology for renewable energy.</li> <li>• Increase energy efficiency.</li> </ul>	<p>The LDP should take account of the declaration.</p> <p>Include SA objectives to enhance the natural environment, promote renewable energy and energy efficiency and sustainable use of natural resources.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Aarhus Convention (1998)</b></p>	<p>Established a number of rights of the public with regard to the environment. Local authorities should provide for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The right of everyone to receive environmental information.</li> <li>• The right to participate from an early stage in environmental decision making.</li> <li>• The right to challenge in a court of law public decisions that have been made without respecting the two rights above or environmental law in general.</li> </ul>	<p>The LDP should take account of the convention.</p> <p>Ensure that public are involved and consulted at all relevant stages of SA production.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Our Children and Young People- Our pledge</p>	<p>Sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children.</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the convention.</p>

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
<p><b>World Health Organisation Guidelines for Community Noise</b></p>	<p>Guidelines for community noise based on the consolidation of actual scientific knowledge on the health impacts of community noise and to provide guidance to environmental health authorities and professionals trying to protect people from the harmful effects of noise in non-industrial environments.</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the guidelines.</p>
<p><b>UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</b></p>	<p>The Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. We recognize that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. Contains 17 sustainable development goals which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• End poverty in all its forms everywhere</li> <li>• End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</li> <li>• Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages</li> <li>• Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</li> <li>• Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</li> <li>• Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</li> <li>• Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all</li> <li>• Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</li> </ul>	<p>The LDP should take account of the agenda.</p>



Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation</li> <li>• Reduce inequality within and among countries</li> <li>• Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</li> <li>• Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</li> <li>• Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</li> <li>• Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development</li> <li>• Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss</li> <li>• Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</li> <li>• Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development</li> </ul>	
<p><b>The X'ian Declaration on the Conservation of the Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas</b></p>	<p>Adopted in Xi'an, China by the 15th General Assembly of ICOMOS on 21 October 2005, the declaration aims to promote and ensure the safeguarding and conservation of the world's cultural heritage settings. It's main principles are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge the contribution of setting to the significance of heritage monuments, sites and areas;</li> </ul>	<p>The LDP should take account of the declaration.</p> <p>Include SA objectives to protect, conserve and enhance settings of historic environment and heritage assets.</p>

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand, document and interpret the settings in diverse contexts;</li> <li>• Develop planning tools and practices to conserve and manage settings;</li> <li>• Monitor and manage change affecting settings; and</li> <li>• Work with local, interdisciplinary and international communities for co-operation and awareness in conserving and managing settings</li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001)</b></p>	<p>The UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, adopted in 2001, is intended to enable States to better protect their submerged cultural heritage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main principles</li> <li>• Obligation to Preserve Underwater Cultural Heritage</li> <li>• <i>In Situ</i> Preservation as first option</li> <li>• No Commercial Exploitation</li> <li>• Training and Information Sharing</li> </ul>	<p>The LDP should take account of the Convention together with the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valletta, 1992), with regards to protection off underwater archaeological heritage.</p> <p>Include SA objectives to promote protection, conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, heritage, and settings.</p>

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
<b>REGIONAL LEVEL</b>		
<b>Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035</b>	The strategy aims to take account of the economic ambitions and needs of the region, and put in place spatial planning, transport and housing priorities that will support and enable the aspirations of the region to be met.	The LDP should take into consideration the policies contained within the RDS.
<b>Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)</b>	This publication sets out the Department's regional planning policies for securing the orderly and consistent development of land in Northern Ireland under the reformed two-tier planning system. The provisions of the SPPS must be taken into account in the preparation of Local Development Plans. The core principles are below:	The provisions of the SPPS must be taken into account in the preparation of the Belfast Local Plan
	Improving Health and Wellbeing	The LDP will implement policies to improve health and wellbeing within the plan area. Include SA objectives to improve health and wellbeing of the population.
	Creating and Enhancing Shared Space	The LDP recognises the need to ensure that individuals can live, learn, work and play wherever they choose. Include SA objectives to encourage the creation of an environment that is accessible to all and enhances opportunities within shared communities.
	Supporting Sustainable Economic Growth	The LDP recognises the need to create jobs and promote prosperity.

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
		Include SA objectives to support sustainable economic growth.
	Supporting Good Design and Positive Place Making	The LDP recognises the need for good design to provide better communities and neighbourhoods. Include SA objectives in achieving good design principles.
	Preserving and Improving the Built and Natural Environment	The LDP recognises the importance of preserving and improving the built and natural environment. Include SA objectives to preserve and improve the built and natural environment.
<b>The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011</b>	Formulation and co-ordination of policy securing the orderly and consistent development of land and the planning of the development.	The LDP must be in adherence with the legislation set out by the Planning Act.
<b>Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy</b>	Framework to move forward in response to major threats such as climate change and energy price instability in a way which will encourage integrated action to tackle problems and take advantage of the opportunities they provide.	The LDP should take the Sustainable Development Strategy into consideration, ensuring sustainable development is promoted.
<b>Creating Places: Achieving quality in residential developments 2000</b>	Guide is intended for use in all the design of all proposals for residential development throughout Northern Ireland. Guide will be used as basis for assessing any proposal.	The LDP should take the Creating Places guide into consideration; ensuring good design principles are implemented.

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<b>Living Places: An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland 2014</b>	Aims to establish the key principles behind good place making. It seeks to inform and inspire all those involved in the process of managing (stewardship) and making (design) urban places, with a view to raising standards across Northern Ireland.	The LDP should take the Living Places Guide into consideration; ensuring good design principles are implemented.
<b>Belfast Houses in Multiple Occupation Subject Plan for the Belfast City Council Area 2015</b>	The purpose of the Subject Plan is to inform the general public, statutory, authorities, developers, and other interested bodies of the policy framework that will be used to guide planning decisions in relation to HMOs within Belfast City Council Area over the Plan period.	The LDP will ensure the HMO Subject Plan Strategy is taken into consideration.
<b>Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation in Belfast</b> Planning and Place Best Practice Guide	This guide articulates the view of Belfast City Council on this type of development in the city. This will ensure the supply of student accommodation needed whilst delivering regeneration benefits and avoiding negative impacts on adjacent land uses and established residential communities.	The LDP will ensure best practice guidance is adhered to in relation to student housing.
<b>Northern Ireland Economic Strategy</b>	The Economic Strategy sets out how to grow a prosperous local economy over the short, medium and longer term to 2030.	The LDP should take into consideration the Economic Strategy and implement its own strategies to ensure economic growth.
<b>DETI Innovation Strategy for Northern Ireland (2014-2025)</b>	Strategy for innovation sets out long term actions necessary to make transformation for innovation to play its part in the economic strategy.	The LDP should take into consideration the Innovation Strategy and ensure methods to increase innovation are supported.
<b>Continuing to Connect- Telecoms 2015 to 2017</b>	The strategy document presents how telecommunications can be further advanced in Northern Ireland by Government.	The LDP should take into account the strategy document with the understanding that telecommunications

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
		in the UK is fully privatised, independently regulated and a reserved matter with responsibility primarily resting at Westminster.
<b>Education Reform (NI) Order 1989</b>	Bill to provide for the establishment and functions of the Education and Skills Authority; to make further provisions of education, education services and youth services; and for connected purposes.	The LDP should adhere to regulations set out in the Education Reform Order
<b>Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010</b>	This report contains the results of research carried out by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) to identify small area concentrations of multiple deprivation in Northern Ireland.	The LDP will take into account the identified areas of multiple deprivation within the Plan Area.
<b>Anti-Poverty Strategy 2006</b>	Strategy to tackle poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland.	The LDP should take into consideration the Anti-Poverty Strategy in relation to decreasing poverty.
<b>Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (2013) (PSRNI)</b>	The strategy establishes the objectives and the policies for land use and development appropriate to the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland and which need to be considered on a scale wider than the Individual District Council Area.	The LDP should take into account the strategy for rural areas within the designated Belfast Area.
<b>Rural White Paper Action Plan</b>	Strategy sets out the vision for rural areas and the actions which Departments will take in support of achieving that vision and to help ensure the future sustainability of rural areas.	The LDP should adhere to regulations set out for rural areas within the designated Belfast Area.
<b>Rural Needs Bill</b>	A Bill to impose a duty on public authorities to consider rural needs; and for connected purposes.	The LDP should take into account the strategy for rural areas within the designated Belfast Area.

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<p><b>Thinking Rural: The essential guide to Rural Proofing</b></p>	<p>All government departments have been required to rural proof since 2002. At that time guidance was produced and a training programme was delivered to NICS policy makers. Rural proofing forms part of the suite of impact assessments detailed in the OFMDFM policy makers' toolkit.</p>	<p>The LDP should take the Rural Proofing Guidance set out into consideration, ensuring fair and equitable treatment of rural communities and that policy does not indirectly have a detrimental impact on rural dwellers and rural communities.</p>
<p><b>Rural Homes and People Policy</b></p>	<p>Aims to address rural issues in the immediate future with policy actions under five headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling New Homes</li> <li>• Improving Existing Properties</li> <li>• Building and Serving Communities</li> <li>• Supporting independent Living</li> <li>• Contributing to Rural Development and Regeneration</li> </ul>	<p>The LDP will adhere to policy laid out within rural areas.</p>
<p><b>Sustainable Rural Communities: A Review of the Housing Executive's Rural Housing Policy</b></p>	<p>The review sets out proposals for a revised rural housing policy these are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To plan and enable the provision of affordable homes which meet rural housing needs;</li> <li>• To improve the condition of rural housing stock and reduce fuel poverty;</li> <li>• To provide housing support to vulnerable people in rural areas;</li> <li>• To contribute to the development of safe, cohesive and engaged rural neighbourhoods;</li> <li>• To work in partnership with others to assist in rural development.</li> </ul>	<p>The LDP should take into consideration the review of policy to ensure future objectives are adhered to.</p>

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<p><b>The Agricultural Census in Northern Ireland. Results for 2015</b></p>	<p>Detailed analyses of the results of the Northern Ireland Agricultural Census for June 2015 as well as time series data from 2001-2015.</p>	<p>The LDP will take into account the amount and purpose of agricultural land within Belfast.</p>
<p><b>Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation: A New Framework</b></p>	<p>The Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Framework is a rural initiative led by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) which aims to tackle poverty and social isolation in rural areas through organisations working in partnership to design and implement measures which target the needs of vulnerable people.</p>	<p>The LDP should take into account the measures that apply to rural areas within the council area.</p>
<p><b>Water and Sewerage Sustainable Water: A long term water strategy for Northern Ireland (2015-2040)</b></p>	<p>The Strategy presents a clear framework for action which will facilitate implementation of a range of initiatives aimed at delivering the long-term vision to have a sustainable water sector in Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>The LDP should take into consideration the Water Strategy in relation to the water sector.</p>
<p><b>The Water and Sewerage Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2016</b></p>	<p>The Water and Sewerage Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 amends the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. The Department of Environment (DOE) enforces private and public water supply quality legislation in place of the Department for Regional Development. The DOE may update public and private water supply standards. The DOE will carry out inspections of supplies and may take enforcement action to ensure minimum standards are met.</p>	<p>The LDP should take into consideration amendments made to the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.</p>
<p><b>Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015</b></p>	<p>Plan consists of proposals for the maintenance, management and development of this transport network up to the end of 2015.</p>	<p>The LDP should take into consideration the RSTN TP in relation to transport proposals.</p>



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<b>Regional Transportation Strategy 2002-2012</b>	Strategy identifies strategic transportation investment priorities and considers potential funding sources and affordability of planned initiatives over the next 10 years.	The LDP should take into consideration the RTS in relation to transport proposals
<b>Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future: A New Approach to Regional Transportation.</b>	Sets out the transportation vision to have a modern, sustainable, safe transportation system which benefits society, the economy and the environment and which actively contributes to social inclusion and everyone's quality of life.	The LDP should take into consideration the aims of the Sustainable Transport Future document.
<b>Road Traffic Regulations (NI) Order 1997</b>	Transport NI policy and procedures guide outlining the order particularly in relation to the provision of on-street and off-street parking places, the removal and disposal of vehicles from roads and the misuse of disabled person's badges.	The LDP should take the Road Traffic Regulations Order into consideration when assessing roads and transport.
<b>Northern Ireland's Road Safety Strategy to 2020</b>	Strategy detailing intentions to further improve road safety in Northern Ireland.	The LDP should take the strategy into consideration when assessing roads and transport.
<b>Bicycle Strategy Northern Ireland 2015</b>	Strategy sets out over a 25 year horizon; plan to make Northern Ireland a cycling community.	The LDP should take into consideration the Bicycle Strategy in relation to transport.
<b>Mountain Bike Strategy for NI 2014-2024</b>	The Mountain Bike Strategy 2014 -2024 sets out the framework for the development, management and marketing of mountain bike trails in Northern Ireland.	The LDP should take into consideration the Mountain Bike Strategy to develop and protect mountain bike trails.
<b>Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland: Making Northern Ireland's Outdoors Great: A Strategic Plan for Outdoor</b>	This strategic document sets out the overarching framework for the activities of ORNI for the period 2015 - 2020. It provides focus, setting out the strategic priorities to which ORNI will direct its effort and resources in order to achieve its vision and mission.	The LDP should take into consideration the ORNI's vision and mission set out in the strategy.

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Recreation in Northern Ireland 2015-2020		
Sports Facility Strategy Northern Ireland	Currently being developed to identify sport facility needs across Northern Ireland and more specifically within the Council areas.	The LDP will take the Sports Facility Strategy into account when published.
Sport Matters- The Northern Ireland strategy for sport and physical recreation 2009-2019	Strategy to achieve a vision that is a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport.	The LDP should take into consideration the strategy reflecting the aims and targets set out.
The Play and Leisure Implementation Plan 2006-2016	The plan aims to see a high value placed on play and improved play and leisure facilities for all children and young people in order to support their development, enjoyment and growth	The LDP should take into consideration the Play and Leisure Plan in relation to ensuring adequate play and leisure facilities for children.
The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a statutory framework to enable transposition of the requirements of EC Directives 96/61 on Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (the IPPC Directive) and 96/62 on Ambient Air Quality Assessment and Management;</li> <li>• Makes additional provision for the prevention and control of environmental pollution; and</li> <li>• Introduces measures to allow for the better protection and management of Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs)</li> </ul>	The LDP will adhere to regulations set out in the order.
Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (NI) 2012	The regulations apply the EIA Directive (Directive 85/337/EEC) to the planning process in Northern Ireland. EIA Directive requires an assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment before development consent is granted.	The LDP must adhere to the regulations set out.

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<b>UK National Ecosystem Assessment Northern Ireland 2011</b>	This report is the first independent assessment of the services provided by Northern Ireland's environment. Part of the UK National Ecosystem Assessment, it has been prepared by over 70 scientists. It provides an analysis of the current state of our ecosystems, looks at changes over time, examines the factors driving current changes and provides recommendations on how Northern Ireland's land and sea can be managed to ensure delivery of a wide range of benefits to enhance wellbeing.	The LDP should take into account the key recommendations made within the report.
<b>The Wildlife and Natural Environment (NI) Act 2011</b>	To make provision about biodiversity. Abolished game licenses and game dealers' licenses; to prohibit hare coursing events. Amend Wildlife (NI) Order 1985. Amend Game Preservation Act (Northern Ireland) 1928.	The LDP should take into consideration The Wildlife and Natural Environment Act 2011 in the protection of biodiversity.
<b>Northern Ireland Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)</b>	The Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group has prepared BAPs for 37 habitats in the province out of the total list of 65 UK BAP habitats.	The LDP should take into consideration the conservation of biodiversity when implementing statutory duties.
<b>Biodiversity Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020</b>	Sets out the strategy for Northern Ireland to meet its international obligations and local targets to protect biodiversity and ensure that the environment can continue to support people and the economy.	The LDP must take into account the international obligations and targets to protect biodiversity.
<b>Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (NI) Order 1985</b>	The principle nature conservation legislation in Northern Ireland relating to nature reserves, Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs), wildlife protection and the implementation of the Habitats Directive.	The LDP must adhere to the regulations set out.
<b>Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013</b>	The Act provides the framework for Northern Ireland seas based on a system of marine planning that will balance conservation, energy and resources needs; improved management for marine nature	The LDP should adhere to regulations set out in relation to marine plans.

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
	conservation; and the streamlining of marine licensing for some electricity projects.	
<b>UK Marine Policy Statement</b>	Sets out the framework for preparing Marine Plans and taking decisions affecting the marine environment.	The LDP must take into account the considerations set out due to the potential impacts on the marine area.
<b>Marine Plan for Northern Ireland (Draft 2017)</b>	Sets out the framework for the management of the Northern Ireland marine area.	Once the draft Marine Plan has been adopted the LDP must have regard to the policies set out due to the potential impacts on the marine area.
<b>Marine Plan for Northern Ireland (Draft 2016)</b>	Ensure future development of Northern Ireland Seas follows the environmentally sensitive ecosystem based approach and promotes a stable, sustainable and biologically diverse future for our local seas.	The LDP should take into consideration the Marine Plan in the promotion and protection of local seas.
<b>Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009)</b>	The act provides a management system for the marine area, including marine planning system; changes to marine licensing and marine fisheries. It also provides the designation of conservation zones.	The LDP must adhere to the regulations set out.
<b>The Protection of Wrecks Act 1973</b>	Provides protection for designated shipwrecks. Section 1 provides for wrecks to be designated due to historical, archaeological or artistic value. Section 2 provides for designation of dangerous sites.	The LDP must adhere to the regulations set out.
<b>Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination (2004)</b>	Technical framework for applying a risk management process when dealing with land affected by contamination.	The LDP will consider the framework for dealing with contaminated land.

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<b>Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007</b>	The regulations are primarily concerned with the quality of water supplied in Northern Ireland for drinking, washing cooking and food preparation, and with arrangements for the publication of information about water quality.	The LDP should take into consideration the water quality within the area.
<b>Drinking Water Quality Annual Report 2015</b>	Annual review on the quality of drinking water in Northern Ireland:	The LDP should take into consideration the quality of drinking water within Belfast.
<b>The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland: Volume 1</b>	The air quality strategy sets out air quality objectives and policy options to further improve air quality in the UK.	The LDP should take into consideration the strategy to further improve air quality in Belfast.
<b>Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy</b>	Strategy sets out the policy framework for the management of waste in Northern Ireland, and contains actions and targets to meet EU Directive requirements and the Department's Programme for Government commitments.	The LDP should take into consideration the Waste Management Strategy ensuring targets are met.
<b>The Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006</b>	The Department of the Environment in a Department designated for the purposes of section 2 of the European Communities Act 1972 in relation to measures relating to the assessment, management and control of environmental noise. The Department makes these Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred by that section.	The LDP should adhere to the regulations set out.
<b>Noise Policy Statement for Northern Ireland 2014</b>	In line with the Department of the Environment's vision three aims have been produced, these are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life;</li> </ul>	The LDP should take into consideration the aims of the Noise Policy Statement.

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mitigate and minimise adverse impacts on health and quality of life; and</li> <li>• Where possible, contribute to the improvement of health and quality of life.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Noise Complaint Statistics for Northern Ireland 2013-2014</b></p>	<p>The number of noise complaints received each year by district councils across Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>The LDP will make use of the statistics to be informed of the extent of noise pollution within Belfast.</p>
<p><b>Noise Action Plans</b></p>	<p>Under the European Directive for Assessment and management of Environmental Noise 2002/40/EC the Minister for the Environment adopted the Noise Action Plans for roads and railways.</p>	<p>The LDP will take into account Candidate Noise Management Areas proposed by subsequent Noise Action Plans.</p>
<p><b>Roads Noise Action Plan 2013-2018</b></p>	<p>Deals with noise from both major roads across Northern Ireland and all roads within agglomerations of greater than 100,000 inhabitants.</p>	<p>The LDP will take into account Candidate Noise Management Areas proposed by the Noise Action Plan.</p>
<p><b>The Railways Noise Action Plan 2013-2018</b></p>	<p>Actions to be taken to reduce noise originating from railways within Northern Ireland by Translink.</p>	<p>The LDP will take into account Candidate Noise Management Areas proposed by the Noise Action Plan.</p>
<p><b>Northern Ireland Greenhouse Gas Inventory 1990-2014 statistical bulletin</b></p>	<p>Contains data detailing greenhouse gas emissions in Northern Ireland from 1990 to the latest reporting year.</p>	<p>The LDP will take into account levels of greenhouse gases within Northern Ireland.</p>

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<p><b>Radon in Northern Ireland: Indicative Atlas (2015)</b></p>	<p>A joint mapping method based on the results of radon measurements and geological information was used to estimate radon 'Affected Area' potential in Northern Ireland. The method allows variation of radon potential both between and within geological units and is based on measurements of radon in more than 23,000 homes.</p>	<p>The LDP will take into account any affected areas within the Belfast City Council Area.</p>
<p><b>Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (Northern Ireland) 2011</b></p>	<p>Delivers the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) for Northern Ireland as required by Article 4 of the EU Floods Directive (2007/60EC). Assesses the potential adverse consequences of future floods on human health, economic activity, cultural heritage and the environment taking into account long term developments such as climate change.</p>	<p>The LDP will take into account the potential impacts of future flooding in Belfast.</p>
<p><b>UK Climate Change Act 2008</b></p>	<p>Established a framework to develop an economically credible emissions reduction path. Provided for the introduction of carbon budgets and the 2050 target of reducing UK emissions by at least 80% in 2050 from 1990 levels, with a requirement to produce an Adaptation Programme</p>	<p>The LDP will take into account the requirements and target set to assist in achieving it.</p>
<p><b>Cross Departmental Working Group on Climate Change: annual report 2016</b></p>	<p>This is the fifth, and final, annual progress report to be submitted by the Cross Departmental Working Group on Climate Change (CDWGCC) to the Executive during the current Assembly mandate. The report looks back on what has been achieved for both climate change mitigation and adaptation during this Assembly period as well as detailing progress made towards the Programme for Government (PFG) target of continuing to work towards a greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction of at least 35% by 2025 based on 1990 levels.</p>	<p>The LDP will take into account the progress made on targets.</p>

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<b>UK Climate Change Projections</b>	<p>The UK Climate Change Projections provide three types of climate information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observed Climate Data</li> <li>• Climate Change Projections</li> <li>• Marine and Coastal Projections</li> </ul>	<p>The LDP will take into account current climate change projections for the duration of the plan.</p>
<b>Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) for Northern Ireland 2017</b>	<p>The CCRA is required under section 56 of the Climate Change Act 2008 and presents a national assessment for the potential risks (and opportunities) from climate change facing Northern Ireland for the period to 2100.</p>	<p>The LDP will take into account the potential future climate change risks in Belfast.</p>
<b>Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaption Programme 2014</b>	<p>The Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaption Programme is required by section 60 of the UK Climate Change Act 2008. The Adaptation Programme contains the Government's response to the risks and opportunities identified in the Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) for Northern Ireland, which was produced in January 2012, as part of the overall UK CCRA.</p>	<p>The LDP will take into account the strategic objectives in relation to climate change.</p>
<b>NIEA Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG): Wind Energy Development in Northern Irelands Landscapes (2010)</b>	<p>In conjunction with PPS18: Renewable Energy, the SPG provides guidance on the visual and landscape impact of wind energy development. This guidance is based on an assessment of the overall sensitivity of wind energy development in each of the 130 LCAs.</p>	<p>The LDP will take into account the sensitivity assessment of the LCAs within the Plan Area.</p>
<b>Energy: A Strategic Framework for Northern Ireland 2010</b>	<p>The Energy Framework flags the direction for Northern Ireland energy policy over the next ten years, concentrates on the key areas of electricity, natural gas, and renewable energy sources.</p>	<p>The LDP should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the SPPS.</p>



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		Include SA objective relating to the energy performance/efficiency
<b>Sustainable Energy Action Plan 2012-2015</b>	The Action Plan outlines the various initiatives being undertaken by the Northern Ireland Executive and includes a statement of leadership from the Executive, demonstrating a united and long-lasting commitment to sustainable energy.	The LDP should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the SPPS.  Include SA objective relating to the energy performance/efficiency.
<b>The Planning (Listed Buildings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015</b>	Regulations for applications relating to listed buildings and notice of the listing of a building.	The LDP should adhere to the regulations set out.
<b>Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (Northern Ireland) Order 1995</b>	The order provides for the protection of scheduled historic monuments by the introduction of scheduled monument consent procedures, obliging persons to seek the consent of the Department of the Environment for any works which might affect a scheduled monument.	The LDP will be cognisant of the legislation in designating potential areas for development.
<b>Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (Northern Ireland) Order 1995</b>	Provides the statutory remit for NIEA to acquire historic monuments to secure their protection and manage them for the benefit of present and future generations, by providing public access.	The LDP will take into account designated historic monuments.
<b>The Protection of Military Remains Act 1986</b>	Provides protection for the wreckage of military aircraft and designated military vessels. The Act provides for two types of protection: <i>protected places</i> and <i>controlled sites</i> .	The LDP must adhere to the regulations set out.

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<b>The Planning (Control of advertisements) Regulation (NI) 2015</b>	Provision to restrict or regulate the display of advertisements.	The LDP must adhere to the regulations set out.

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<b>LOCAL LEVEL</b>		
<b>Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015</b>	BMAP 2015, the statutory LDP for the Belfast metropolitan area was formally adopted in 2014, however the process of adoption was declared unlawful on 18 May 2017.	The draft plan in its most advanced form remains a significant material consideration in planning decisions, and thus is a key consideration in the development of the LDP.
<b>Belfast City Council Social Clause Framework</b>	The framework aims to utilise social clauses to increase the economic social, and environmental benefit of its procurement spend.	The LDP should take into consideration the use of social clauses.
<b>Belfast Integrated Economic Strategy 2015 - 2020</b>	The strategy sets out the key strategic aspirations and priorities for Belfast City Council, Invest NI and its partners in respect of the economic growth and prosperity of the city council area.	The LDP should take into consideration the Economic Strategy.
<b>Belfast Agenda</b>	The community plan for Belfast. Joint vision for Belfast 2035, created in partnership with key city partners, residents and community organisations. The plan will set out medium and long term goals for social, economic and environmental improvements for Belfast over the next 15 years.	The LDP should take into consideration the Community Plan set out by the Belfast Agenda
<b>Belfast: Integrated Tourism Strategy 2015-2020</b>	Aim of the strategy is to achieve the ambition and aspiration to make Belfast a world class, must visit, city destination.	The LDP should take in to consideration the tourism strategy ensuring the promotion of Belfast as a tourist destination.
<b>Belfast City Centre Regeneration &amp; Investment Strategy</b>	Strategy to ensure maximum economic and social impact by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the employment population;</li> <li>• Increasing the residential population;</li> </ul>	The LDP should take into consideration the Regeneration and Investment Strategy by promoting the underlying principles.

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing the retail offer;</li> <li>• Maximising the tourism opportunity;</li> <li>• Creating a regional learning and innovation centre;</li> <li>• Creating a green, walkable, cyclable centre;</li> <li>• Connect to the city around, and;</li> <li>• Shared space and social impact.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Belfast City Council Corporate Plan 2016-2017: Driving Growth, Improving Lives</b></p>	<p>Sets out the council's commitment to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serve and represent citizens and communities and to ensure the provision of the best possible, value for money services for local people, communities and businesses;</li> <li>• Provide and grow strong, fair and trusted leadership for the city to drive growth and provide opportunities for all citizens and;</li> <li>• Work with those who want to improve the competitiveness of the city and to improve life for people and communities.</li> </ul>	<p>The LDP should take into consideration the Corporate Plan to develop Belfast's potential.</p>
<p><b>The Draft Cultural Framework for Belfast Action Plan (2016-2020)</b></p>	<p>Vision for 2020 that "everyone in Belfast experiences and is inspired by our city's diverse and distinctive culture and arts. Arts and heritage are valued for enriching quality of life and creating wealth, and the city's culture and creativity is renowned throughout the world."</p>	<p>The LDP should take into consideration the Cultural Framework ensuring culture is maintained and enhanced.</p>
<p><b>Linen Quarter Masterplan</b></p>	<p>The plan expands on the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Investment Strategy, providing detailed analysis of the Linen Quarter, establishing its qualities and character and setting out a framework for how the streets, spaces and buildings could be re-</p>	<p>The LDP should take into consideration the Linen Quarter Masterplan, to influence investment in new business.</p>

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
	imagined, and combined to enhance the wider city centre and Belfast as a whole.	
<b>Belfast City Corporation- High Buildings Policy 1968</b>	<p>The document outlined a concern at that time, expressed within the document, that high buildings would destroy the character of areas, streets and spaces, or would block historic views. It stated that high buildings should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not mar views of hills / views into city (from Lough, motorway, to Cathedral from Shankill), views from the city (city centre streets), views within the city (between Cathedral and Shankill / Castle Place to Quay);</li> <li>• Not dominate public open space;</li> <li>• Relate to other high buildings (Harbour, City Centre, University) / buildings of historic safeguard amenities (daylight, sunlight) of adjoining sites; and</li> <li>• Relate to transportation system.</li> </ul>	<p>The LDP will take the policy into consideration and update accordingly.</p>
<b>Belfast City Centre- Urban Design &amp; Development Strategy (LDR International- 1993)</b>	<p>Urban Design report highlighted a number of problems and contained a framework for Environmental improvements/ hierarchy of streetscapes, open spaces and gateways.</p>	<p>The LDP should take into consideration the Urban Design and Development Strategy ensuring future urban design is sustainable and of high quality.</p>
<b>Belfast City Council Local Biodiversity Action Plan</b>	<p>Plan to encourage relevant partners to work together and deliver a programme of continuing action for biodiversity at a local level.</p>	<p>The LDP should take into consideration the Biodiversity Plan to ensure action for biodiversity continues.</p>
<b>Belfast City Council's Your City, Your Space Strategy 2005-2020</b>	<p>Sets out the vision of how Belfast's open spaces will develop between 2005 and 2020.</p>	<p>The LDP should take into consideration open space and parks to continue to promote investment.</p>

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
<b>Leisure Transformation Programme 2012-2022</b>	Programme sets out a £105 million investment in Belfast's leisure provision highlighting priority sites for redevelopment.	The LDP should take into consideration the Leisure Transformation Programme and Belfast's Leisure provision.
<b>Belfast City Council Physical Activity &amp; Sports Development Strategy</b>	The strategy builds on contributions made within Sport Belfast but also to find new and innovative ways to ensure a more systematic and comprehensive approach to the development of opportunities for sport and physical activity.	The LDP should take into account the Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy in the development of leisure facilities.
<b>Belfast City Council Growing Communities Strategy 2012-2022</b>	The strategy aims to ensure that all parts of the community of Belfast have the opportunity to participate in, and experience the benefits of urban cultivation.	The LDP should take into consideration the strategy in urban cultivation and community growing.
<b>Belfast City Council Renewing the Routes Programme</b>	Since 2004 Belfast City Council have invested £7,510,000 in approximately 21 miles of the city- making improvements to shopping areas and green spaces, developing gateways, introducing public art and celebrating diverse heritage.	The LDP should be aware of future projects of the programme.
<b>Managing Storm water - a strategy for promoting the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) within Northern Ireland</b>	Comprises a strategy for promoting the use of SuDS as the preferred approach for managing the storm water discharges which arise from the development of land.	The LDP should take into consideration the Storm water Strategy by the promotion of SuDS.
<b>Arc 21- Waste Management Plan</b>	Plan provides a framework for waste management provision and a regional network of facilities for all controlled wastes within the arc21 region.	The LDP should take into consideration the Waste Management Plan ensuring proposed arrangements are met and a waste is dealt with in a sustainable manner.

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
<b>Towards Zero Waste Action Plan 2012-2015</b>	Plan established a series of tasks aimed at improving Belfast's recycling rate.	The LDP should take into consideration the TZWAP and ensure long term recycling targets are met.
<b>Draft Programme for Government 2016-2021</b>	Contains 14 strategic outcomes which, taken together, set a clear direction of travel and enable continuous improvement on the essential components of social wellbeing.	The LDP will take into account the Executive's target of reducing greenhouse gases by at least 35% on 1990 levels by 2025.
<b>The George Best Belfast City Airport (GBBCA) Noise Action Plan 2013 - 2018</b>	Summary of aircraft noise in the Belfast Agglomeration, measures already in place at GBBCA to prevent and reduce aircraft noise and actions proposed over the next five years to continue to do so.	The LDP will take into account the proposed Candidate Noise Management Areas.
<b>2014 Air Quality Progress Report for Belfast City Council</b>	Review of air quality monitoring data across the city in order to identify locations where new or existing exceedances of Air Quality Strategy objectives and European Commission limit values are occurring.	The LDP will take into account the data presented in the report.
<b>Belfast City Council Air Quality Action Plan 2015-2020</b>	Aim is to confirm measures that will be implemented throughout the city to improve air quality for the citizens of Belfast.	The LDP will take into account the measures proposed to improve air quality in Belfast.
<b>Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance</b> LAQM. PGNI(03) DOE	Designed to help relevant authorities with their local air quality management duties under Part III of the Environment (NI) Order 2002. Represents major aspects of policy in regards to ambient air quality management, and includes policy guidelines on air quality reviews and assessments, air quality action planning, transport planning and land use planning.	The LDP should take account of the guidance in relation to air quality management in Belfast.

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
<b>Air Quality &amp; Land Use Planning - A Belfast Specific Guidance Note for Planners &amp; Air Quality Consultants 2009</b>	Guidance supports developers and consultants involved in developments in Belfast, to give due consideration to air quality measures and to submit appropriate supporting information with their planning applications.	The LDP will take the guidance into account with proposed developments and air quality measures.
<b>Detailed Assessment for Belfast City Council 2010</b>	Report presented within compliance of the Environment Order (NI) 2002 which places responsibility on councils to periodically review and assess air quality within their boundaries.	The LDP will take subsequent reviews on air quality into account.
<b>North Eastern River Basin Management Plan 2009 and 2015</b>	Identifies where the water environment is in a good or excellent condition and sets out objectives for the improvement or the prevention of the deterioration of individual river, lake, marine and groundwater for the next three river basin cycles to 2015, 2021 and 2027.	The LDP will take into account the condition of water bodies within its area.
<b>North Eastern Flood Risk Management Plan</b>	Requirement of the Floods Directive (2007/60/EC) aimed at reducing the potential adverse consequences of significant floods on human health, economic activity, cultural heritage and the environment.	The LDP will take into account areas susceptible to flooding and measures to prevent this.
<b>Lagan Valley Regional Park Strategy 2013</b>	Framework of work for the next 10 years.	The LDP will take into account the aims and vision of the Strategy.
<b>Conservation Management Plan for HMS Caroline</b>	Sets out the heritage value of significance and identifies policies to be applied to protect the asset.	The LDP will take into account the contents of the plan.



Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements	Implications for the LDP & SA
<b>Conservation Management Plan for Alexandra Dock</b>	Sets out the heritage value of significance and identifies policies to be applied to protect the asset.	The LDP will take into account the contents of the plan.

Plan, Policy or Programme	Implications for the LDP & SA
<p><b>PLANNING POLICY STATEMENTS (PPS)</b></p>	<p>The LDP will take into consideration the policy provisions of those documents retained under the transitional arrangements.</p> <p>PPS policies that have not been consolidated into the SPPS will cease to be a material consideration in assessing planning applications in the Belfast District once the Council adopts the new LDP.</p> <p>It is therefore necessary that any existing PPS policies the Council wish to continue to apply once the LDP is in place will need to be replaced through the inclusion of relevant, locally tailored policies within the new plan.</p>

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements
<p><b>PPS 2: Natural Heritage</b> 2013</p>	<p>The Department's planning policies for the conservation, protection and enhancement of our natural heritage.</p>
<p><b>PPS 3: Access, Movement &amp; Parking</b> 2005 <b>PPS 3 (Clarification): Access, Movement &amp; Parking</b> 2006</p>	<p>The Department's planning policies for vehicular and pedestrian access, transport assessment, the protection of transport routes and parking.</p>
<p><b>PPS 4: Planning &amp; Economic Development</b> 2010</p>	<p>The Department's planning policies for economic development uses and indicates how growth associated with such uses can be accommodated and promoted in development plans.</p> <p>It seeks to facilitate and accommodate economic growth in ways compatible with social and environmental objectives and sustainable development.</p>

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements
<p><b>PPS 6: Planning, Archaeology &amp; Built Heritage</b> 1999</p>	<p>The Department's planning policies for the protection and conservation of archaeological remains and features of the built heritage.</p> <p>It embodies the Government's commitment to sustainable development and environmental stewardship.</p>
<p><b>PPS 6 (Addendum): Areas of Townscape Character</b> 2005</p>	<p>Addendum to PPS 6. Provides additional planning policies relating specifically to Areas of Townscape Character, for demolition of buildings, new development and the control of advertisements.</p> <p>It embodies the Government's commitment to sustainable development and environmental stewardship.</p>
<p><b>PPS 7: Quality Residential Environments</b> 2001</p>	<p>The Department's planning policies for achieving quality in new residential development and advises on the treatment of this issue in development plans.</p> <p>It embodies the Government's commitment to sustainable development and the Quality Initiative.</p>
<p><b>PPS 7 (Addendum): Residential Extensions</b> 2008</p>	<p>Addendum to PPS 7. Sets out the Department's planning policy for achieving quality in relation to proposals for residential extensions and alterations.</p> <p>It also provides guidance which is intended to provide advice to homeowners and to assist the Department in the determination of proposals. As with PPS7 it embodies the Government's commitment to sustainable development and the Quality Initiative.</p>
<p><b>PPS 7 (Addendum): Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas</b> 2010</p>	<p>Second addendum to PPS 7. Provides additional planning policy provisions on the protection of local character, environmental quality and residential amenity within established residential areas, villages, and smaller settlements.</p> <p>As with PPS7 it embodies the Government's commitment to sustainable development and the Quality Initiative.</p>
<p><b>PPS 8: Open Space, Sport &amp; Outdoor Recreation</b></p>	<p>The Department's planning policies for the protection of open space, in association with residential development and the use of land for sport and outdoor recreation, and advises on the treatment of these issues in development plans.</p>

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements
DOE 2004	
<p><b>PPS 10: Telecommunications</b> 2002</p>	<p>The Department's planning policies for telecommunications development.</p>
<p><b>PPS 11: Planning &amp; Waste Management</b> 2002</p>	<p>The Department's planning policies for the development of waste management facilities.</p>
<p><b>PPS 12: Housing in Settlements</b> 2005</p>	<p>Prepared to assist in the implementation of the Regional Development Strategy to guide the future pattern on housing by managing future housing growth and distribution, support urban renaissance and achieve balanced communities.</p>
<p><b>PPS 12: Policy HS3 (amended) 'Travellers accommodation'</b> 2013</p>	<p>Amendment to PPS 12. Provides policy on serviced sites for travellers outside settlements.</p>
<p><b>PPS 13: Transportation &amp; Land Use</b> 2005</p>	<p>Prepared to assist in the implementation of the Regional Development Strategy to guide the integration of transportation and land use.</p>
<p><b>PPS 15: Planning Policy &amp; Flood Risk</b> 2006</p>	<p>The Department's planning policies to minimise and manage flood risk to people, property and the environment.</p>

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements
<p><b>PPS 16: Tourism</b> 2013</p>	<p>The Department's planning policies for tourism development and also for the safeguarding of tourism assets. It seeks to manage the provision of sustainable and high quality tourism developments in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment.</p> <p>It embodies the Government's commitment to sustainable development and to the conservation of biodiversity.</p>
<p><b>PPS 17: Control of Outdoor Advertisements</b> 2006</p>	<p>The Department's planning policy and guidance for the display of outdoor advertisements.</p>
<p><b>PPS 18: Renewable Energy</b> 2009</p>	<p>The Department's planning policies for development that generates energy from renewable resources.</p>
<p><b>PPS 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside (Relevant Provisions)</b> 2010</p>	<p>The Department's planning policies for development in the countryside.</p>
<p><b>PPS 23: Enabling Development for the Conservation of Significant Places</b> 2014</p>	<p>The Department's planning policies for assessing proposals for enabling development.</p>

Plan, Policy or Programme	Implications for the LDP & SA
<b>CURRENT AREA PLANS</b>	The LDP will consider existing planning designations and policy contained within the current development plan that applies to Belfast as well as the current development plans of neighbouring districts.

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements
<b>Antrim Area Plan 1984 – 2001</b>	Policy provision for Antrim District Council
<b>Armagh Area Plan 2004</b>	Policy provision for Armagh District Council
<b>Ards and Down Area Plan 2015</b>	Policy provision for Ards Borough and Down District Council Areas
<b>Ballymena Area Plan 1986 - 2001</b>	Policy provision for Ballymena Borough Council
<b>Ballymoney Town Centre Local Plan 1991-2002</b>	Policy provision for Ballymoney Town Centre
<b>Banbridge, Newry &amp; Mourne Area Plan 2015</b>	Policy provision for Banbridge and Newry and Mourne District Councils
<b>Cookstown Area Plan 2010</b>	Policy provision for Cookstown District Council
<b>Craigavon Area Plan 2010</b>	Policy provision for Craigavon District Council
<b>Craigavon Town Centres &amp; Retail Designation Plan 2010</b>	Additional to the Craigavon Area Plan 2010, contains policy provision for the 3 town centres of Portadown, Craigavon and Lurgan
<b>Derry Area Plan 2011</b>	Policy provision for Derry City Council
<b>Dungannon &amp; South Tyrone Area Plan 2010</b>	Policy provision for Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council
<b>Fermanagh Area Plan 2007</b>	Policy provision for Fermanagh District Council Area

<b>Plan, Policy or Programme</b>	<b>Objectives or Requirements</b>
<b>Larne Area Plan 2010</b>	Policy provision for Larne Borough Council
<b>Lisburn Area Plan 2001</b>	Policy provision for Lisburn City Council
<b>Magherafelt Area Plan 2015</b>	Policy provision for Magherafelt District Council
<b>Northern Area Plan 2016</b>	Policy provision for the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
<b>Strabane Area Plan 1986-2001</b>	Policy provision for Strabane District Council

Plan, Policy or Programme	Implications for the LDP & SA
<b>FORTHCOMING LDP's</b>	<p>Belfast City Council neighbours 3 other councils.</p> <p>The LDP will take account of the policies and designations contained within these LDP's.</p>

Plan, Policy or Programme	Objectives or Requirements
<b>North Down &amp; Ards LDP</b>	<p>Under the Planning Act 2011 each of the 11 councils has been given the powers to set local planning policy through the preparation of LDP's.</p> <p>These will replace the current adopted development plans, allowing each council to set its own direction of land use and development policies.</p>
<b>Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh LDP</b>	
<b>Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey LDP</b>	

Plan, Policy or Programme	Implications for the LDP & SA
<b>FORTHCOMING MASTERPLANS</b>	<p>The LDP will seek to support development within development opportunity areas, for which mast plans, urban design and landscape frameworks, and developers' briefs shall be required to demonstrate a comprehensive approach to the planning and regeneration of the opportunity area and consistency with LDP objectives and policies. The council will take account of these development opportunity areas throughout the plan-making process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater Clarendon, City Quays and Sailortown</li> <li>• Inner North West</li> <li>• North East Quarter</li> <li>• Oxford Street and East Bank</li> <li>• Transport Hub and South Centre Linen Quarter.</li> </ul>



## APPENDIX 5

### BASELINE INFORMATION FOR BELFAST

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The collection of baseline information is necessary to meet the requirements of Schedule 2 (2) and (3) of the EAPP (NI) Regulations. The requirements of the SA and SEA are similar. The evidence collection for the SA is wider as it considers not just the environmental information that is required specifically for the SEA but also the social and economic influences that may have potential impacts upon sustainability as a result of the plan adoption and implementation.
- 1.2 The baseline information should enable a council to:
- Determine the current state of the social, economic and physical environment;
  - Identify trends to indicate whether the situation is better or worse or how far it is from reaching any established thresholds or targets;
  - Identify particularly sensitive or important elements of the social, economic and physical environment which are likely to be affected e.g. endangered species, vulnerable groups;
  - Identify any problems and/or issues and whether these are likely to be reversible, irreversible, temporary or permanent;
  - Determine how difficult it would be to offset or remedy any damage;
  - Determine if there have been significant cumulative or synergistic effects over time or if any such effects would be expected in the future.
- 1.3 The information discussed below reflects data collected up to and including 2018, however the collection of baseline information will go on indefinitely and will be updated on an ongoing basis. The information is organised under the following broad themes:

Section	Baseline
A	Social
B	Economic
C	Environmental
D	Cultural & Built Heritage
E	Material Assets
F	Brexit

1.4 It is noted there has been some limitations in gathering evidence specific to Belfast particularly in light of the recent Review of Public Administration (RPA). Other evidence only provided trends on NI basis. The information gathered was the best available data at the time of collection.

1.5 **Baseline structure**

A SOCIAL BASELINE	
A.1	Population & human health
A.2	Age structure
A.3	Life expectancy
A.4	Population projections
A.5	Housing
A.6	Housing Needs Assessment & Housing Market Analysis
A.7	Social inclusion & deprivation
A.8	Disability & health
A.9	Human health
A.10	Education, skills & training
A.11	Crime
A.12	Levels of segregation
A.13	Culture, leisure & recreation

B ECONOMIC BASELINE	
B.1	Employment
B.2	Skills & employability issues
B.3	Qualifications of the resident population
B.4	Business sectors in Belfast

<b>B.5</b>	Self-employment
<b>B.6</b>	Earnings
<b>B.7</b>	Employment outlook
<b>B.8</b>	Reliance on skilled commuters
<b>B.9</b>	Foreign direct investment
<b>B.10</b>	Key employment areas
<b>B.11</b>	Belfast Harbour
<b>B.12</b>	Belfast City Centre
<b>B.13</b>	Giant's Park
<b>B.14</b>	Tourism
<b>B.15</b>	Transport
<b>B.16</b>	Digital infrastructure
<b>B.17</b>	Direct fibre connectivity
<b>B.18</b>	Broadband
<b>B.19</b>	Mobile
<b>B.20</b>	Super-Connected Belfast Programme

<b>C ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE</b>	
<b>C.1</b>	Biodiversity, flora & fauna
<b>C.2</b>	International
<b>C.3</b>	Belfast Lough SPA
<b>C.4</b>	Belfast Lough Open Water SPA
<b>C.5</b>	National
<b>C.6</b>	Local
<b>C.7</b>	Trees & woodland
<b>C.8</b>	Air quality
<b>C.9</b>	Water
<b>C.10</b>	Water infrastructure: water supply
<b>C.11</b>	Water infrastructure: wastewater
<b>C.12</b>	Soil
<b>C.13</b>	Agriculture
<b>C.14</b>	Areas of Natural Constraint
<b>C.15</b>	Contaminated land
<b>C.16</b>	Current contaminated land regime
<b>C.17</b>	Development within the urban footprint

<b>D CULTURAL &amp; BUILT HERITAGE BASELINE</b>	
<b>D.1</b>	State Care sites
<b>D.2</b>	Scheduled monuments
<b>D.3</b>	Unscheduled monuments
<b>D.4</b>	Undesignated heritage assets including local listings
<b>D.5</b>	Listed buildings
<b>D.6</b>	Built heritage at risk
<b>D.7</b>	Conservation areas
<b>D.8</b>	Areas of Townscape Character
<b>D.9</b>	Areas of Significant Archaeological Interest
<b>D.10</b>	Areas of Archaeological Potential
<b>D.11</b>	Historic parks, gardens & demesnes
<b>D.12</b>	Defence heritage
<b>D.13</b>	Industrial heritage
<b>D.14</b>	Shipwrecks
<b>D.15</b>	Landscape
<b>D.16</b>	Northern Ireland Regional Landscape Character Assessment
<b>D.17</b>	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<b>D.18</b>	Countryside recreation
<b>D.19</b>	Green Belt
<b>D.20</b>	Seascape

<b>E MATERIAL ASSETS BASELINE</b>	
<b>E.1</b>	Waste & recycling
<b>E.2</b>	Minerals
<b>E.3</b>	Climate change, energy consumption & energy efficiency
<b>E.4</b>	Energy consumption
<b>E.5</b>	Climate change
<b>E.6</b>	Climate change projections

<b>F BREXIT BASELINE</b>	
<b>F.1</b>	Referendum impact
<b>F.2</b>	Environmental implications

## A SOCIAL BASELINE

### A.1 Population and human health

- 1.1 In April 2015, the Belfast City Council Area boundary expanded to incorporate areas that were formally parts of Lisburn City Council, Castlereagh Borough Council and North Down Borough Council (see Image 1 below). The new areas include the localities of Gilnahirk, Tullycarnet, Braniel, Castlereagh, Merok, Cregagh, Wynchurch, Glencreagh (formerly in Castlereagh Borough Council), Belvoir, Collin Glen, Poleglass, Lagmore, Twinbrook, Kilwee and Dunmurry, (formerly in Lisburn Council Area) and a small section from North Down Council.



Image 1: Belfast Local Government District



Image 2: Northern Ireland Key Infrastructure

- 1.2 In 2014, the Belfast City Council area had a total population of roughly 283,166. By 2015, this was estimated to have risen to 338,907; which is approximately 18 percent of the Northern Ireland population and an increase of more than 53,000. This was a result of the city boundary expansion in April 2015, which saw Belfast take in additional residents from Castlereagh Borough Council, Lisburn City Council, and a small section from North Down Council. The most recent 2017 figures show a population of 340,220 residents.

**A.2 Age structure**

2.1 On Census day 2011, the median age of those living in Belfast in 2011 was 35 years, which is lower than the Northern Ireland average (37 years) (BCC City Profile 2015). NISRA estimate that in 2014, 19.7% of the Belfast population were children aged 0-15 years, lower than the Northern Ireland average of 20.9%. Older persons (i.e. 65 years and over) made up 14.6% of the Belfast population, again lower than the Northern Ireland average of 15.5%.

District	All persons	0-14 years	15-29 years	30-44 years	45-59 years	60-74 years	Persons 75+ years
Northern Ireland	1,862,137	365,605 (19.6%)	361,163 (19.4%)	363,545 (19.5%)	377,149 (20.3%)	262,979 (14.1%)	131,696 (7.07%)
Belfast LGD 2016	339,579	63,231 (18.6%)	78,074 (23.0%)	68,750 (20.2%)	64,028 (18.9%)	41,598 (12.2%)	23,898 (7.04%)

**Table 1: Age Structure of Population 2016**

*Source: NISRA Population Estimates Broad Age Bands 2016 (Administrative Geographies)*

2.2 Over the decade 2016-2026, the population of Northern Ireland is projected to increase by 4.2 per cent (i.e. 77,600 people), reaching 1,939,700 people in 2026. Based on these projections, Belfast’s projected growth of 4.2% is the ninth highest out of the 11 Local Government Districts.

2.3 A Local Development Plan has a role in providing development land to meet these indicators and facilitate housing units to meet the needs of the elderly, particularly nursing homes, sheltered accommodation and smaller sized units. It also has a role in ensuring such units are accessible. The Development Plan housing zonings need to ensure that all housing, including for the elderly, is sited where it is accessible to local services and transportation. These services include health and other community facilities together with recreation and shops. A rising elderly population will also increase demand for health and community services, the development of which will also need to be accommodated.

2.4 The Local Development Plan has a role in providing a range of houses types to meet the needs of different household sizes and to provide policy to facilitate those wishing to expand their houses to meet changing needs, providing it does not harm other interests of acknowledged importance.

### A.3 Life expectancy

- 3.1 According to NINIS, the average life expectancy in Belfast for a male is 75 years and 80 years for a female, which is lower than the Northern Ireland average of 78 years and 82 years respectively.
- 3.2 In terms of the new 11 Local Government Districts, life expectancy was lower in Belfast for both males and females<sup>1</sup>.
- 3.3 According to the Sub-regional NI Health and Social Care Inequalities Monitoring System 2014:
- Males in the 20% most deprived LGD areas could expect to live 70.8 years, 4.5 years fewer than in Belfast LGD over all (75.4 years)
  - Female life expectancy in the most deprived areas was 77.3 years, 3.4 years less than the LGD average (80.7 years)

### A.4 Population projections

- 4.1 In April 2018, NISRA published the key findings from the 2016 based national population projections. The population of Northern Ireland is projected to reach 1.9 million people by 2020, with the 2 million milestone being reached by 2040. By 2033, annual population growth is projected to fall below 0.2 per cent for the first time since mid-1999, due to a falling number of births and rising deaths as a result of an ageing population. Figures 1 and 2 illustrates this below:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp130.htm>

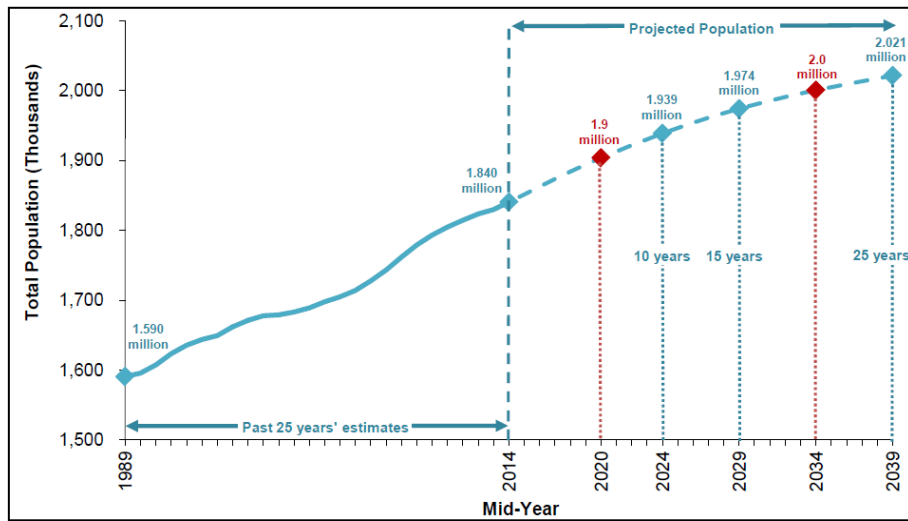


Figure 1: Northern Ireland Population Projections, NISRA 2015

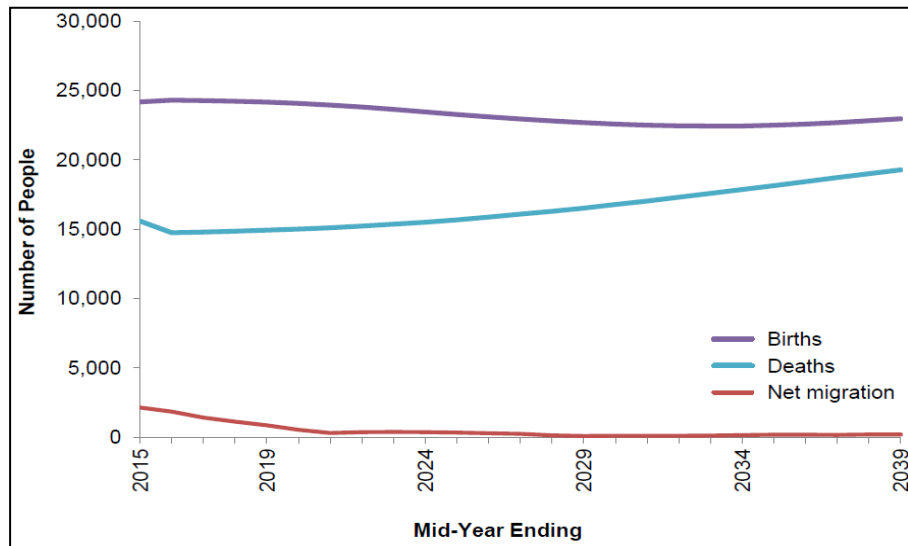


Figure 2: Factors in Population Change NISRA 2015

4.2 While the number of people aged 16 to 64 are both projected to decrease over the next 25 years, the number of people aged 65 and over are projected to increase. Figure 3 shows that by mid-2028, there are projected to be more people aged 65 and over than children, with the gap projected to widen.



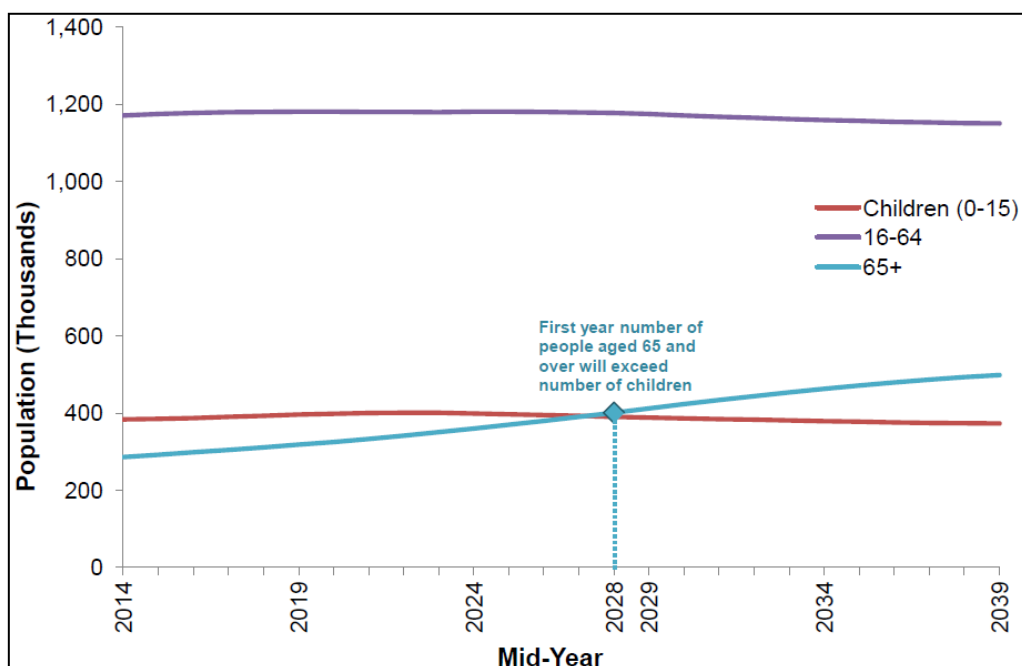


Figure 3: Population Projections by Age Group, NISRA 2015

## A.5 Housing

5.1 The new Belfast City Council Area had a total population of 339,600, living in 144,323 households (2016):

- In Belfast in 2016, 49% of households were owner occupied and 50% were rented (social rented and private).
- A smaller proportion of Belfast's housing stock is made up of detached houses compared to the rest of Northern Ireland. Proportions of terraced dwellings and apartments are comparatively higher.

5.2 Future population is projected to grow by 3.3% by mid-2024. Average household size in Northern Ireland is expected to fall marginally from 2.54 in 2012 to 2.52 in 2022. The average household size has steadily declined in Belfast (2.32 in 2012); driven by a higher proportion of single people (45.32%) than the NI average, a lower married proportion and a marginally higher proportion of divorcees (6.17%).

5.3 It is forecasted between 2012 and 2022; household compositions will be small made up of:

- One adult or two adults without children are the fastest growing household types. By 2037, these are projected to represent 60% of all households in Northern Ireland. For Belfast this figure is projected to be 62%
  - By 2037, people aged 65 and over are projected to represent half of all those living in one adult households without children.
- 5.4 The average house price in Northern Ireland is £163,621<sup>2</sup>. According to the University of Ulster Quarterly House Price Index for Quarter One in 2018, average price in Belfast was £175,908, up by 8.9% from Q1, 2016, a picture which is reflected across all the property types in Belfast with semi-detached houses (£177,967), detached bungalows (£220,304), apartments (£139,665) and detached houses (£289,882). South Belfast is the highest priced sub-market in the city with average house prices at £225,101. Across the other segments of the city, the average house price in North Belfast is £127,889, East Belfast £182,540 and West Belfast £130,098.
- 5.5 Belfast has a lower level of owner occupied dwellings and a higher proportion of social housing than the rest of NI. Projected new social housing need for Belfast is 14,102 units over the 15 year period 2017-2032 (940 per annum), but only 416 completed across Belfast in 2016-17. At March 2017, 335 new social homes were started. There is a shortage of programmed schemes to meet the projected social housing need. Welfare reforms are likely to increase the demand for smaller social housing units.
- 5.6 For Belfast, the projected new dwelling requirement (DfI Housing Growth Indicators) is 13,700 units (2012-2025) or just over 1,000 units per year. There is the potential to develop 21,517 dwelling units on 359.1 hectares of land within the Belfast urban footprint (2016/17 Housing Monitor).
- 5.7 In 2009, there were an estimated 12,817 vacant properties in Belfast, 4.8 percent of the stock. The House Condition Survey (HCS) 2011 advised that the Northern Ireland vacancy rate was 7.2% compared with the Belfast Metropolitan Area at 4.8%. A higher vacancy rate is particularly evident in the private rented sector – the 2016 House Condition Survey outlined that there were 9,820 vacant private rented dwelling across NI representing 1/3 of all vacant stock.

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<sup>2</sup> University of Ulster Quarterly House Price Index for Quarter One in 2018(<http://www.rpp.ulster.ac.uk/housing-index.php>)

## **A.6 Housing Needs Assessment and Housing Market Analysis**

- 6.1 The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) through their Housing Investment Plan 2015-2019 have indicated that the population is projected to increase and older people will represent a higher proportion of the population. Household formation is currently lower than previously projected. The rate of new house building is lower than the annual requirement as set out in the RDS 2035.
- 6.2 Census 2011 demonstrated the continued desire of residents to own their own home. It also highlighted the significance of the private rented sector which increased from 8% in 2001 to 20% in 2011 across Belfast. Private sector sales have also increased despite tighter mortgage lending conditions and negative equity. There are 4,108 registered HMOs within Belfast.

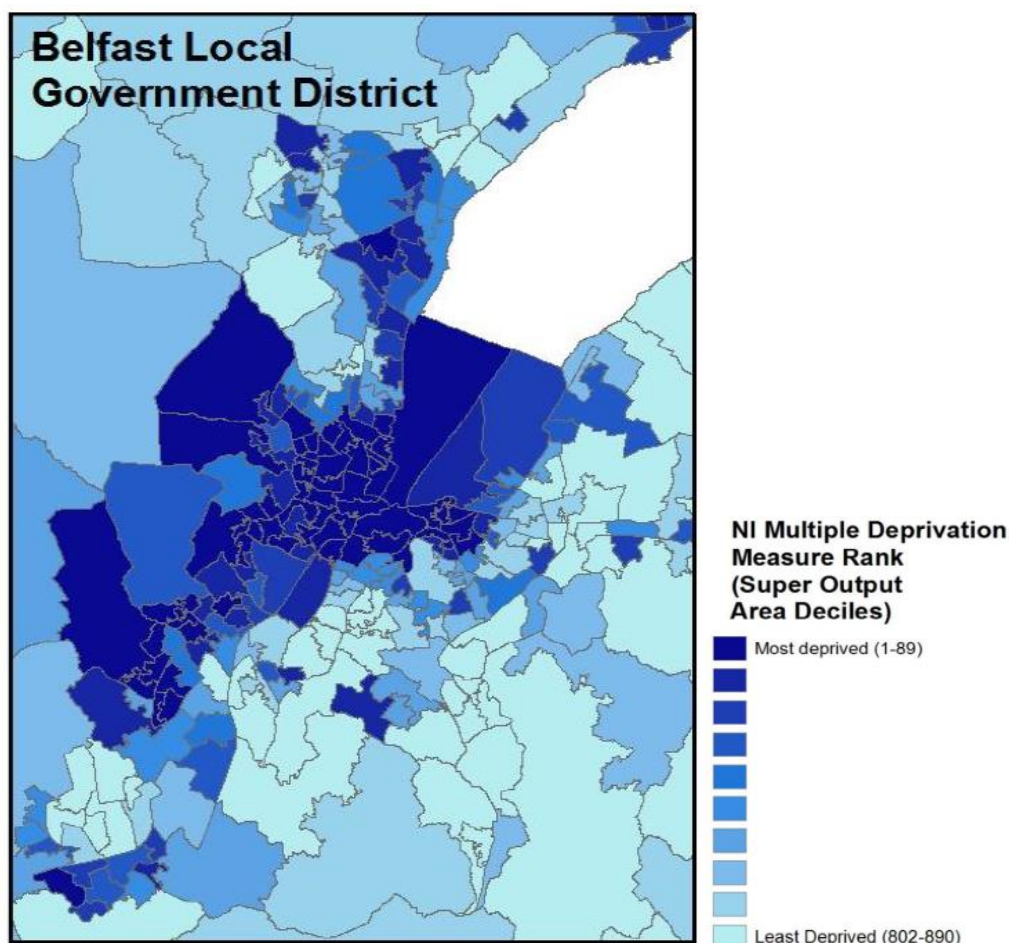
## **A.7 Social inclusion and deprivation**

- 7.1 Spatial deprivation studies have been undertaken in Belfast for almost four decades and all have shown certain places immersed in permanent deprivation (QUB Forthcoming). Indeed, in all regional deprivation research between 1994 and 2010 (1994, 2001, 2005 & 2010), around 40% of Belfast's wards (about 40% of its population) have been consistently in Northern Ireland's most deprived decile, even though the city contains only 18% of the regional population. Moreover, the 2015 expansion of the Belfast Council Area has increased the proportion of spatial deprivation as the new boundary now encompasses some of the region's most deprived Super Output Areas that were previously in Lisburn Borough Council (*Op Cit*).
- 7.2 Within the context of the rankings for the 11 new LGDs in Northern Ireland, Belfast is the worst performer as it contains areas with the highest concentrations of multiple deprivation.

Local Government District	Multiple Deprivation Ranking
Belfast	1
Derry & Strabane	2
Newry, Mourne & Down	3
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	4
Causeway Coast & Glens	5
Mid & East Antrim	6
Antrim & Newtownabbey	7
Mid Ulster	8
Fermanagh & Omagh	9
North Down & Ards	10
Lisburn & Castlereagh	11

Table 2: Multiple Deprivation Ranking by NISRA

- 7.3 At Super Output Area level, the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) 2010 illustrates the disparities within the Belfast Council Area. Belfast contains the nine most deprived of the 890 SOAs in Northern Ireland with significant areas of multiple deprivation, particularly in West, North and inner Belfast, it also contains some of the least deprived SOAs, which are located in the South and East of the city. Whiterock (2) is the most deprived SOA in Northern Ireland. Belfast contains 20 out of the top 25 most deprived SOAs in Northern Ireland.
- 7.4 The complex methodology used to determine overall multiple deprivation scores means that whilst the areas shown above as the most deprived by this multiple measure are also the worst effected by income, employment, health and disability, education, skills and training, living environment, crime and disorder, income deprivation facing children and income deprivation facing the elderly, these areas, given their city location, are the least deprived in terms of proximity to services.



**Figure 4: Belfast Super Output Areas Multiple Deprivation Measure Rank**

Source: [http://www.nisra.gov.uk/deprivation/archive/Updateof2005Measures/NIMDM\\_2010\\_Maps.pdf](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/deprivation/archive/Updateof2005Measures/NIMDM_2010_Maps.pdf)

- 7.5 The areas of South & East Belfast that are amongst the least deprived by the multiple measure but are considerably more deprived according to the Living Environment Deprivation measure. This measure aims to identify small areas experiencing deprivation in terms of the quality of housing, access to suitable housing, and the outdoor physical environment. The quality of housing measure is based upon the Decent Homes Standard which considers state of repair, thermal comfort and how modern the facilities are. This measure may, in part, explain why areas of older housing, which are less modern and energy efficient appear to be more deprived against this measure than the other variables.

**A.8 Disability and health**

8.1 As of April 2014, 113,960 people in Belfast claimed at least one of the main benefits. This is equal to 42.3% of the all residents aged 16 years and over. A higher proportion of people aged 16 years and over living in Belfast claimed at least one benefit when compared to the Northern Ireland average of 39.3%. Belfast was the Local Government District with the second highest proportion of people aged 16 years and over claiming at least one benefit. The highest proportions of benefits claimants are located in wards in North, West and Inner East Belfast. This is to be contrasted with low levels of claimants in more suburban areas in the South and East of the city.

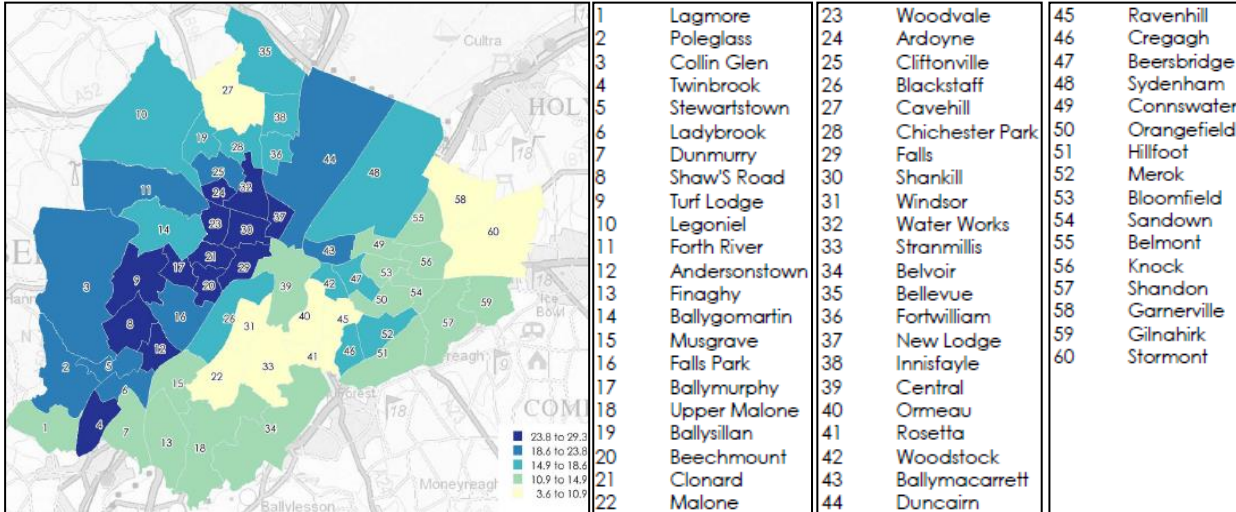


Figure 5: Proportion of people in receipt of one disability related benefit at ward level, February 2014  
Source: NISRA

**A.9 Human health**

9.1 Overall, the health of the area is improving. However, there are inequalities in health across Belfast with long term disability and prevalence of long term conditions particularly pronounced problems in areas most affected by multiple deprivation. The 2017 sub-regional bulletin of the Health and Social Care Inequalities Monitoring System highlights the following health inequalities:

- As seen regionally, deprivation related inequality was most evident in indicators relating to alcohol and drug use, suicide/self-harm and teenage births.
- Both male and female life expectancy has increased across the period in the LGD.
- Widening gap in Belfast between deprived areas and others especially in alcohol

related admissions and mortality; drug related admissions and mortality; lung cancer mortality; teenage birth rates; and self-harm admissions.

- Cancer death rates in the most deprived areas are a sixth higher than in the overall Belfast Trust;
- The death rate from suicide in Belfast is a quarter higher than the rest of NI;
- The alcohol related death rate in Belfast Trust was around two-thirds higher than in NI;
- Belfast has the highest teenage birth rate;
- Belfast also has the greatest number of self-harm admissions to hospital within the region;
- Belfast has the greatest number of deaths per 100,000 of the population from suicides; and
- Belfast has the highest admission rate to hospitals from drug related illnesses.

## A.10 Education, skills and training

10.1 Education also has an important role to play in promoting economic wellbeing, improving social mobility and tackling multiple deprivation. Better education improves access to employment opportunities. It improves the quality of people's lives and leads to broad social benefits to individuals and society. Education raises people's productivity and creativity and promotes entrepreneurship and technological advances. In addition, it plays a very crucial role in securing economic and social progress and improving income distribution.

Area	2+ A-levels A*-E (2)		5+ GCSEs A*-C (2)		5+ GCSEs A*-C (2) Inc. GCSE English & maths		Total Leavers
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number
<b>Belfast Council District</b>	2160	58.5	2918	79	2274	61.5	3695
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	13037	57.3	18528	81.7	15393	67.7	22746

**Table 3: Qualifications of school leavers by 2014 district council of pupil residence 2015/2016<sup>(1)</sup>**

Source; NISRA 2016

<http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/InteractiveMaps/Children%20Education%20and%20Skills/School%20and%20College%20Education/SchoolLeavers/atlas.html>

10.2 Table 3 shows the following key education attainment statistics for Belfast:

- 58.5% of pupils in Belfast received 2 or more A-Levels at grades A\* to E which is 2% higher than the NI average of 57.3%.
- The proportion of pupils receiving more than 5 GCSE's at grades A\* to C in Belfast is 79% which is slightly below the NI average of 81.7%. The situation is reversed when considering the average number of pupils receiving GCSE A\* to C grades in English and Maths in Belfast is 61.5%, which is 6% below the NI average.
- The proportion of free school meal entitled school leavers achieving at least five GCSEs at grades A\* - C or equivalent including GCSE English and maths increased by 3.5 percentage points from 41.3% in 2014/15 to 44.8% in 2015/16.
- 16% of people of working age still have no formal level of education. This is twice that of the UK average and the highest of all UK regions.
- The proportion of school leavers continuing to Institutions of Higher Education has remained stable (41.7% in 2015/16). Overall, 94.5% of school leavers were recorded by their school as entering Education, Employment or Training.

## A.11 Crime

11.1 According to NINIS between June 2017 & May 2018, there were:

- 32,298 incidences of recorded crime offences in 2017/2018 which is one third (98,304) of recorded crime offences in Northern Ireland for the same period. Crime offences recorded range from violence with injury (including homicide), burglary to public order offences.
- 18,537 anti-social behaviour incidents were recorded in Belfast, 30% of the Northern Ireland total (59,954) and more than three times higher than Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon who recorded the second highest incidents in Northern Ireland.
- Across Northern Ireland, there were 1348 incidences of recorded hate crime (homophobic, racist, and/or sectarian). 37% (508) occurred in Belfast.
- There is a low-level effect (65.55%) of the fear of crime on quality of life which is slightly lower than the Northern Ireland average of 69.55%.

11.2 The LDP should enhance the quality of life by encouraging safe and accessible environments.



## A.12 Levels of segregation

- 12.1 The legacy of Belfast's troubled past is still felt today and has had major impacts on the physicality of the City from its spatial layout to the design of its buildings as well as its fragmented and duplicated service provision across the city. Almost 20 years after the implementation of 'The Good Friday Agreement', Belfast has seen significant redevelopment, investment and regeneration in the City. However, segregation continues in parts of the city in 2016 with 88 different security barriers and forms of defensive architecture, known as 'Peace Walls', are still located within and between communities.
- 12.2 Research by Queen's University Belfast on changing levels of segregation as indicated by 2011 census states the following; *"Northern Ireland, as a whole, has experienced a fall in residential segregation between 2001 and 2011. It is likely that Belfast has shared in this trend with the rest of Northern Ireland. However, it is likely that the decrease between 2001 and 2011 is a result of the demographic balance of some areas being changed by immigration, by changes in the way in which people describe their religion in the Census, to local differences in births and deaths between Catholics and Protestants, and to genuine mixing in some areas."*
- 12.3 'Making Space for Each Other: Civic Place-making in a Divided Society' (2016) produced by the Planning for Spatial Reconciliation Research Group at Queen's University, Belfast aimed to identify how regeneration and reconciliation can be harnessed by the new approaches to planning under council's to promote good relations. It states, 'long-standing precepts of good planning and design can play a significant role in embedding reconciliation in the development process. A necessary, through insufficient, approach to redressing the divisions in a deeply contested society lies in the basic principles of good planning: intentional connectivity, search for synergies, coherent design, public access, balanced development that minimised duplication; and avoidance of physical infrastructure that can dissect a city more markedly than 'peace walls'. (pp.14).
- 12.4 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement recognises that the planning process has an important role to play in the delivery of good quality housing that supports the creation of more balanced communities. Balanced communities can contribute positively to the creation and enhancement of shared spaces and vice-versa.

## **A.13 Culture, leisure and recreation**

- 13.1 Good quality open space makes our city an attractive and healthier place to live. Open space can perform a multitude of functions, for example well-appointed open spaces can attract investment in cities which have balanced urban development with green infrastructure. The variety in the urban scene can have positive impacts on the landscape as well as providing good places to work, live and visit. These high urban quality spaces can support regeneration, improve quality of life for communities as well as promote health and wellbeing. Open space has a strategic function by helping to define an area, create a sense of place as well as create linkages between Cities and its rural hinterlands.
- 13.2 The typology of open space ranges from parks and gardens to outdoor sports facilities, play parks, greenways, urban green spaces, community gardens and cemeteries. The value and function of open space is essential for a viable, healthy, greener and liveable city.
- 13.3 Belfast's open space ranges from country parks to woodlands and playing fields to playgrounds, the value and function of open space in Belfast is essential for a viable, healthy, greener and liveable city.
- 13.4 There is a lack of open space in the city centre and indeed its surrounding communities. Open space becomes more available as you move from the city centre. Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy was launched in 2015 and sets out the context for developing the City Centre and the aspirations for regeneration and growth of the city core and its surrounding areas. The Strategy recognises the lack of green open space in the city centre and provides potential solutions to soften the harsh concrete and tarmac appearance of the city centre. It states "the centre is lacking in green space, in tree-lined streets, in the softness that can provide relief in the most densely developed part of a great city".
- 13.5 Through the Belfast City Council £150million Investment Programme and ongoing £105million Leisure Transformation Programme, Belfast City Council have invested substantially in outdoor and indoor recreation in the city. There are 15 Leisure Centres in Belfast and through the commitment of the ambitious Leisure Transformation Programme, the upgrade of leisure provision across key sites in the city aims to improve

health outcomes and reduce health inequalities in state of the art and safe facility. Due to the fragmented make up of Belfast, there is duplication of such services which serve our divided communities.

- 13.6 The council is preparing an Open Spaces Strategy, which also informs the Local Development Plan. As part of this process, an audit of existing open space facilities has been undertaken and the preliminary results are summarised as follows:

Type	Sub-type	Number of sites (co-located)	Area (ha)
Parks	Country Park	5	447.2
	City Park	2	44.9
	District Park	9	132.9
	Local Park	49	273.6
<b>Total Parks</b>		<b>65</b>	<b>898.6</b>
Playing fields	Public	101 (78)	171.2
	Private	40	120.4
	School/university	33	151.6
<b>Total Playing Fields</b>		<b>174 (78)</b>	<b>443.2</b>
Other sports	Golf courses	11	442.6
	Other outdoor sports	36 (19)	25.0
<b>Total Playing Fields</b>		<b>47 (19)</b>	<b>467.6</b>
Play areas	LEAPs	48 (16)	14.9
	NEAPs	55 (36)	33.4
	MUGAs	79 (29)	9.9
<b>Total Play Areas</b>		<b>182 (81)</b>	<b>58.2</b>
Other spaces	Other	2 (2)	1.0
	Amenity space	1,460	293.7
	Civic Space	13	17.7
<b>Other Spaces</b>		<b>1475 (2)</b>	<b>312.4</b>
Growing spaces	Allotments	8 (4)	6.0
	Community gardens	30 (12)	1.8
<b>Growing Spaces Total</b>		<b>38 (16)</b>	<b>7.8</b>
Cemeteries		11	155.8
<b>Cemeteries Total</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>155.8</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1992 (196)</b>	<b>2343.6</b>

**Table 4: Existing Open Space Facilities**  
Source: *Belfast City Council Open Spaces Strategy*

13.7 There are 11 designated community greenways in the Belfast City area (source: BMAP):

1	BT 147/01	Carr's Glen / Waterworks
2	BT 147/02	Forth River/ Glencairn / Ligoniel Route
3	BT 147/03	Shore Road / Belfast Hills
4	BT 147/04	Lagan Valley Regional Park/Bog Meadow / Whiterock Route
5	BT 147/05	Ballymurphy Route
6	BT 147/06	Comber Greenway (Belfast)
7	BT 147/07	Odyssey / Tullycarnet Park / Ormeau Park
8	BT 147/08	Odyssey / Stormont
9	BT 147/09	North Belfast / South Belfast / Lagan Valley Regional Park
10	MCH 41/01	Annadale / Lagan Valley Regional Park
11	ML 23/01	Lady Dixon/Belfast Hills

13.8 Following Local Government Review, parts of the following 6 designated community greenways also fall within the Belfast City Council area:

1	HD18	Hollywood
2	MCH 41/0	2 Annadale / Castlereagh Escarpment
3	MCH 41/03	Castlereagh Escarpment / Lagan Valley Regional Park
4	MCH 41/04	Castlereagh Escarpment / Lagan Valley Regional Park, Belvoir
5	MCH 41/06	Comber Greenway (Castlereagh)
6	ML 23/02	Lagan Valley Regional Park to Colin Valley Golf Course

13.9 The Department of Infrastructure (DFI) are drawing up a strategic plan for Greenways with the aim of developing an integrated system of greenways for the benefit for future generations. A strategic approach to an integrated system links in to the council's Corporate Plan, Belfast Agenda and indeed the LDP. Community Greenways may also act as a cycle network, allowing cyclists to have a safe journey with less noise and air pollution. Whilst river corridors and disused railway lines can also provide a haven for wildlife, Community Greenways may also act as corridors linking areas of open space in urban areas to the countryside.

13.10 Alongside the recreational value of greenways, a green and blue infrastructure network can build resilience and mitigate flood risk to establish a natural water cycle. This is achieved by combining water management and protecting the ecological values of the

urban landscape, while providing adaptive measures to deal with flood events. This approach to water and green space management, integrates urban drainage into a coherent green and blue connected network. The Connswater Greenway is an example of a blue and green infrastructure scheme that incorporated flood alleviation measures with outdoor recreational space. The LDP, facilitated by a Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan (draft 2018) and an Open Space Strategy, can seek ways to develop a more integrated corridor and innovative uses of greenways within the Belfast area.

- 13.11 Belfast has many community gardens, where local residents can grow vegetables, fruit, and flowers, meet their neighbours and learn about the environment. Such spaces can offer an environmental haven in an urban area, shared spaces as well as support the council social agendas of health and wellbeing and creating shared and greener spaces.
- 13.12 The Belfast Hills provides an array of outdoor recreational facilities alongside Colin Glen Forest Park and Cavehill Country Park. Other types of countryside recreation include Belvoir Forest Park, Community Woodlands at Knockmount Gardens, Ligoniel Wood, Old Throne Wood and Mill Dam Wood.
- 13.13 Lagan Valley Regional Park covers 2116ha and stretches along the Lagan from Belfast to Lisburn. As an AONB, its characteristic features include riverbank scenery, meadows and woodland and is also rich in biodiversity.
- 13.14 There are 18 libraries across Belfast, including close to areas with substantial levels of social deprivation. Belfast Central library has potential to become a world class modern regional library and has a role to play in the economic, cultural, social and educational development of the Inner North Quarter of the City Centre.

## B ECONOMIC BASELINE

### B.1 Employment

1.1 Belfast accounts for 18% of the total Northern Ireland population. The 2014 Labour Force Survey profiled the labour market structure for Belfast:

Area	Economically Inactive		Economically Active		Employment	
<b>Belfast</b>	70,000	31%	156,000	69%	145,000	64%
<b>N.I.</b>	320,000	28%	844,000	72%	789,000	68%

**Table 5: Labour Market Structure (16-64 Population)**  
*Source: Belfast Regional Briefing (2016) Invest Northern Ireland*

1.2 Table 5 above shows 31% of Belfast's working age population are economically inactive who are not looking for work or not available for work. Notably over half of this cohort is claiming out of work or 'other' benefits. 146,000 people are in paid employment of which 75% are engaged in full time work. 14,000 (9%) of the working age population are self-employed. This is significantly lower than the 14.7% figure for Northern Ireland.

1.3 According to NISRA in 2017, 7010 people claimed unemployment-related benefits (Job Seekers Allowance), which accounts for 25% of all claimants in Northern Ireland (54,101). These figures are broken down by age band in Table 6 below:

Area	Number of Claimants			% of Working Age			Change over year	
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Number	%
<b>Belfast</b>	4,912	2,098	7,010	4.5	1.8	3.1	-1,096	-13.5
<b>N.I.</b>	18,789	9,579	28,368	3.2	1.6	2.4	-3,627	-11.3

**Table 6: Claimant Count by Comparative Area**  
*Source: NISRA Claimant Count by Council Area, December 2017*

1.4 The percentage of claimants within the working age population was higher in Belfast, both as a total percentage and also when broken down into male and female categories. However, when examining the percentage change over the year, Belfast had a larger decrease in comparison to the NI average.

**B.2 Skills & Employability Issues**

2.1 According to the Centre for Local Economic Strategies ‘Employability and Skills Framework for Belfast’, skills and employability issues are a continuing concern for Belfast employers. In 2013, a third of employers had difficulty recruiting, half of those due to lack of skills. Skills shortages are more acute in certain sectors and roles, notably skilled trades and also in professional, associate professional, caring and leisure, and elementary roles<sup>3</sup>.

**B.3 Qualifications of the Resident Population**

3.1 Table 7 shows just over a third of working age people in Belfast has above NVQ Level 4 qualification which is just over 3 percentage points higher than the regional average of 30.9%. This is derived from the Labour Force Survey, Local Area Database, and measures qualifications ranging from none to NVQ L4 (degree level and above) in the working age population 16-64 years.

Area	No Qualifications	Below NVQ L4	Above NVQ L4
Belfast	14.2%	51.8%	34.0%
N.I.	16.0%	53.1%	30.9%

**Table 7: Qualification Levels (16-64 Population) 2016**  
*Source: Labour Force Survey, Local Area Database 2016*

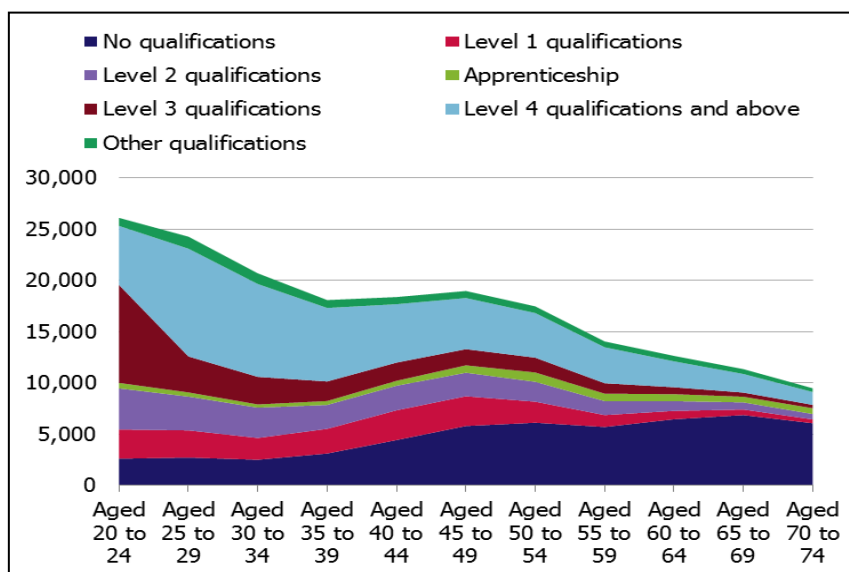
3.2 This also shows that since LGR, the amount of Belfast residents aged 16-65 with no qualifications has dropped a greater amount of percentage points in comparison to the NI average (14.2% in 2016 a decrease from 19%). This has been complemented with an increase in percentage points of Belfast residents with NVQ qualifications below level 4 which has rose marginally while the NI average has remained the same (53.1% in 2016 up from 53% in 2014).

3.3 The higher qualification level relates strongly to people’s age. Figure 6 shows the population of Belfast by age and qualification. It highlights that the proportion of people with qualifications in the younger age groups are considerably larger than in older age groups, with the pattern of qualifications changing significantly. The proportion of

<sup>3</sup> Centre for Local Economic Strategies ‘Employability and Skills Framework for Belfast’ May 2015



residents without qualifications was 64% for those aged 70-74 and 51% for those aged 60-64. This is just 10% for those aged 20-24. Just 20% of the 60-64 cohort hold Level 4 or above qualifications compared with higher proportions for other age groups – as high as 44% for those aged 30-34. Thus, the trend in future is likely to be a more skilled resident population, as a less skilled older workforce is gradually replaced by younger people possessing more, and higher level qualifications.



**Figure 6: Highest qualification held by age group, Census 2011<sup>4</sup>**

*Source: BCC Employability and Skills Framework*

<sup>4</sup> Employability and Skills Framework for Belfast: Final Strategy and Action Plan 2015 Belfast City Council

**B.4 Business sectors in Belfast**

4.1 According to NISRA, there were 10,295<sup>5</sup> VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses operating in Belfast which accounts for 14.4 % of all Northern Ireland businesses.

Area	Manufacturing		Construction		Services		Other		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
<b>Belfast</b>	9,332	4%	4,476	2%	202,421	93%	2,251	1%	<b>218,480</b>
<b>NI</b>	80,446	11%	33,050	4%	604,086	82%	22,033	3%	<b>739,615</b>

**Table 8: Employee Jobs per Business Sector**  
*Source: NISRA Business Register and Employment Survey 2016*

4.2 The Belfast economy and NI regional economy are both heavily dominated by the presence of the service sector, comprising the likes of retail, banking, tourism, health, education and computer services. Services account for the largest employment sector in Belfast which is 11% higher than the NI average of 82%. The dominance of the service sector is largely reflective of the wider UK employment structure, however, due to a greater reliance on public sector employment, NI and Belfast are both marginally higher than the UK average.

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<sup>5</sup> Statistics taken from NISRA (2017) VAT and/or PAYE Registered Businesses Operating in NI

Operational Registered Businesses	Belfast	NI
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	40	17,845
Production	560	4,870
Construction	830	9,680
Motor trades	205	2,525
Wholesale	495	3,230
Retail	1,080	6,065
Transport & storage (Inc. postal)	260	2,355
Accommodation & food services	855	3,865
Information & communication	715	1,850
Finance & insurance	400	1,185
Property	550	2,080
Professional, scientific & technical	1,775	5,630
Business administration & support services	525	2,465
Public administration & defence	30	35
Education	175	650
Health	820	2,870
Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services	985	4,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,300</b>	<b>67,200</b>

**Table 9: Amount of Operational Registered Businesses**

*Source: NISRA VAT and/or PAYE Registered Businesses Operating in NI 2017*

- 4.3 Agriculture represents 0.4% of businesses in Belfast, 26.1% lower than the Northern Ireland average. While the make-up of the land outside the settlement limits includes the Belfast Hills and Lagan Valley Regional Park, there are only a small number of farm holdings. The NISRA 2017 Farm Census figures estimate there are 31 farms in Belfast, 26 of which can be described as ‘very small’<sup>1</sup> small farm and 4 medium to large farms.. Agriculture in Belfast employs 126 people either on a full and/or part time basis. Within this figure there are 23 full time farmers employing 66 full time workers.
- 4.4 The following table below shows a comparison between private and public sector split in employment.

	Private		Public		All
<b>Belfast</b>	138,265	66%	72,159	34%	<b>210,424</b>
<b>NI</b>	478,536	69%	212,965	31%	<b>691,501</b>

**Table 10: Public/Private Sector Employment**  
*Source: Belfast Regional Briefing (2016) Invest Northern Ireland*

4.4 This shows over a third of the working age population work in Belfast is employed in the public sector which comparatively is higher (3%) than the NI average. Both figures however are significantly higher than the UK average of 17.1% of the workforce who are employed as part of the public sector according to the ONS 2016 Public and Private Sector Employment Headcount release<sup>6</sup>.

## **B.5 Self-employment**

5.1 Belfast's performance in this area lags the Northern Ireland average. According to the 2011 Census there were over 13,000 self-employed people in Belfast, a total of 9.3% of the working age population. But this is significantly lower than the 14.7% figure for Northern Ireland.

## **B.6 Earnings**

6.1 The Department of Economy in October 2017 published its latest Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)<sup>7</sup>. The key points from ASHE 2017 show that:

- In April 2017, the median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees were £501, up 1.5% over the year. This is the first time median gross weekly earnings in NI have exceeded £500.
- In the UK, median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees were £550, an increase of 2.2% over the year. NI earnings remained well below the UK average and were third lowest of the 12 UK regions (an improvement in rank from 2016). The ratio of NI to UK gross weekly earnings for full-time employees has fallen over the last two years, however, at 91% it still remains higher than the ratios recorded prior to 2015.

<sup>6</sup>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/datasets/publicsectoremploymentreferencetable>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/annual-survey-hours-and-earnings>

- The increase in median gross weekly earnings was more marked in the private than in the public sector. The full-time median gross weekly earnings in the private sector increased by 3.0% to £446, compared to a 1.0% increase in the public sector, to £623.
- NI private sector full-time weekly earnings were 84% of those in the UK. However, earnings of public sector employees in NI were 4.0% higher than in the UK.

## **B.7 Employment Outlook**

- 7.1 The change in employment between 2009 and 2013 was small at 1.2%, although this still compares favourably with the fall in Northern Ireland of -0.7%, illustrating resilience within the Belfast economy<sup>8</sup>. Nearly a third of jobs (29%) in Northern Ireland are located in Belfast. The city, like many other former industrialised regions, has undergone economic restructuring, with a shift from manufacturing employment towards services and public sector employment. However, the reliance upon the public sector is high in Belfast, as it represents 34% of total jobs.

## **B.8 Reliance on Skilled Commuters**

- 8.1 Because the increase in supply of higher skilled residents will not match demand, this will inevitably lead to an increase in net commuters with level 4 qualifications or above over the forecast period. Belfast is not producing enough of its own graduates with required skills sets to reduce commuting, and without action, it is difficult to perceive this trend changing in either the medium or long term. Belfast travel to work area covers 2690sqm comprising 81,094 commuters representing 58% workplace population compared to Northern Ireland average of 44%. It is forecasted commuting for those who possess level 3 and 4 qualifications will increase by 38% and 43% respectively by 2025.

## **B.9 Foreign Direct Investment**

- 9.1 Belfast has become the second most attractive city in the UK outside London for foreign direct investment and has been named as one of the top 10 small and mid-sized cities in the world and the top small business friendly city in Europe 2016 for the second year. 60% of all FDI to NI is in Belfast. (DETI Analytical Services Unit Research Agenda 2015/16). Belfast is forecast to become the UK's fastest growing financial services

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<sup>8</sup> Census of Employment 2013

behind London by 2025 and is Europe's leading destination for new software development projects according to Invest NI. Total inward investment from 2010-2011 to 2014-2015 totalled £981.79m within Belfast the majority originating from Great Britain and the United States.

- 9.2 Invest NI advises that almost 60% of enquires for office space were from FDI businesses. The Harbour Commission have completed construction of Grade A office accommodation at City Quays occupied by a global law firm, and has further planning permission for a second Grade A office block adjacent to be completed mid-2016 for an American technology company. It also seeks to develop commercial space at the Titanic Quarter and Sydenham Business Park. Grade A office accommodation was also completed at Weavers Court, Linfield Road and Forthriver Industrial Estate but there is still not a choice of Grade A office accommodation that would be comparable to the UK.
- 9.3 The devolution of Corporation Tax enabling Northern Ireland to set its own rates will encourage domestic business to invest and increase foreign direct investment by reducing the rate to 12.5% from 21% in line with the ROI rate and the Act which was given Assent in March 2015 and the power handed to the Executive in April 2018. Whilst it is estimated that the tax changes could create 2000 jobs in the local area, a sustained drive on skills levels would be required to ensure that Belfast has the appropriate skill sets in place to match the demand for jobs that a reduction in Corporation Tax would bring.

## **B.10 Key Employment Areas**

- 10.1 Whilst the evidence is applicable throughout the whole area the key areas for employment use are Belfast City Centre; Harbour and Giant's Park.

## **B.11 Belfast Harbour**

- 11.1 Belfast Harbour is Northern Ireland's principal maritime gateway and logistics hub, serving the Northern Ireland economy and increasingly that of the Republic of Ireland. Around 70% of Northern Ireland's and 20% of the entire island's seaborne trade is handled at the Harbour each year<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.belfast-harbour.co.uk/port>

- 11.2 Major regeneration projects for the Belfast Harbour Estate include City Quays, Titanic Quarter, Clarendon and Sydenham Business Park. The Belfast Harbour Estate is a key employment area for Belfast with over 23,000 people employed across a range of business sectors from shipping and logistics to creative industries. The Belfast's Harbour turnover grew in 2015 by 3.4% to £54.3m.
- 11.3 The Harbour is a major economic enabler supporting 31% of NI's GDP and 27% of its employment within 700 companies. Trade is expected to grow by 68% by 2030, and the commissioner's plans indicate requirement for 82 additional acres. Offices, a hotel and multi-storey car parking have recently been constructed on Harbour lands; the NI Science Park is expanding; and the film industry is utilising buildings within harbour lands. The harbour lands are key locations handling liquid bulk products, dry bulk sector commodities, aggregates of coal and scrap, break bulk products and supporting exports of feedstuffs such as milk powder and beef and poultry products supporting the agricultural sectors. The Port comprises logistics warehousing and container terminals with primary routes to Antwerp and Rotterdam. The Port supports freight and passenger routes to Liverpool, Loch Ryan and Heysham accommodating 357,000 freight vehicles, 272,000 cars and 1.24 million passengers in 2011 and a Marina that has welcomed the Tall Ships.

## **B.12 Belfast City Centre**

- 12.1 The city centre includes some of the city's most prominent civic and historic buildings, primary pedestrian routes, gateways and accessibility nodes, orbital boulevard, River Lagan and waterfront, former industrial and port lands, areas of cultural and heritage, entertainment areas, areas of housing. The city centre is bound by the inner ring road, Orbital Boulevard and the east bank of the River Lagan between the Albert and Queen Elizabeth II Bridges.
- 12.2 Belfast City Centre is the primary office location in NI and the first choice for major office developments. A significant residential population is highly important for the successful functioning of the city centre in relation to complementary services such as retailing, supply chains, leisure, employment, and growing the evening economy. The relocation of the University of Ulster campus will act as a catalyst for development in the northern area of the city, and it is estimated that 15,000 students will be attracted to the new campus with an estimated expenditure of £94 million p.a.

- 12.3 Almost 200,000 employee jobs in Belfast comprise 29% of the total jobs across Northern Ireland, a figure which highlights the economic importance of the city centre to the wider region. Typically for a regional capital, there is a significant association with public administration. Other notable sectors which are concentrated in Belfast City Centre include: administrative and support services; education, financial and insurance activities; health, information and communication; and professional, scientific and technical activities. The creative industries are one of Belfast's fastest growing sectors with over 1,600 creative businesses based in the city, employing over 20,000 people. When considering the combined productivity across these sectors, it is apparent Belfast has experienced growth in Gross Value Added (GVA) per head in the last decade.
- 12.4 In terms of sector specific GVA growth, Belfast has been most pronounced in financial and insurance services and information and communications, both of which have seen GVA growth of over 100% since 2000. Part of the growth in these sectors is linked to Belfast's success in attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Belfast sits 4th out of 28 UK cities based on number of projects and 3rd out of 28 based on number of jobs created between 2009 and 2011.
- 12.5 There is significant interest in planning applications and policy relating to student accommodation given the relocation of Ulster University into the Centre from its present Jordanstown Campus which will increase the residential student population living within the North of the City Centre.
- 12.6 Belfast has a catchment area of 602,000 people which places Belfast 13th out of 22 major cities with a comparable catchment to Nottingham and Edinburgh. The challenge remains in ensuring this catchment population chooses Belfast as its retail destination.
- 12.7 Belfast ranks as the UK's 16<sup>th</sup> city centre retail venue based on Venuescore, a proprietary ranking system for the UK shopping venues based on the scale and profile of multiple retailers trading there<sup>10</sup>.
- 12.8 During the first half of the 2000's, retailer sales productivity performance in Belfast was consistently above the average for Major City locations. With the opening of Victoria Square, Belfast's status in the UK retail hierarchy peaked at 14.

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<sup>10</sup> Compiled by Javelin Group



- 12.9 As of September 2015, there were 4,508 properties rated as shops in Belfast LGD based on the LGD 2014 wards<sup>11</sup>. Vacancy rates in Belfast City Centre exceed the UK averages. Belfast City Council conducted a Vacancy Report in 2016 which recorded a vacancy rate of 18% which is almost 3 times higher than the vacancy rate in Bristol (6.8%) and double that of Glasgow (9.9%). Reasons that have been cited for this include retailers falling into administration and retailers being more selective and requiring less space. Business rates in prime locations can also be a concern to existing occupiers, a situation which will only serve to further increase vacancy rates in the future. Vacancy is however concentrated, rather than dispersed and could potentially be tackled on a coordinated basis. According to Experian Data, 2017 there were 8,200 commercial businesses operating within the Belfast LGD.
- 12.10 City centre living in Belfast has not reached comparable levels with other UK cities 9,458 persons are estimated to live in the city centre<sup>12</sup>. According to LPS pointer, there are 5,678 domestic properties within the city centre.

### **B.13 Giant's Park**

- 13.1 At 340 acres, the North Foreshore of Belfast Lough is the largest development site in the city. Known as Giant's Park, this area offers huge potential to deliver physical, economic and social benefits for citizens as part of the council's City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy.
- 13.2 This former landfill facility, owned by Belfast City Council, is a sustainable asset which has the potential to attract investors and create jobs and other opportunities for the city.
- 13.3 Construction is underway to create Northern Ireland's first Cleantech Hub on 30 acres of Giant's Park. This £9.5 million development will create an innovative business cluster at the southern portion of the site, creating up to 400 jobs and bringing in £105 million of investment for the city.
- 13.4 The hub is aimed at companies working in renewable energy, solar power, recycling and other environmental technologies, who are keen to invest in Belfast and take advantage of our strong skills base, accessible location and growing clean-tech sector.

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<sup>11</sup> LPS Rating information 30th September 2015

<sup>12</sup> NISRA's Census Small Areas – Population Totals (2001-2014)

13.5 Key infrastructural work has been completed including the creation of 1,734 metres of roads needed to improve access and set up key services at the hub.

13.6 In 2017, Belfast Harbour opened a £20m film studio complex in Giant's Park.

#### **B.14 Tourism**

14.1 Belfast is an important European city. In the 17th century Belfast grew rapidly and successfully as a port. It continued to grow in size and status throughout the 18th century based upon trade, the development of sea-routes and the 'facilitation' of industry. Belfast took raw materials from elsewhere and converted them into products creating high added value.

14.2 The 19th century witnessed the development of its linen industry, earning Belfast the reputation of being 'Linenopolis'. This success was based upon innovation and invention in financial models and exchange of ideas as much as it was about the invention of production techniques.

14.3 It was soon to become a manufacturing powerhouse; a centre of global significance in linen, shipbuilding and rope making. Harland and Wolff Shipyard soon becomes one of the biggest ship builders in the world constructing over 70 ships including the Titanic. The shipyards cranes, known locally as Samson and Goliath, are of Krupp Ardel design, have become synonymous to Belfast's story.

14.4 A city whose prosperity, pride and international status were reflected in its great architectural statements such as City Hall and Queen's University, as well as its financial, philanthropic, cultural and social institutions. At the turn of the twentieth century Belfast was a small town but had the physical and psychological characteristics of an ambitious, confident, much larger maritime city. This is a characteristic that prevails today and needs to be further nurtured.

14.5 Belfast's cultural heritage and maritime assets have become an important tourism asset making a viable contribution to the economy locally and indeed to Northern Ireland. Key assets such as Lagan Valley Regional Park, City Hall, Crumlin Road Gaol and the Ulster Museum (to name just a few) are examples of Belfast's diverse heritage. Belfast is unquestionably a maritime city with recent attractions such as Titanic Belfast fast

becoming a 'must see' attraction. Notably, Titanic Belfast was awarded the 'World's Leading Tourism Attraction'<sup>13</sup>, in 2016. HMS Caroline which underwent extensive restoration and has added to the visitor experience in Belfast's Titanic Quarter. It provides tourists with state of the art special effects interactive exhibits to investigate the events leading up to the Battle of Jutland.

- 14.6 The council's Belfast Integrated Tourism Strategy 2015-20 identifies Culture and Heritage, amongst others, as one of the strengths of tourism in Belfast and suggests opportunities to further explore and expand the offer and delve further on maritime heritage.
- 14.7 According to NISRA, Lagan Valley Regional Park was the top tourist attraction in both Belfast attracting 1,472m visitors.<sup>14</sup> Titanic Belfast is Belfast's second most popular attraction drawing in over 760,000 visitors and the Ulster Museum 533,000 visitors in 2017<sup>15, 16</sup>.
- 14.8 Belfast tourism has displayed impressive growth, quadrupling visitor trips and tourism spend between 2000 and 2013 to become a significant destination, for business, conferences, and short city breaks for leisure and cultural activities.
- 14.9 Whilst there have been a number of recent hotel developments along the Riverfront, in Cathedral Quarter and the Linen Quarter, demand for accommodation remains high as the international profile of the City continues to rise. Belfast Agenda's target is to create a minimum of 3,000 new bed spaces by 2021. . Belfast has 35 hotels with 3,929 rooms available at the end of March 2017.<sup>17</sup> The Northern Ireland Annual Hotel Occupancy Survey 2017 identified a suggested upward trend from 2011 to the end of 2017 based on the estimated number of arrivals to Northern Ireland hotels, which had increased from 1.37m in 2011 to 1.84m in 2017<sup>18</sup>. In 2017, hotels in Belfast achieved 80% room

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13 <http://titanicbelfast.com/Blog/December-2016/Titanic-Belfast-named-King-of-the-World/>

14 <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/Annual-Tourism-Statistics-Publication-2017%20.pdf>

15 <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/Annual-Tourism-Statistics-Publication-2017%20.pdf>

16 <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/Annual-Tourism-Statistics-Publication-2017%20.pdf>

17 <https://tourismni.com/globalassets/facts-and-figures/research-reports/tourism-performance-statistics/accommodation-stock/accommodation-stock-end-march-2018.pdf>

18 <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/Annual-Hotel-Occupancy-Survey-2017.pdf>

occupancy, <sup>19</sup>benefitting from increases in business tourism, conferences, cultural events and city breaks.<sup>20</sup>

- 14.10 The city has become a significant tourist destination, attracting 1,459,760 trips, and £334.1 million spend in Belfast; this accounted for 39% of total tourism spend in NI in 2016.<sup>21</sup> There were 4.7m visits to Belfast visitor attractions in 2016.<sup>22</sup> The Sector supported 18,607 tourism jobs across the council area, or approximately 8.5% of total employee jobs in 2015.<sup>23</sup> The unique natural heritage of the Lough, Lagan Valley Regional Park and Belfast Hills are significant environmental assets and its cultural, industrial and maritime resources give it enormous potential to drive the tourism economy and provide employment.
- 14.11 The city is a major gateway through the sea, the airports, road and rail network to the wider region and UK facilitating visitors and tourists. In 2015 there were direct flights to 57 destinations, including 29 European destinations. There are 5 direct sea routes to Great Britain. Tourism NI research in 2015 shows that 55% of our overseas visitors come to NI via the Republic. <sup>24</sup>
- 14.12 Major growth markets include business trips furthered by new conference facilities, short break leisure and cruise tourism. Belfast Tourism Strategy aims to strengthen the hospitality and service sectors and develop new tourism attractions to ensure the City has the capacity to compete and highlights the importance of marketing and reputation. The Tourism Strategy and Action Plan outlined a target to support 10,000 extra jobs by 2020 and there is an aim to double revenue to £870 million by 2020<sup>25</sup>.
- 14.13 In 2017, 93 cruise ships with 110,411 passengers docked in Belfast<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/Annual-Hotel-Occupancy-Survey-2017.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> NI Update 2015 - Rejuvenating Belfast 4th Quarter 2015 [www.lisney.com](http://www.lisney.com)

<sup>21</sup> NIRSA Northern Ireland Local Government District Tourism Statistics 2016 Published 6 July 2017 <https://tourismni.com/globalassets/facts-and-figures/research-reports/tourism-performance-statistics/local-government-district-tourism-statistics/lgd-all-fact-cards-2014-2016.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> NIRSA Northern Ireland Local Government District Tourism Statistics 2016 Published 6 July 2017 <https://tourismni.com/globalassets/facts-and-figures/research-reports/tourism-performance-statistics/local-government-district-tourism-statistics/lgd-all-fact-cards-2014-2016.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> NIRSA Northern Ireland Local Government District Tourism Statistics 2016 Published 6 July 2017 <https://tourismni.com/globalassets/facts-and-figures/research-reports/tourism-performance-statistics/local-government-district-tourism-statistics/lgd-all-fact-cards-2014-2016.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Tourism NI Access into NI Summer 2015

<sup>25</sup> Belfast Integrated Tourism Strategy 2015 – 2020, Belfast City Council

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/tourism-statistics-early-indicators>

14.14 In 2016 the average length of stay was 3.0 nights and average spend per trip was £229.<sup>27</sup> The greatest majority of visitors were from Great Britain (41%), 28% of Northern Ireland, 10% from Republic of Ireland, 12% of mainland Europe and 9% from Northern America. The main reason for visiting Belfast was for holiday and visiting friends and relatives followed by business trips. Belfast LGD has the highest proportion of overnight business trips, overnight trips and highest proportion of European overnight trips of all the LGDs. see Figures 7 and 8.

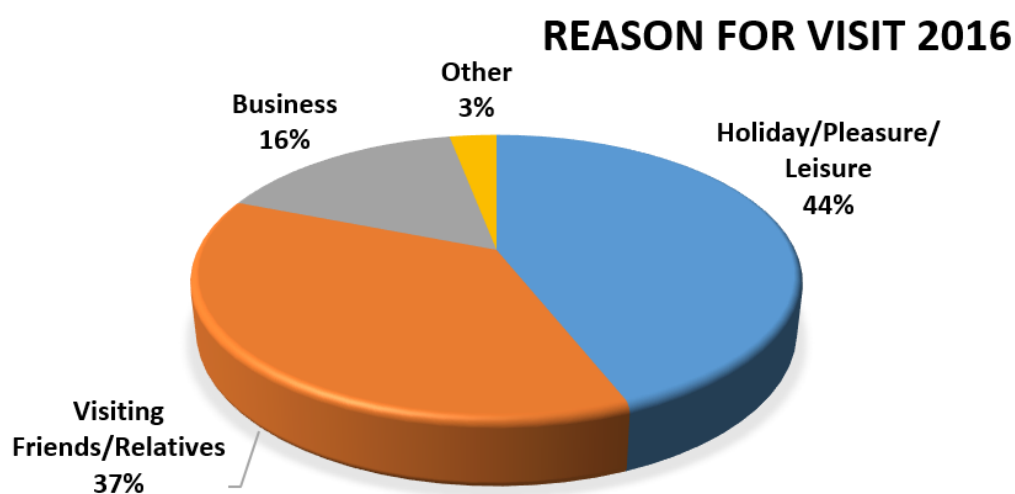


Figure 7: Reason for Visit to NI  
Source: NISRA, 2016<sup>28</sup>



Figure 8: Origin of Visitors to NI Source: NISRA, 2016<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Tourism NI Belfast City LGD Fact Card 2014 – 2016 (NISRA)

<sup>28</sup> NISRA Northern Ireland Local Government District Tourism Statistics 2016 Published 6 July 2017  
<https://tourismni.com/globalassets/facts-and-figures/research-reports/tourism-performance-statistics/local-government-district-tourism-statistics/lgd-all-fact-cards-2014-2016.pdf>

- 14.15 Belfast has a range of tourist accommodation providing a total of 11,243 bed spaces as of the end of March 2018<sup>30</sup>. According to Tourism NI, Belfast has 35 hotels with 3,929 rooms available as of March 2018, which represents 45% of total hotel rooms within Northern Ireland<sup>31</sup>. The City has 253 self-catering accommodation providing 1,673 bed spaces up to the end of March 2018<sup>32</sup>. Belfast also had 362 rooms within guesthouses/guest accommodation/bed and breakfast, <sup>33</sup>general trends are that stock of these tourist facilities are decreasing. There are also nine hostels within Belfast LGD to include the International Youth Hostel on Donegal Road in the City core and the university campuses also offer tourist accommodation during the summer months.
- 14.6 There has been an influx of hotel developments since the publication of the BMAP, for example along the Riverfront, in Cathedral Quarter and Linen Quarter. There are pending planning applications to the south centre. In Belfast LGD there are two 5\* hotels 'The Merchant' and 'The Fitzwilliam', thirteen 4 star hotels<sup>34</sup> and a projected need of 1000 – 1500 more hotel rooms between 2015 – 2020 graded as 4 or 5-star quality (Belfast Regeneration and Investment Strategy). Belfast Windsor House, the former Harland and Wolf Headquarters Building and Drawing Offices on Queens Road have recently been completed, and there are pending applications within Linenhall Street, Victoria Street, Franklin Street and Corporation Street. Whilst it is estimated that there are 1,184 rooms in future supply these recent approvals are all indigenous brands unlikely to develop again in foreseeable future and there is call for further international brands (ASM Chartered Accountants Hotel Sector Market Analysis). Higher classified establishments achieve the highest levels of business.
- 14.7 The plan will need to consider how to improve the tourism infrastructure to be able to promote accessibility whilst protecting the City's cultural, man-made and natural assets.

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<sup>29</sup> NIRSA Northern Ireland Local Government District Tourism Statistics 2016 Published 6 July 2017 <https://tourismni.com/globalassets/facts-and-figures/research-reports/tourism-performance-statistics/local-government-district-tourism-statistics/lgd-all-fact-cards-2014-2016.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> <https://tourismni.com/globalassets/facts-and-figures/research-reports/tourism-performance-statistics/accommodation-stock/accommodation-stock-end-march-2018.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> <https://tourismni.com/globalassets/facts-and-figures/research-reports/tourism-performance-statistics/accommodation-stock/accommodation-stock-end-march-2018.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> <https://tourismni.com/globalassets/facts-and-figures/research-reports/tourism-performance-statistics/accommodation-stock/accommodation-stock-end-march-2018.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> <https://tourismni.com/globalassets/facts-and-figures/research-reports/tourism-performance-statistics/accommodation-stock/accommodation-stock-end-march-2018.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> Tourism NI, Accommodation Stock March 2018

## B.15 Transport

- 15.1 Transportation systems in Belfast include a comprehensive road network that is served by Northern Ireland's three motorways, M1, M2 (fed by M22) and M3 which run south, north and east of the city respectively. The George Best City Airport is also located within Belfast's boundary along with rail and bus networks. The Westlink, a dual carriageway through pass skirting the western edge of the city connects all three motorways.
- 15.2 The Westlink, M2 and M3 motorways, which are key sections of the Strategic Road Network, are presently connected through a complex arrangement of traffic signals at York Street. This bottleneck presently causes significant congestion and delays for traffic travelling between Westlink and the M2 and M3 motorways at peak times. The junction will come under increased pressure to deal with traffic in the future. In preparation for this, Transport NI has developed proposals to provide a grade-separated junction at York Street that would provide direct links between Westlink and the M2 and M3 motorways and greatly improve access between these roads. The York Street Interchange Public Enquiry took place in November 2015 with the Commissioner publishing the findings in spring 2016. However, there is a need for careful design to reduce the visual impact of the interchange and enhance connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists. Investment is needed in the design of the interchange proposal with the aim of improving development and regeneration potential and non- motorised movement could have significant future benefits. The procurement process for the York Street Interchange has progressed during 2017/18, however a legal challenge has prevented tender award to appoint a contractor to bring to the scheme to a construction ready stage. The legal process is on-going.
- 15.3 There will be five surplus land parcels resulting from the proposed scheme post construction which can be used for development. The regeneration and development potential of these sites should be addressed through the LDP process. The project is dependent on funding and has been subject to competing infrastructural demands in the region.
- 15.4 Belfast is a city that has historically been dependent on the private car and the streetscape has evolved to cater to these demands, resulting in road infrastructure that is over sized, over complicated and a barrier to non-motorised accessibility. However, in

the recent regional and local policy and initiatives there has been a move towards a more balanced approach to pedestrians, public transport and the private car. The recent 'Belfast On the Move' initiative sought to reorganise traffic management within Belfast City Centre to facilitate the reduction in general traffic levels and encourage walking, cycling and public transport.

- 15.5 According to a DRD/NISRA (now DFI) Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (TSNI) carried out in NI between 2014-2016<sup>35</sup> car travel made up just over four fifths (82%) of the total distance travelled, public transport (Ulsterbus, Metro, Other Bus, Northern Ireland Railways and Black Taxi) accounted for 8% of total distance travelled, walking 3% and only 0.5% of journeys per adult per year were by bicycle. Between 2012-2014 period, 60% of households in Belfast had access to at least 1 car, with 20% having access to 2 or more cars- previous data contained household car ownership data by area. The area classification was based on the old 26 Local Government Districts (LGDs) which were in place prior to April 2015. These LGDs have now been superseded. However, there is no equivalent area classification based on the new LGDs (the 11 LGDs in place from April 2015) and the sample sizes of some LGDs are not sufficient to report data at LGD level. Therefore this table now reports Northern Ireland level data only.<sup>36</sup> -
- 15.6 In response to the Regional Transport Strategy 2012, the public transport network was transformed into Belfast Metro which operates 12 quality bus corridors and a number of additional routes. It also operates 5 bus stations, all situated in Belfast. On some routes the buses extend beyond Belfast into neighbouring towns, notably Newtownabbey and Dundonald as well as outlying areas such as Poleglass, Twinbrook and Lagmore.
- 15.7 There are 4 railway stations located in Belfast City Centre, Central Station, Great Victoria Street, City Hospital and Botanic. Central Station is the main terminus of the cross-border Enterprise service to Dublin's Connolly Station which runs every two hours. Central Station also operates with other routes in Northern Ireland including Derry, Bangor, Portadown and Larne.

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<sup>35</sup> <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/system/files/publications/infrastructure/TSNI-in-depth-report-2014-2016.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/system/files/publications/infrastructure/TSNI-in-depth-report-2014-2016.pdf>



- 15.8 Belfast Rapid Transit - Glider (BRT - Glider) is an innovative project that will create a new public transport system for Belfast. This project is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund through the Investment for Growth and Jobs Program for Northern Ireland 2014-2020. BRT will operate under the brand name Glider and will offer a high quality service providing people with better access to jobs, hospitals, shops, schools, colleges, and entertainment.
- 15.9 It will incorporate high quality halts with easy access to vehicles, real time information systems for easier journey planning and off-vehicle ticketing to speed up the boarding process. The speed, reliability and comfort of the Glider services should provide an attractive alternative to private car use. The Glider is scheduled to become operational in September 2018.
- 15.10 The first phase of the BRT network, which is currently being implemented, will link East Belfast, West Belfast and Titanic Quarter via the city centre. It is the intention to extend the BRT network to other areas of Belfast, subject to the success of phase 1 and the availability of funding.
- 15.11 DfI Cycling Unit was established in November 2013 to provide a focus and co-ordination role for cycling issues and cycling related activities. The Unit works towards making cycling an integral part in network planning and development and to ensure that cycling provision remains a key element in both strategy and delivery. The Unit is beginning to develop a number of bicycle network plans for urban areas within Northern Ireland and will build on the Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland. The Draft Belfast Bicycle Network Plan was published for public consultation in January 2017 and the public consultation report was published January 2018.
- 15.12 In Belfast, the first bicycle route, encompassing new engineering measures to create a safer space for those using the bicycle, was officially opened on the 23 March 2016 and links Ormeau Avenue to Chichester Street through Alfred Street and Upper Arthur Street.
- 15.13 Work is also complete on a further two schemes, Durham Street and College Street North from Grosvenor Road to College Avenue and College Street and Queen Street from College Avenue to Castle Street. All three routes link existing cycle tracks from the west and south of the city to the city centre. When complete the schemes proposed will

form a continuous 2.5 kilometer route between the Westlink shared footway and cycleway and Titanic Quarter Station which leads to the Ballymacarrett Walkway and the Comber Greenway.

- 15.8 DRD (now DFI) were also previously responsible for 367 public car parks, however off street parking, has from the 1st April 2015, become a Local Government responsibility. It is important to acknowledge that while Belfast City Council is now responsible for off street parking it has no authority over the road network within the council area. The new Local Development Plan may indicate a desire to see improvements to the existing transport network within Belfast but the council will be limited in what it can achieve as it is DFI who have the authority and control the mechanisms for implementing such changes.
- 15.9 As Belfast continues to grow and modernise, continued developments and major enhancements to our transport infrastructure are still required. The need to integrate transportation and land use to maximise development around quality sustainable transport networks is an essential element of the local development plan.
- 15.10 The responsibility for transport policies and initiatives lies with the Department for Infrastructure (DFI) and during the plan process the council will be required to work closely with the DFI to incorporate transport policy and initiatives into the plan. The LDP will need to be consistent with the objectives of the Regional Development Strategy<sup>37</sup> and relevant Transport Plans<sup>38</sup>. Regional guidance outlines the need to deliver a balanced approach to transport infrastructure, support the growth of the economy, enhance quality of life for all, and reduce the environmental impact of transport.
- 15.11 Key headline findings from the Travel Survey for Northern Ireland are as follows:
- 92,000 people within a 2,690 sq mile area travel into Belfast for work per day. Car travel made up over four fifths (82%) of the total distance travelled<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> Regional Transportation Strategy <https://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/rds2035.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> DRD/NISRA Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (TSNI) 2014-2016

<sup>39</sup> DRD/NISRA Travel Survey for Northern Ireland (TSNI) 2014-2016

- Public transport (Ulsterbus, Metro, Other Bus, Northern Ireland Railways and Black Taxi) accounted for 8% of total distance travelled<sup>210</sup>.
- Walking accounted for 3% and bicycle journeys 0.5% of total distance travelled<sup>40</sup>.
- During 2012- 2014 40% of households in Belfast do not have access to a private vehicle Since Local Government Reform this information is provided at a Northern Ireland level only. There are four Air Quality Management Areas in Belfast, in places where the air has been affected by pollution, principally nitrogen dioxide (NO<sup>2</sup>) from road transport.

## B.16 Digital Infrastructure

- 16.1 Northern Ireland has a strong record of staying at the forefront of communications technology. It became the first region in Europe to achieve 100 percent broadband coverage and one of the first to operate and experience high speed, next generation services with a new 100-gigabyte per second transatlantic and terrestrial telecommunications link between Northern Ireland, North America and Europe.
- 16.2 The region provides a fully digital, fully fibre optic communications network. Northern Ireland benefits from its own Internet backbone exchange, and telecoms costs are among the lowest in Europe. Investors have access to a truly leading-edge telecoms infrastructure and a burgeoning telecoms sector. The region's compact size also makes it an ideal test-bed for new communications technology.
- 16.3 Northern Ireland's telecoms industry is a deregulated and competitive market with over 70 operators. Deregulation means better service and lower costs. It is widely accepted that access to high quality digital communications and technology platforms can significantly enhance economies, encourage investment, develop services and improve overall quality of life for people in the coming years.

## B.17 Direct Connectivity

- 17.1 The Digital Agenda for Europe (DAE) aims to help Europe's citizens and businesses to get the most out of digital technologies. The DAE targets broadband speeds of 30Mbps or above (aka Superfast or Next Generation Access) for all European Union citizens,

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<sup>40</sup> Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015  
<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/belfast-metropolitan-transport-plan>

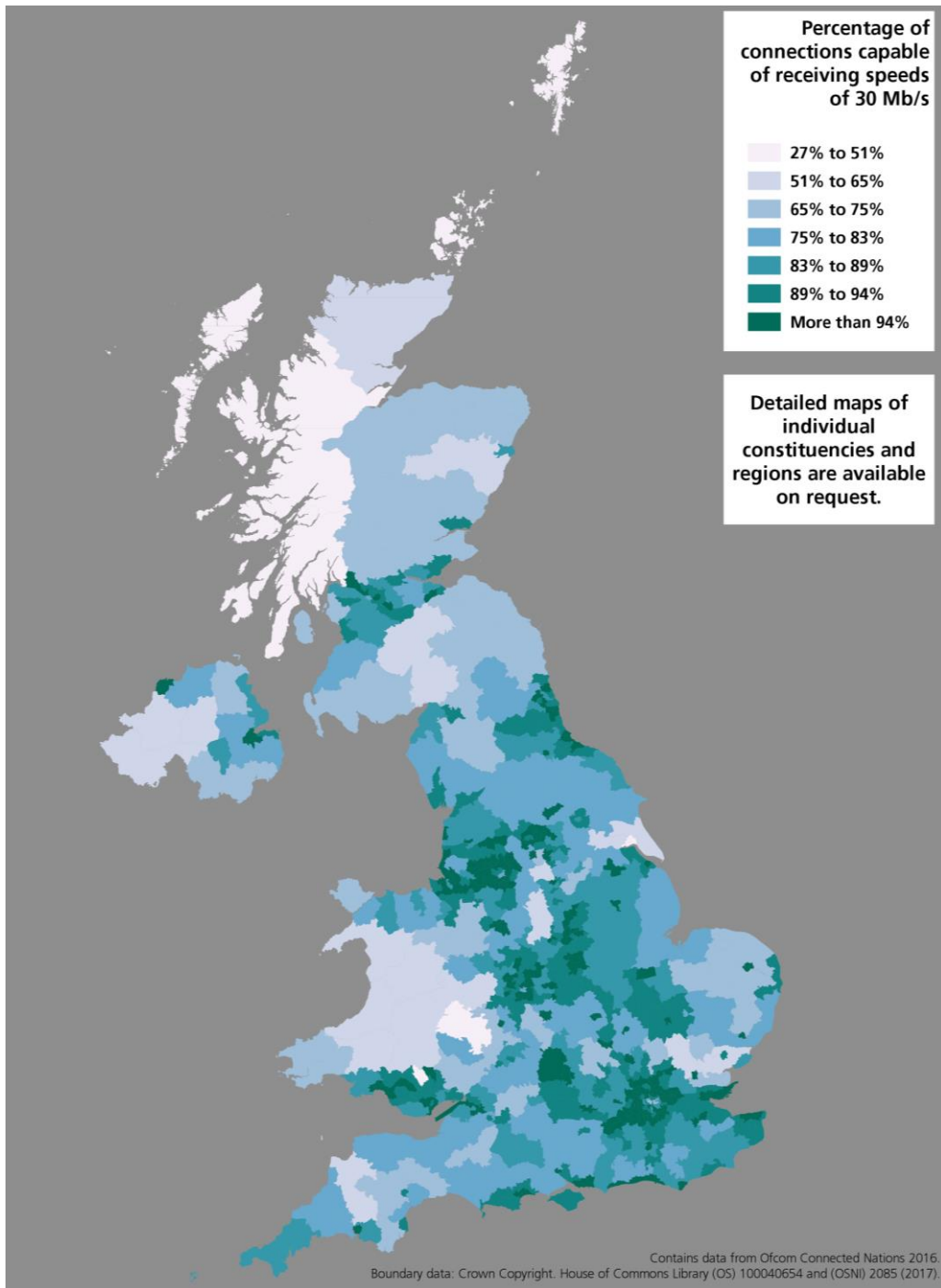
with half of households subscribing to connections of 100Mbps or higher (Ultrafast) by 2020.

17.2 In 2013 UK Government stated its commitment “to continue to invest in broadband that will result in extending superfast broadband to 95% of premises by 2017 and to explore with the industry how to expand coverage further using more innovative fixed, wireless and mobile broadband solutions to reach at least 99% of premises across the UK by 2018”<sup>41</sup>.

17.3 It also recognises the need to plan ahead to make sure that our digital communications infrastructure meets the needs of users in the UK and maintains a competitive edge to retain and attract business.

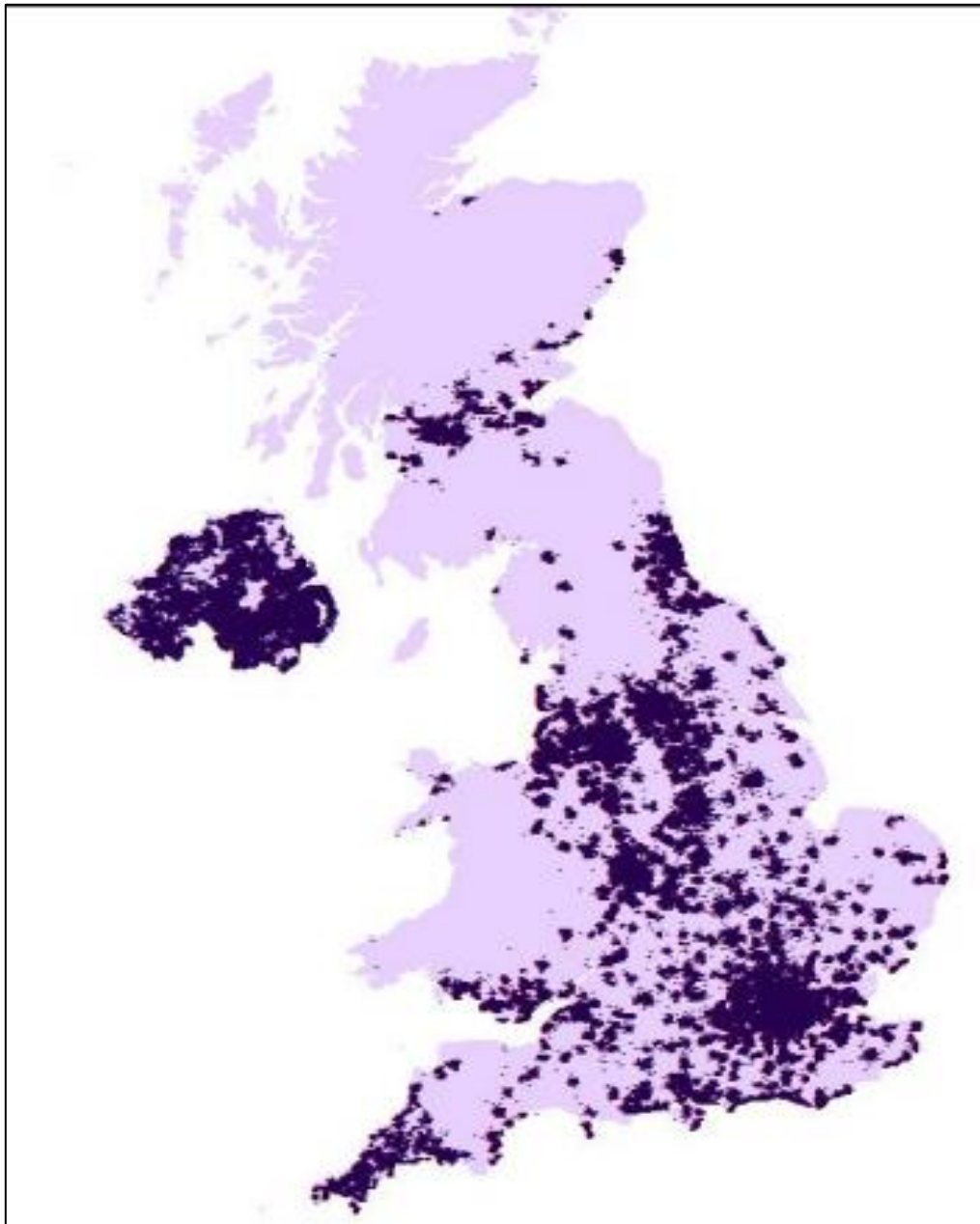
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<sup>41</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/countryside-benefits-from-speeded-up-broadband-roll-out>



**Figure 9: Availability of Superfast Broadband 2016**<sup>42</sup>  
Source House of Commons Library 2017

<sup>42</sup> <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06643/SN06643.pdf>



**Figure 10: Postcodes where Next Generation Access Networks are Available**  
*Source: Ofcom*

- 17.4 Figure 10 shows the postcodes where Next Generation Access (30Mbps) networks are available. Throughout most of the UK, superfast broadband roll out is largely concentrated in urban areas, where it is cheaper to deploy new infrastructure because of population density, the impact of public sector interventions to extend NGA availability in Northern Ireland is clearly visible.
- 17.5 Ofcom’s Connected Nations 2016 report states that although superfast coverage has “improved in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, they still lag behind the UK as a

whole”<sup>43</sup>The UK Government is making further funding available to extend superfast broadband across the UK. Under the Superfast Rollout programme, Northern Ireland has an indicative allocation of £7.24m and DETI is seeking to match this amount resulting in a potential total of £14.48m. This may be further supplemented with a supplier contribution. If a further intervention presents value for money, this will provide further or improved broadband coverage across Northern Ireland.

- 17.6 The Northern Ireland Executive’s Economic Strategy recognises that, to underpin economic growth, Northern Ireland needs a modern and sustainable economic infrastructure. It also recognises the need to build on NI’s existing strengths, including our status as one of the first UK regions to deliver extensive next generation broadband services.
- 17.7 A key aim of the Executive’s Regional Development Strategy is to implement a balanced approach to telecommunications infrastructure that will provide a competitive advantage.
- 17.8 The continued development of Northern Ireland’s telecoms infrastructure is also relevant to other Programme for Government targets which aim to improve the quality and cost effectiveness of public services in terms of access and the range of contact channels available, including better quality and consistent online services. The Economic Pact between the Northern Ireland Executive and the UK Government acknowledges the need to build on Northern Ireland’s strong communications infrastructure in boosting the Northern Ireland economy.
- 17.9 DETI has developed and delivered a number of important infrastructure projects, drawing on funding from the EU, UK Government and Northern Ireland Executive sources. Projects include, Project Kelvin<sup>44</sup>, £52m fibre roll out (business access of up to 40 megabits per second, £19.3m NI Broadband Improvement Project and £14.48m Superfast Rollout Programme.

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<sup>43</sup> Ofcom, Connected Nations 2016, 16 December 2016, para 2.9

<sup>44</sup> Project Kelvin which connects Northern Ireland to North America, Great Britain and mainland Europe via submarine cable. Co-financed under the EU INTERREG IVA Programme for Ireland, Northern Ireland and Western Scotland 2007-2013, and in partnership with the Department of Communication, Energy and Natural Resources in the Republic of Ireland, and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI)

17.10 Northern Ireland became the first region in Europe to achieve 100 per cent broadband coverage. Its position in respect of telecommunications technology and infrastructure provision has been aided by various projects and funding initiatives, including:

- Nex generation broadband project – launched by DFE to provide services to 85% of SMEs across NI to increase the competitiveness of local business. It aimed to deploy fibres to cabinets and provide fibre upgrades. In 2015 Ofcom reported that Northern Ireland superfast broadband availability is highest in the UK, following the completion of the project, which invested more than £52m in fibre-to-the-cabinet broadband across the country and was completed in 2011.<sup>45</sup>
- Northern Ireland Broadband Fund – a £1.9m fund provided by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to support projects which aimed to improve broadband across NI. Within Antrim and Down, a WIMAX wireless broadband connection was installed
- Urban Broadband Fund – Belfast received £13.7m from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Urban Broadband Fund and provided £3m through the council's Investment Programme to become a digital city and one of 22 Super Connected Cities in the UK. Belfast has the highest density of fibre in Europe and the best availability of superfast broadband in the UK
- Project Kelvin – NI is one of the first regions in Europe to operate high and experience high speed, next generation services through Project Kelvin, with a new 40-gigabyte per second transatlantic and terrestrial telecommunications link to North America and Europe via industry leading fibre optic submarine cables.<sup>2846</sup>
- Super Connected Communities – Belfast City Council developed Super Connected Communities to provide activities and facilities across Belfast to help people use the internet. It has developed IT hubs within community centres and an outreach hub which travels around Wi-Fi enabled community centres. Through this scheme, the council has issued connection vouchers to 1323 organisations across the city, providing them with super-fast access. The council has also provided a complimentary economic development programme assisting recipients to maximise the return from their enhanced connectivity. A second strand of the

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<sup>45</sup> In 2015 Ofcom reported that superfast broadband availability is highest in Northern Ireland, following the completion of the Government-funded Next Generation Broadband Project, which invested more than £52m in fibre-to-the-cabinet broadband across the country and was completed in 2011.

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.investni.com/invest-in-northern-ireland/why-northern-ireland/advanced-infrastructure.html>



programme has provided the public free access to Wi-Fi in 109 public buildings across the city. The aim is to enliven these spaces, to support a connected community and to build upon digital access to both commerce and government. A further stage of this strand is currently under way to extend this free Wi-Fi out into the city centre streets.

## **B.18 Superfast Northern Ireland**

- 18.1 Superfast Northern Ireland is the Northern Ireland delivery body for the Superfast Rollout Programme. The Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project (NIBIP) was a Phase 1 project to provide increased or improved broadband services in certain areas. It ran from February 2014 to December 2015. As part of phase 1 of the UK Government's superfast broadband programme, Northern Ireland was allocated £4.4 million through BDUK, and as part of phase 2, BDUK allocated a further £7.2 million.<sup>47</sup>
- 18.2 The Superfast Rollout Programme (Phase 2) is a project to provide improved superfast broadband services in areas across Northern Ireland. The project aims to provide superfast broadband to over 38,000 premises in areas where the choice is poor or broadband speeds are low. Some of these are in rural and remote parts of Northern Ireland. This Phase 2 project started in February 2015 and will run until the end of December 2017. It is allocated £17 million from the Department for the Economy, BDUK and BT.<sup>48</sup>
- 18.3 According to BDUK data, as at the end of March 2016, 83% of premises in Northern Ireland has access to superfast broadband; 80% of premises had access as a result of commercial coverage, 3% had access as a result of BDUK projects.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> BDUK, BDUK: Table of local broadband projects, Accessed online: 7 October 2015

<sup>48</sup> Northern Ireland Department for the Economy, Superfast Rollout Programme [accessed 28 February 2017] ; see also: 'N.Ireland Secures Another GBP17m to Extend Superfast Broadband', ISPreview, 2 March 2015

<sup>49</sup> DCMS, Table showing coverage data for all constituencies, DEP2016-0613. Note that BDUK data and analyses uses a different methodology to Ofcom, so is not directly comparable.

## B.19 Mobile

### 4G Mobile Broadband Networks

- 19.1 The major mobile networks, (i.e. EE, Vodafone, O2 Telefonica (O2) and Three), provide 4G coverage in NI, with other providers having status as mobile virtual network operators (MVNOs) that use the wireless network infrastructure of the four major operators to provide mobile broadband services to customers. EE was the first major provider to launch 4G Services, doing so in October 2012, with coverage reaching Belfast in December 2012, and double-speed 4G services introduced in July 2013. It was followed in August 2013 by the introduction of 4G Services by Vodafone and O2. Three was the last network provider to offer a 4G Service, announcing plans in November 2015 to provide 4G Coverage to Belfast, followed by other parts of NI including Londonderry. The provision of 4G services entails upgrading existing sites rather than the construction of new sites, and involves deploying new antennas and upgrading backhaul.
- 19.2 OFCOMs Connected Nations update: Spring 2018 highlighted a 72% geographic availability of 4G services covered by all operators in NI. The area covered by 4G services from all operators increased by 20% in Northern Ireland. While 4G availability in NI, still lags in comparison with a number of countries, notably the USA, available data for the first half of 2018 indicates relatively high levels of 4G availability throughout Belfast, when measured against the geographic percentage for the region. The data provides a 'footprint perspective' which is the likelihood of accessing 4G on the provider's network in any given area. Figures for Belfast are summarised as follows.

Network Providers	% 4G Footprint Perspective
EE	97.6
Vodafone	97.2
Three	96.4
O2	94.5

**Table 11: 4G Footprint Perspective for Belfast (first half of 2018)**  
 (Source: table generated from information produced by RootMetrics)<sup>50</sup>

19.3 According to 4G<sup>51</sup> major network providers are seeking to extend 4G coverage throughout the UK. EE's 4G network currently reaches over 99% of the UK population, which is the equivalent of more than 86% of the UK geography. Vodafone currently has 98% UK 4G population coverage across 1,000 larger towns, cities and districts as well as thousands of smaller communities. O2 brings 4G coverage to over 98% of the UK population indoors and Three has widespread 4G coverage with over 99% population coverage currently.

## B.20 Super-Connected Belfast Programme

20.1 In May of 2013 Belfast was named one of the 10 cities included in the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's Super-Connected Cities Programme. This was designed to allow the nominated cities to further develop their digital infrastructure to support the creation of highly developed leading edge centres. Through this scheme, Belfast City Council has issued connection vouchers to 1323 organisations across the city, providing those with super-fast access. The council has also provided a complimentary economic development programme assisting recipients to maximise the return from their enhanced connectivity.

20.2 A second strand of the programme has provided free to the public access to Wi-Fi in 107 public buildings across the city. The aim is to enliven these spaces, to support a connected community and to build upon digital access to both commerce and government. A further stage of this strand is currently under way to extend this free Wi-Fi out into the city centre streets.

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.rootmetrics.com/en-GB/home>

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.4g.co.uk/4g-networks/>



## C ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE

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### C.1 Biodiversity, flora & fauna

- 1.1 Many areas in Belfast are important for their natural heritage interest. Several of these areas merit statutory designation and are protected under international (including European), national or local legislation. Certain species and habitats also benefit from legal protection. Whilst this evidence is applicable throughout the plan area, the key areas are summarised below.

### C.2 International

- 2.1 Natura 2000 includes sites are Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar Sites. Each identified site is managed through a set of conservation objectives which should be taken into account when developing the LDP.
- 2.2 **Special Protection Areas** (SPAs) are sites established under the European Commission Directive of Wild Birds (2009/147/EC), commonly known as the 'Birds Directive'. SPAs are important areas for breeding, over-wintering and migrating birds. Currently Belfast has 2 SPAs, Belfast Lough SPA and Belfast Lough Open Water SPA. Belfast Lough is a large intertidal sea Lough situated at the mouth of the River Lagan. The inner part of the Lough comprises a series of mudflats and lagoons; the outer Lough is restricted to mainly rocky shores and small sandy bays on the southern shore with more extensive mixed sediment intertidal areas on the northern side.

### C.3 Belfast Lough SPA

- 3.1 Belfast Lough SPA is 428.64 ha in area and qualifies under Article 4.1 of the 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive by supporting Bar-tailed Godwit and migratory species of Redshank and Turnstone over winter. The area also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl. Over winter, the area regularly supports individual waterfowl including Goldeneye, Redshank, Turnstone, Great Crested Grebe, Cormorant, Shelduck, Mallard, Bar-tailed Godwit, Black-tailed Godwit, Eider, Curlew, Red-breasted Merganser, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Lapwing, Knot, Dunlin, Black-tailed Godwit, and Scaup.
- 3.2 The Special Protection Area boundary is entirely coincident with that of the Belfast Lough Ramsar Site.

- 3.3 Belfast Lough SPA also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) by regularly supporting internationally important populations of Redshank and Black-tailed Godwit. Additionally, the site qualifies under the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC under Article 4.1 by supporting Common Tern, Arctic Tern and Bar-Tailed Godwit.
- 3.4 Numbers of wintering Redshank have been declining since the SPA designation. This is concurrent with UK and indeed International trends. As a result, the status of Belfast Lough is considered 'unfavourable'.

#### **C.4 Belfast Lough Open Water SPA**

- 4.1 Belfast Lough Open Water SPA covers 5,591.73 ha in area and comprises of the marine area below the mean low water mark. Seawards it extends to a notional boundary between the eastern limits on the north and south shores of the Outer Belfast Lough Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) at Kilroot and Horse Rock respectively.<sup>52</sup> The boundary towards the head of the Lough is a notional line between Greencastle on northern shore and Holywood Bank on the southern shore. The site qualifies under Article 4.2 of the 79/409/EEC Directive by supporting Great Crested Grebe, an internationally important species.
- 4.2 The current status of the SPA features of the Belfast Lough Open Water is of 'favourable' status. However, the population of Great Crested Grebe is being closely monitored following a recorded decline in 2010/11 which was potentially due to weather conditions. Although populations have been steadily recovering, the feature is being closely monitored.
- 4.3 In January 2016, NIEA proposed an agglomeration of a number of existing designated sites into one SPA - the East Coast (Northern Ireland) Marine SPA. The proposed SPA includes coastal and near shore waters from Ringford near Carnlough in the north, the marine area of Larne Lough, the marine area of Belfast Lough, waters around the Copeland Islands and off shore of the Ards Peninsula to Cloghan Head, near Ardglass in the south. The site would also subsume the existing Belfast Lough SPA and Belfast Lough Open Water SPA. The site covers a diverse range of seabed habitats, from extensive coastal fringing reefs of various lithologies to the fine silt of inner Belfast

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<sup>52</sup> <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/special-protection-area-belfast-lough-open-water>

Lough. The purpose of adjoining the above SPA's is to support internationally important populations of Great Crested Grebe, Red-throated Diver, Sandwich Tern, Common Tern, Artic Tern, Manx Shearwater, and Eider Duck.

- 4.4 **Special Areas of Conservation** (SACs) are sites that have been given protection under the European Legislation of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). The designated sites are for other species other than birds such as special habitats, species, grasslands and wetlands of biodiversity importance on an international scale.
- 4.5 There are no SACs located directly within Belfast. There is one proposed SAC for Harbour Porpoise where the boundary runs across Belfast Lough and therefore not in the plan area.
- 4.6 **Ramsar Sites** are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention 1971. Wetlands are productive ecosystems and provide us with fresh water but have been subject to human interventions and converted to other uses. The convention includes "all lakes and rivers, underground aquifers, swamps and marshes, wet grasslands, peatlands, oases, estuaries, deltas and tidal flats, mangroves and other coastal areas, coral reefs, and all human-made sites such as fish ponds, rice paddies, reservoirs and salt pans."<sup>53</sup> Wetlands as ecosystems are extremely important for biodiversity conservation which is recognised for the wellbeing of society. The management of our wetlands is important and are sensitive to trans-boundary water and air pollutants.
- 4.7 UK Government applies the procedures for Ramsar sites under the Habitats Regulations. There are 21 Ramsar sites designated in Northern Ireland of which 1 site is located in Belfast, Belfast Lough. The Ramsar site at Belfast Lough covers 433ha and qualifies under Criterion 3 of the Ramsar Convention which supports populations of Common Redshank in winter. The site also supports nationally important species such as Shelduck, and Oystercatcher.
- 4.8 DAERA, through NIEA, is responsible for implementing and complying with the requirements of the Habitats Directive through the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) which transposes the Habitats

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<sup>53</sup> <http://www.ramsar.org/about/the-ramsar-convention-and-its-mission>

Directive<sup>54</sup>. Under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) and the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 (as amended) carry special conservation measures for many priority species. Alongside this, some priority species are also protected under the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) and the Wildlife Order 1985 (as amended). The Habitats Directive also required continuous monitoring of the population of certain species with the aim of achieving Favourable Conservation Status (FCS).

- 4.9 The LDP has regard to the regulations and the conservation objectives governing these sites to ensure no direct or indirect adverse impacts will be caused as a result of planned development. Development proposals will be subject to a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening Report to ensure due consideration is given to the aforementioned sites as necessary. If the report highlights the potential for significant effects cannot be avoided at an early stage, an Appropriate Assessment will be undertaken to consider the potential impact on the structure and function as well as the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 sites. An assessment of potential mitigation measures will be presented to reduce potential adverse impacts alongside an additional assessment of Alternative Solutions will be undertaken.
- 4.10 The Shared Environmental Services (SES) team that has been set up in Mid and East Antrim Council provides support to council on a range of specialist functions including the HRA on planning applications and during the preparation of the LDP to assess and advise on the impacts of European Sites. This function will support the council to ensure the legal requirements of these habitats/sites are fully met in accordance to the Habitats Directive and other Environmental Legislation and to reduce the risk of challenge to planning decisions, development plans and policies. SES has provided a long list of sites that are within or adjacent to Belfast and those which have a connection ecologically, or are within a scope of 15km – see Table 11.

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<sup>54</sup> The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations (NI) 1995:  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/1995/380/made>



European Site Name	Connection with plan area				Key Issues
	Within or Adjacent	Ecological	Within 15km	By Infrastructure	
Belfast Lough SPA	•	•	•	•	Activities during construction or use of development causing disturbance to birds. Impacts causing a significant deterioration of water quality.
Belfast Lough Ramsar	•	•	•	•	Activities during construction or use of development causing disturbance to birds. Impacts causing a significant deterioration of water quality.
Belfast Lough Open Water SPA	•	•	•	•	Activities during construction or use of development causing disturbance to birds. Impacts causing a significant deterioration of water quality.
East Coast (Northern Ireland) Marine pSPA	•	•	•	•	Activities during construction or use of development causing disturbance to birds. Impacts causing a significant deterioration of water quality.
North Channel pSAC		•	•	•	Activities during construction causing disturbance to harbour porpoise. Impacts causing a significant deterioration of water quality.
Outer Ards SPA		•	•	•	Activities during construction or use of development causing disturbance to birds. Impacts causing a significant deterioration of water quality.
Outer Ards Ramsar		•	•	•	Activities during construction or use of development causing disturbance to birds. Impacts causing a significant deterioration of water quality.
Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA		•	•	•	Any major development in small part of plan area that drains to Lough Neagh. Major increase in demand for water.
Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Ramsar		•	•	•	Any major development in small part of plan area that drains to Lough Neagh. Major increase in demand for water.
Strangford Lough SPA		•	•		Activities during construction or use of development causing disturbance to birds. Impacts causing a significant deterioration of water quality. Any major development in small part of plan area that drains to Strangford Lough.
Strangford Lough SAC		•	•		Any major development in small part of plan area that drains to Strangford Lough.
Strangford Lough Ramsar		•	•		Activities during construction or use of development causing disturbance to birds. Impacts causing a significant deterioration of water quality. Any major development in small part of plan area that drains to Strangford Lough.

European Site Name	Connection with plan area				Key Issues
	Within or Adjacent	Ecological	Within 15km	By Infra-structure	
Larne Lough SPA		•	•	•	Activities during construction or use of development causing disturbance to birds. Impacts causing a significant deterioration of water quality.
Copeland Islands SPA		•	•	•	Activities during construction or use of development causing disturbance to birds. Impacts causing a significant deterioration of water quality.
The Maidens SCI (SAC)		•	•		Activities during construction or use of development causing disturbance to seals.
Murlough SAC		•	•		Activities during construction or use of development causing disturbance to seals.
Skerries and Causeway SCI (SAC)		•	•		Activities during construction or use of development causing disturbance to harbour porpoise.
Aughnadarragh Lough SAC			•		Major increases in aerial emissions of pollutants.
Eastern Mourne SAC				•	Major increase in demand for water.
Antrim Hills SPA				•	Major increase in demand for water.
Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay SAC				•	Major increase in demand for water.

**Table 11: European Sites for Consideration in Habitats Regulation Assessment for Belfast LDP**  
Source: SES Belfast Baseline HRA

## C.5 National

5.1 **Areas of Special Scientific Interest** (ASSIs) are of special interest by reason of their flora, fauna, geological and/or physiological features designated under the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 (as amended). Sites are protected to conserve biodiversity and geodiversity. There are four ASSI's in Belfast:

- **Inner Belfast Lough** also contains a number of Earth Science Conservation Review (ESCR) sites exhibiting a range of Ordovician, Carboniferous and Permian features of national geological interest.
- **Craigtlet Woods** represents a large block of semi-natural woodland. Due to the inaccessibility of the woods, it has been relatively undisturbed maintaining a high degree of naturalness. The site was recorded as having 'unfavourable' status in 2009 due to the spread of non-native invasive species, principally Sycamore.
- **Belvoir** ASSI within the former Belvoir Estate with the exception of Moreland's Meadow. It is designated for its parkland and wood pasture habitat and associated species<sup>55</sup>.
- **Bellevue**<sup>56</sup> is important because of its geology. It is one of a series of sites that describes the Clay-with-Flints (CwF), a unique deposit whose exposure is mostly confined to the Antrim Plateau.

5.2 **Areas of Scientific Interest** (ASI) were declared under the Amenity and Lands Act (Northern Ireland) 1985 where consideration must be given to maintaining the feature of scientific interest but development may proceed subject to appropriate restrictions. ASI's in many respects are treated similarly to ASSIs but there is less control over land use. Many ASIs have been pre-designated to ASSI, SPA or SAC to preserve the feature of scientific interest. At present, Hazelwood ASI is the only such designation with the administrative boundary of Belfast which contains a diverse ground flora carpet of woodland herbs and provides a suitable home to multi stemmed hazel.

5.3 **Marine Protected Area** (MPAs) are defined as 'any area of intertidal or subtidal terrain, together with its overlying water and associated flora, fauna, historical and cultural

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<sup>55</sup> Belvoir has been recently declared and assessments are being reviewed. Refer to <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/belvoir-assi> for more detail

<sup>56</sup> Bellevue has been recently declared an assessments are being reviewed. Refer <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/bellevue-assi> for more detail

features which has been reserved by law or other effective means to protect part or all of the enclosed environment.<sup>57</sup> In Northern Ireland there are five types of MPA's designations, SAC, SPA, ASSI, Ramsar Sites, **Marine Conservation Zones** (MCZ) and OSPAR MPAs.

- 5.4 The Marine (Northern Ireland) Act 2013 allows for the creation of MCZ's to protect and conserve important species of marine wildlife, habitats, geology and geomorphology. Currently DAERA is consulting on proposals for MCZ's in the Northern Ireland inshore region (out to 12 nautical miles) which includes a proposal for a MCZ at Outer Belfast Lough.
- 5.5 According to the OSPAR<sup>58</sup> Commission, OSPAR Marine Protection Areas are "areas for which protective, conservation, restorative or precautionary measures have been instituted for the purpose of protecting and conserving species, habitats, ecosystems or ecological processes of the marine environment". The intention of OSPAR is to address the pollution affecting the North East Atlantic area. A key part of the OSPAR biodiversity strategy is the develop a network of MPA's to ensure the biodiversity, environmental and ecological quality of the maritime ecosystems are conserved, protected and managed sustainably. OSPAR is guided by the ecosystems approach which is an interaction of the impacts of human activity and the physical environment of plants, animals and microbes. In Belfast two areas have been identified in the OSPAR biodiversity strategy; Belfast Lough Open Water SPA and Belfast Lough SPA.
- 5.6 **National Nature Reserves** (NNR) protects some of the most important habitats, species and geology and their designation is recognition by Government of their importance. There are no National Nature Reserves in Belfast City Council area.
- 5.7 **Earth Science Interests and Assets** include geology and geomorphology and are defined by the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan as *"the rocks and landforms of Northern Ireland from the surface on which life has developed, they have a major influence in determining the biodiversity of regions and, more directly, the physical character of the*

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<sup>57</sup> <https://www.doeni.gov.uk/articles/marine-protected-areas>

<sup>58</sup> The OSPAR convention was agreed in Paris and came into effect in 1998. The OSPAR convention replaced both the Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft (the Oslo Convention) (adopted in 1972) and the Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution from Land-Based Sources (the Paris Convention) (adopted in 1974)

*landscape*<sup>59</sup>. BMAP identifies the following areas that are of Earth Science Interest and assets: Bellevue; Carr's Glen; Crow Glen; Ballygomartin Sill; Collin Glen; and, Ballymiscaw.

## **C.6 Local**

### **6.1 Northern Ireland Priority Species**

The Wildlife and Natural Environment (NI) Act 2011 also known as the WANE Act introduced a duty on public authorities to exercise its functions to conserve biodiversity. DAERA maintains a list of priority species that require conservation action. Northern Ireland Priority Species (NIPS) are those that require conservation management and action due to their decline, rarity and/or importance to the environment. In 2015, NIEA reviewed the priority species list, which currently stands at 481 species, an increase of 271 from the previous count in 2002. Out of the 481 NIPS, 93 are considered as 'marine'. These include species of algae, bees, beetles, birds, fish, butterflies, fungi and mammals. In the Belfast City Council area, there are 197 recorded NIPS, of which 8 are considered marine.

### **6.2 Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan**

The Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) outlined a number of local designations which play an important part to the contribution of local wildlife. Whilst these sites may not hold the same statutory protection as the international or national sites, they hold weight in the planning process as sites of importance that require due consideration. These sites are listed in Table 12 below.

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<sup>59</sup> Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2015 Countryside Assessment Vol 1

Type of Local Site of Importance	Location
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Areas of High Scenic Value (AHSV)</b></p> <p>Designated to protect the setting of the Metropolitan Urban Area and other areas of particular landscape merit.</p>	<p>There are portions of three AHSV in Belfast:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Belfast Basalt Escarpment:</b> 191.73 of 3012.79ha [6%]</li> <li>• <b>Castlereagh Slopes:</b> 2.48 of 1257.64ha [0.2%]</li> <li>• <b>Castlereagh Escarpment:</b> 275.30 of 904.73ha [30.4%]</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Local Nature Reserves &amp; Wildlife Refuges</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ballyaghagan</b> comprises of species rich hay meadows and an area of upland blanket bog. Some of the fields have rock outcrops with local calcareous species present, acid flushes and more neutral taller grassland swards. Plants found within the acid areas include Common Butterwort and Bogbean.</li> <li>• <b>Hazelwood:</b> Hazel woodland and scrub with good examples of multi stemmed hazel. The woodland contains a diverse ground flora carpet of woodland herbs.</li> <li>• <b>Bog Meadows:</b> the 19 ha (47 acre) Bog Meadows Nature Reserve, managed by the Ulster Wildlife Trust and Friends of Bog Meadows, consists of a variety of habitats including areas of open water, swamp, marshland and wet grassland.</li> <li>• <b>Lagan Meadows:</b> 49 hectares in size and historically was the source of Belfast's first piped water supply over 200 years ago, the spring at Lester's Dam, which provided the water, still runs and gives rise to the wetlands and marsh for which Lagan Meadows is best known. But this attractive 49-hectare site also contains grazed pasture, meadow and woodland.</li> <li>• <b>Moreland's Meadow:</b> separates the main Lagan Meadows Park from the former Lagan canal, where mature veteran oaks and cedars dominate the grazed pasture. The following species can be located: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wetland birds, including snipe, woodcock, grasshopper warbler, sedge warbler and reed bunting.</li> <li>○ Woodland birds, including song thrush, dunnock, wren and treecreeper.</li> <li>○ Amphibians, frogs spawning in early spring. Insects including banded demoiselle, blue-tailed and azure damselfly, orange-tip, ringlet and cryptic wood white butterfly.</li> <li>○ Trees including oak, ash, willow, alder and hawthorn.</li> <li>○ Wildflowers, including common spotted orchid, lady's smock, yellow flag, ragged robin and devil's bit scabious.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Type of Local Site of Importance	Location
<p><b>Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance</b> (SLNCI's)</p> <p>Identified by their local nature importance on the basis of their flora, fauna or scientific interest.</p>	<p>There are 61 SLNCIs, 7 of which are identified as being of geodiversity importance.</p>
<p><b>Local Landscape Policy Areas</b> (LLPAs)</p> <p>Designated to help protect those areas within and/or adjoining settlements which are considered to be of greatest amenity value, landscape quality or local significance and are therefore worthy of protection from undesirable or damaging development.</p>	<p>There are 86 LLPAs designated in the Belfast Council area.</p>
<p><b>Belfast Hills Access Points</b></p>	<p>There are 16 access points to the Belfast Hills.</p>
<p><b>Belfast Metropolitan Area Coastal Area</b></p>	<p>Contains many environmentally sensitive areas, and also listed buildings and scheduled monuments with industrial heritage value.</p>
<p><b>Rural &amp; Urban Landscape Wedges</b></p>	<p>There are four 'Rural Landscape Wedges' within the Belfast City Council area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Hannahstown</b>;</li> <li>• <b>Glencregagh</b>, Castlereagh Countryside (43.88 of 62.80ha [69.9%])</li> <li>• <b>Mosside</b> (rural), Lisburn Countryside (15.57 of 162.54ha [9.6%]); and,</li> <li>• <b>Hollywood</b>, North Down Countryside (9.98 of 82.61ha [12.1%]).</li> </ul> <p>There are five designated Urban Landscape Wedges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bellevue / Fortwilliam</b> - between North Belfast and the Glengormley area in Newtownabbey;</li> <li>• <b>Milltown</b> - between Whiterock, St. James area and Lower Andersonstown, West Belfast;</li> </ul>

Type of Local Site of Importance	Location
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Colin Glen</b> - between Suffolk, West Belfast and Dunmurry/Colin area, Lisburn;</li> <li>• <b>Lagmore Glen</b> - between Belfast and Metropolitan Lisburn; and</li> <li>• <b>Dundonald</b> (Castlereagh) - between Dundonald and the boundary of Knock, East Belfast. A portion of this Urban Landscape Wedge at Knock Golf Course and Dundonald Cemetery lies within Belfast City Council area (0.61 of 28.85ha [2.1%]).</li> </ul>

**Table 12: Natural Heritage Designations**

*Source: 2015 Countryside Assessment Vol 1*



## C.7 Trees & woodland

- 7.1 Urban trees are an essential multifaceted resource, providing a vast array of benefits for people, local communities and the cityscape. Trees have a high amenity value and make a positive contribution to the social, cultural and physical environment. Trees can help to define an area and create a sense of place such as Cyprus Avenue and contribute to the 15 conservation areas in Belfast. Trees harbour wildlife habitats and contribute to the health and wellbeing of people.
- 7.2 Trees absorb gases associated with air pollution such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) which is known to cause respiratory problems. Trees also provide a natural flood defence, can help to conserve ground water and create a noise buffer.
- 7.3 Accepting the maxim, that green leafy surroundings encourages wellbeing, there is a growing evidence to show that people find well-appointed green environments more relaxing thus reducing stress levels, improving mental wellbeing and contributing to a better quality of life. The Department of Social Development (now Department of Communities) over recent years have carried out a tree planting scheme across several of the more deprived arterial routes in the city including Falls Road, Springfield Road and Crumlin Road.
- 7.4 There are three ways in which the planning system can safeguard the conservation of trees:
1. Tree Preservation Orders: The council has a duty to protect trees under Section 122 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are designated to trees (either singularly or in a group) which are of high amenity or historic value or, for its rarity. There are over 160 TPOs in Belfast.
  2. Trees in Conservation Areas: Trees make an important contribution to the appearance and character of a conservation area. Trees situated in conservation areas are treated with the same status of singular trees subject to a TPO.
  3. Trees protected by a retention condition are a stipulation applied to planning permission. The purpose of a retention condition for trees is to ensure trees are protected and not damaged during construction; and/or trees that offer a high

amenity impact are retained to embed the new construction into the natural environment.

## **C.8 Air quality**

- 8.1 The Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) recognises the dangers from air particulate pollution stating that it is estimated that it reduces life expectancy in the UK by 7-8 months. There is a need to reduce air pollution from transport by the use of more energy efficient transport as well as the need to continue to protect Air Quality Management Areas.
- 8.2 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) details that the Local Development Plan (LDP) must consider the location of development which may give rise to air pollution. The LDP must also, ensure that other developments are, as far as practicable, not adversely affected by major existing or potential future sources of air pollution.
- 8.3 At a local level, Belfast City Council has an obligation to regularly review, assess and report on air quality under the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) regime. In Northern Ireland, this is established via Part III of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 and the relevant Policy and Technical Guidance documents (LAQM PGNI (09)). Under the LAQM process, where a local authority determines that exceedance of an air quality objective is likely, they must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan with measures to pursue the relevant objective. At a national level, the UK Government is required to achieve European Union (EU) air quality limit values in accordance with the schedules prescribed in the Ambient Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC) and daughter directive.
- 8.4 The initial air quality assessment was carried out and completed by Belfast City Council in 2003. The assessment concluded that measures would be required in four specific areas of the city in order to mitigate the effects of NO<sub>2</sub> (nitrogen dioxide) and PM<sub>10</sub> (particulate matter) pollution.

8.5 In August 2004, the council identified and declared four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within Belfast where the health based air quality objectives are being exceeded. They are as follows:

1. The M1/ Westlink corridor from the Belfast City boundary at Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park to the end of the Westlink at the junction with Great Georges Street and York Street including Stockmans Lane and Kennedy Way. This area was declared for predicted exceedances of both the nitrogen dioxide and particulate material annual mean air quality strategy objectives, as well as exceedances of the particulate matter 24-hour mean objective and the nitrogen dioxide 1- hour mean objective.
2. Cromac Street to the junction with East Bridge Street and then from East Bridge Street to the junction of Ravenhill and Albertbridge Roads and Short Strand. This area was declared for predicted exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean air quality strategy objective.
3. The Upper Newtownards Road from the North Road junction to the Belfast City boundary at the Ulster Hospital incorporating the Knock Road to the City boundary at Laburnum Playing Fields and Hawthornden Way. This area was declared for predicted exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean air quality strategy objective.
4. The Ormeau Road from the junction with Donegall Pass to the Belfast City boundary at Galwally. This area was declared for predicted exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean air quality strategy objective.

8.6 The four areas are shown in images 3-6, below which shows the AQMA within the blue line.



Image 3: M1- Westlink AQMA

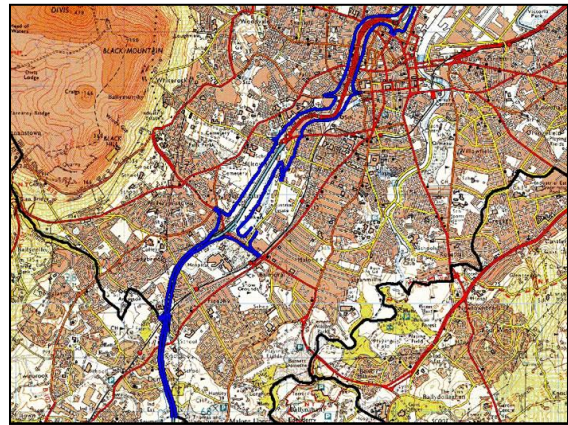


Image 4: Cromac St & Albertbridge St AQMA

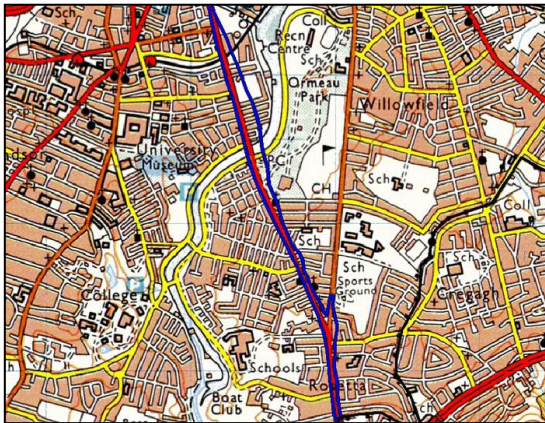


Image 5: Upper Newtownards Road AQMA

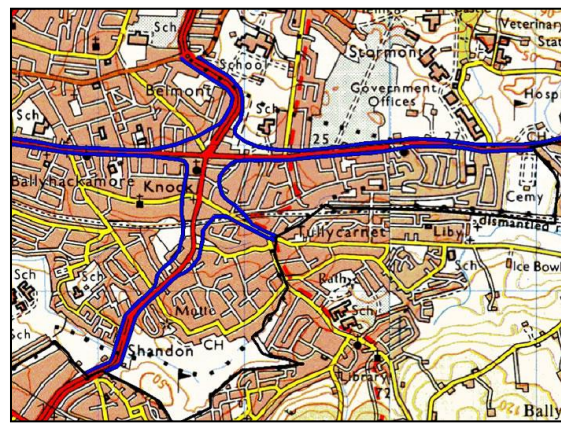


Image 6: Ormeau Road AQM Four

Source: *Belfast City Council Air Quality Management Areas*

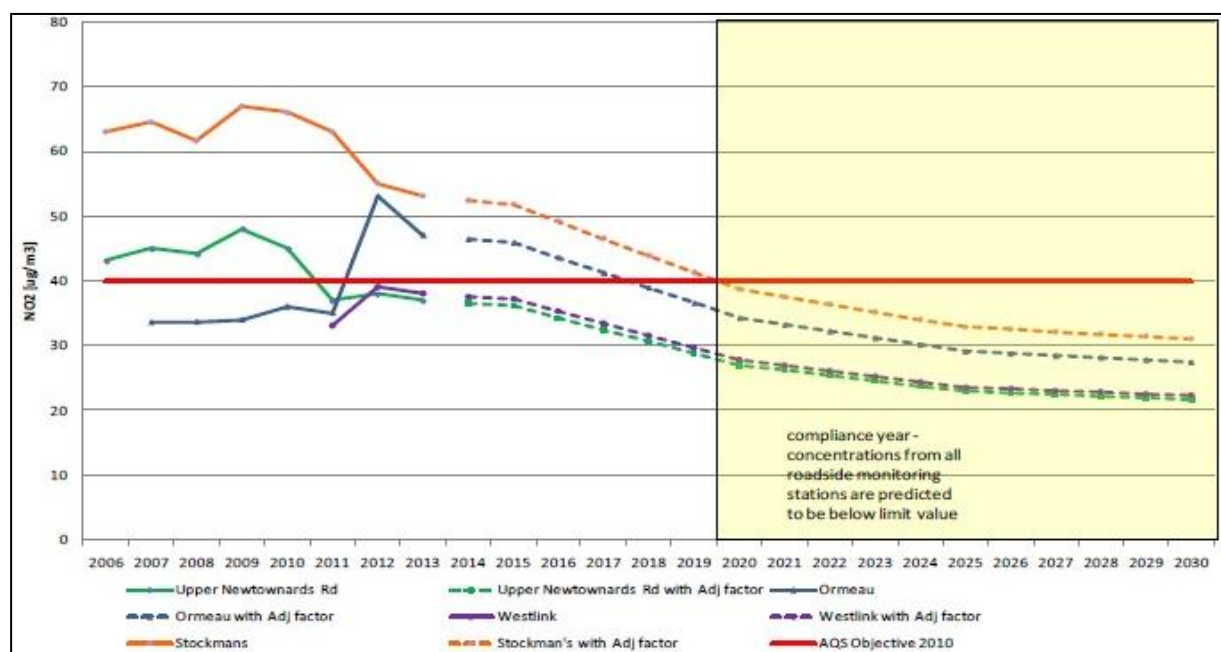
8.7 The 2010 detailed assessment considered the potential for exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide objectives at a number of further locations across the city, these were:

- Junction of the Sydenham Bypass with the Lower Newtownards Road;
- Shaftesbury Square;
- Donegall Road;
- Albertbridge Road; and,
- Locations throughout city centre.

8.8 Some of the above locations have suggested exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective through atmospheric dispersion models, the review and

assessment identified there was not relevant public exposure at these locations and therefore there was no need to declare further AQMAs.

- 8.9 Four automatic monitoring stations monitor air quality across Belfast (see above). One additional monitoring station is located within each of the four area quality management areas as well as one located in the City Centre on Lombard Street halfway between Winecellar Entry and High Street. They provide real time information to the public in relation to air pollution levels within the AQMAs.
- 8.10 The monitoring data indicates that air quality in Belfast has generally improved. The Upper Newtownards Road AQMA has shown reductions to the point that the area is now in compliance with the air quality objectives. Using the DEFRA year adjustment calculator tool, it is predicted that Belfast will be in compliance with the EU limit values by 2020. This is shown in Figure 12.



**Figure 12: Monitored & projected annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations at Belfast roadside air quality monitoring stations**

*Source: Belfast City Council Air Quality Action Plan 2015-2020*

- 8.11 Information within this section has been reviewed by Belfast City Council Environmental Health Unit.

## C.9 Water

- 9.1 DAERA is the statutory agency responsible for the protection of rivers and coastal areas in Northern Ireland. The Water Framework Directive (WFD) is transposed into law through the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 (Statutory Rule 2003 No. 544). WFD aims to achieve 'Good Ecological Status' or better, for the quality of all water bodies. This means ensuring healthy aquatic ecosystems whilst balancing water/nature protection and the sustainable use of natural resources. In assessing water quality, the ecological and chemical quality is considered as well as the pressures that affect them.
- 9.2 A key feature of the WFD is the development of River Basin Management Plans which takes an integrated approach to the protection, improvement and sustainable use of water environment. Belfast falls within the North-Eastern River Basin District where the Lagan is one of the principal river systems in NI. The first North Eastern River Basin Management Plan was published in 2009, detailing where the water environment needs to be protected or improved, the timeframe to make these improvements and how that can be achieved. An update to the plan was published in 2015.
- 9.3 NIEA has formed an NI Water Management Unit River Basin District Group to deliver a series of catchment projects in partnership with government agencies and stakeholders. An example of these catchment programmes includes, the 'Living with Water Programme' (LWWP) which is a strategic drainage infrastructure programme that aims to improve water quality within the Belfast Lough Catchment. This programme will seek to protect against flood risk by determining the level and types of capital infrastructural investment that is necessary to alleviate the problem which will in turn have a multiplier effect for economic and environmental benefit. In this regard, as well as environmental impacts on natural heritage, changes in water level may also have impacts on some built heritage features.
- 9.4 The ecological and chemical classification results for surface waters are combined to give an overall status in one of five classes: high; good; moderate; poor and bad. In classifying water bodies, it gives a deeper understanding in what measures might be required for improvements.

- 9.5 NIEA has responsibility to report on the state of the water environment under the WFD. The most recent statistics published in February 2015<sup>60</sup> uses available data to the end of 2014. The Water Framework Directive requires NIEA to protect the status of water bodies from deterioration and, where necessary and practicable, to restore water bodies to good status. The river water body classification has been produced using the results from the Water Framework Directive quality elements. Overall classification uses a combination of biological, chemical and hydro morphological quality elements including macroinvertebrates, pH (measure of acidity or alkalinity of a solution) and ammonia to assign status of river quality in one of five classes from 'high' through to 'bad'.
- 9.6 According to the Northern Ireland Environmental Statistical Report 2016, the overall classification for the WFD (% River Water Bodies 2015) indicated an improvement in river water body status. The North-Eastern River Basin district showed no river water bodies with 'high' status. Most river water bodies (61.8%) are rated 'moderate' status which is 7 percentage points higher than the NI average. 15.7% of river bodies are of poor status and 2.2% are of 'bad' status which is higher than the NI average of 10.0% and 1.8% respectively.
- 9.7 The Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (UWWTD) (91/271/EEC) is designed to reduce the pollution of freshwater, estuarine and coastal waters by domestic sewage and industrial wastewater collectively known as urban waste water. The Directive sets minimum standards for the collection, treatment and discharge of urban waste water. The minimum standards for the provision of sewerage systems and treatment of sewage are set by the Directive according to the population served by sewage treatment works, and the sensitivity of receiving waters. Inner Belfast Lough and the Tidal Lagan and their catchment areas have been identified as UWWTD Sensitive Areas.
- 9.8 Table 13 shows the baseline data for water quality within the Belfast area. There were some limitations in gathering specific evidence for Belfast but the best available data is tabulated below.

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<sup>60</sup> Water Report NI WFD Statistics October 2015

Indicator		Local Data	Regional Data	Target	Trends	Data Source
Protected Areas	Drinking Water Protected Areas		There are 16 Drinking Water Protected Areas in the North-Eastern Basin; 6 in surface waters to serve the following WTW's - Altnahinch, Dungonnell, Fofanny, Dorisland, Drumaroad, Rathlin; and 10 for groundwaters.	To protect and improve the status of drinking water and restore waters to good status		NIEA North Eastern Basin Management Plan 2015-2021
	Freshwater Fish and Shellfish Waters	There are seven Shellfish Waters within the North-Eastern District and one Shellfish Water designated within the Belfast City Council Area: Belfast Lough.	There are 662km of rivers, 5.5km <sup>2</sup> of canals and 2km <sup>2</sup> of lakes designated for fish within the North-Eastern District. There is a total of 10 Shellfish Waters in Northern Ireland.	Ensure no deterioration and steady progress towards compliance with the guideline standards.	Gradually improving, A total of six out of nine designated shellfish waters complied with the guideline standard for coliform standards in 2012	
	Bathing Water	0 in Belfast City Council Area	There are 17 identified bathing waters in the North-Eastern District. 23 overall in Northern Ireland	Continue to maintain and improve where possible	All 23 beaches have met the stricter EU standards for bathing water quality	
	Nutrient Sensitive Areas	4 in Belfast City Council Area- Inner Belfast Lough; Inner Belfast Lough Catchment; River Lagan Catchment; and Tidal Lagan	There are 16 Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive Sensitive areas within the North-Eastern River Basin			
	Water Dependent Natura 2000	1 in total in Belfast City Council Area: Belfast Lough SPA	27 in total in the North-Eastern Basin, 16 SACs and 11 SPAs	Establish & maintain water and environmental conditions to achieve favourable conservation status of all water dependent features		



Indicator	Local Data	Regional Data	Target	Trends	Data Source																																																																						
Lake Water Framework Directive Status	<p>Lake Water Framework Directive status, 2009-2013 (first cycle water body set and environmental standards)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="5">North Eastern</th> </tr> <tr> <th>2009</th> <th>2010</th> <th>2011</th> <th>2012</th> <th>2013</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	North Eastern					2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	<p>Lake Water Framework Directive status, 2009-2013 (first cycle water body set and environmental standards)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="5">Northern Ireland</th> </tr> <tr> <th>2009</th> <th>2010</th> <th>2011</th> <th>2012</th> <th>2013</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>5</td> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>6</td> <td>6</td> <td>9</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>7</td> <td>7</td> <td>6</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Northern Ireland					2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	5	3	5	7	6	6	9	7	3	7	7	6	5	6	3	3	3	4	<p>The main aim of the WFD is to raise the quality of all water bodies to 'Good Ecological Status' or better'</p>	<p>No apparent regional trend. Locally a slight trend of increasingly better quality with only one lake designated poor in the North-Eastern Region in 2013</p>	<p>DOE Environmental Statistical Report 2015</p>
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Compliance of Water Utility waste water treatment works 2007-2013	<p>Not available at local level</p>	<p>Figure 3.7 Summary of compliance of Water Utility Sector Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW), 2007 – 2017</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Overall Water Utility Sector WWTW compliance</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2007</td><td>83</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>85</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>86</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>88</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>92</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>92</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>91</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>91</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>92</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>93</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>94</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Percentage	2007	83	2008	85	2009	86	2010	88	2011	92	2012	92	2013	91	2014	91	2015	92	2016	93	2017	94	<p>Improving.</p> <p>Compliance of waste water treatment works (WWTW) with numeric conditions of Water Order consents was introduced in 2007. It is a key performance indicator for the water utility sector and has continued to improve since 2007 with compliance now at 94%.</p>	<p>DOE Environmental Statistical Report 2018</p>																																															
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Percentage of compliance in drinking water standards set in NI Water Regulations 2011-2013	<p><u>Belfast City Council</u></p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>2013</td> <td>99.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014</td> <td>99.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015</td> <td>99.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016</td> <td>99.9%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2013	99.8%	2014	99.8%	2015	99.8%	2016	99.9%	<p><u>Northern Ireland</u></p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>2013</td> <td>99.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014</td> <td>99.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015</td> <td>99.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016</td> <td>99.8%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2013	99.7%	2014	99.8%	2015	99.7%	2016	99.8%	<p>99.7% compliance</p>	<p>Target met and exceeded, above Northern Ireland % compliance</p>	<p>NI Water</p>																																																						
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Indicator	Local Data	Regional Data	Target	Trends	Data Source																																										
Overall classification of surface water bodies measured against good ecological status/potential	All but one of the Surface Water Bodies within the Belfast Area has a status of moderate. Connswater River has a status of poor	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Rivers</th> <th>Lakes</th> <th>Transitional</th> <th>Coastal</th> <th>Total no water bodies</th> <th>% of Water Bodies</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>High</b></td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Good</b></td> <td>18</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>6</td> <td>24</td> <td>28</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Moderate</b></td> <td>44</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>6</td> <td>51</td> <td>58</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Poor</b></td> <td>11</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>11</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td>73</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>13</td> <td>87</td> <td>100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Rivers	Lakes	Transitional	Coastal	Total no water bodies	% of Water Bodies	<b>High</b>	0	0	0	1	1	1	<b>Good</b>	18	0	0	6	24	28	<b>Moderate</b>	44	1	0	6	51	58	<b>Poor</b>	11	0	0	0	11	13	<b>Total</b>	73	1	0	13	87	100	Good status in 52% of surface water bodies by 2021	Behind target, aim by 2015 was to achieve good status or above in 49% of surface water bodies, currently 24% are at good status and above	NIEA North Eastern Basin Management Plan 2015-2021
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<b>Total</b>	73	1	0	13	87	100																																									
Ground Water Bodies	Two groundwater bodies are within the Belfast area; these are Belfast Hills and Belfast. Belfast Hills have a status of good while Belfast has a status of poor	The North-Eastern River Basin contains 14 groundwater bodies (superficial and bedrock) In 2015 8 were designated as poor while 6 were designated as good.	All 14 groundwater bodies designated as good by 2027	Behind target, aim by 2015 for 88% of groundwater bodies to be of good status, currently 43% at good status.	NIEA North Eastern Basin Management Plan 2015-2021																																										
Area of Flood Risk within the plan area.	Belfast is named as a Significant Flood Risk Area. Belfast is the greatest at risk	There are 20 Significant Flood Risk Areas within Northern Ireland	Continue to manage flooding as well as adopt precautionary approach to development that aim to prevent future development that may be at risk of flooding or that may increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.	Mitigation measures to prevent flooding continue to be implemented such as the Belfast Sewers Project LWWT	NIEA North Eastern Flood Risk Management Plan																																										

Table 13: Baseline data for Water Quality

## C.10 Water infrastructure: Water supply

10.1 The Belfast City Council area receives treated water from four Water Treatment Works, which are listed in the table below, together with the respective impounding reservoirs / loughs serving each works.

Impounding Reservoirs/Loughs		Water Treatment Works
Silent Valley		Drumaroad WTW Newry Mourne & Down District Council
Lough Neagh		Dunore Point WTW Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
		Castor Bay WTW Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council
Copeland	(Carrickfergus)	Dorisland WTW Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
Dorisland		
Loughmourne		
North Woodburn		
South Woodburn Lower		
South Woodburn Middle		
South Woodburn Upper		

**Table 14: Water Treatment Works serving Belfast City Council**

*Source: NI Water*

10.2 Each of these water treatment works supplies the existing water distribution networks within the Belfast City Council area including 15 service reservoirs (located within or just outside Belfast City Council boundary) that provide the necessary storage. NI Water is satisfied with the sufficiency of the water supply to Belfast City Council area over the timeframe of the new Plan.

## **C.11 Water infrastructure: Wastewater**

- 11.1 The NI Executive accepts that Northern Ireland's drainage infrastructure is insufficient to meet the future requirements expected of it – to the extent that it is actively stunting economic development – particularly in the greater Belfast area<sup>61</sup>.
- 11.2 The capacity of wastewater treatment facilities and sewerage systems is an increasingly important factor to be considered for future development. For example, without major investment in wastewater and sewerage infrastructure in Greater Belfast in the near future, it may not be possible to permit any new connections that will impact significantly on an already stretched infrastructure. Planning for the provision of water and sewerage infrastructure and treatment facilities is both a practical and environmental necessity for regional development<sup>62</sup>.
- 11.3 The majority of rainwater that falls on hard surfaces such as roofs, footpaths and roads in towns and cities is drained by our public drainage systems. Many sewers were constructed in Victorian times to take wastewater and sewage to the nearest river, as the focus then was on reducing disease and illness caused by poor sanitation. However, discharging wastewater which contains raw sewage directly into rivers can cause pollution. EU environmental standards now require wastewater to undergo appropriate treatment before being returned to the environment.
- 11.4 Many of our urban drainage systems are combined, carrying both storm-water and sewage in one pipe. This means that rainwater is often pumped and treated like sewage unnecessarily. Excessive rainfall can overload sewerage systems by exceeding the economic design capacity of combined sewers. This can result in out of sewer flooding and pollution. Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) are a necessary part of the system to reduce the risk of overloading of sewers. However, these overflows should only operate during heavy rainfall. Where CSOs spill too frequently and cause pollution these are categorised as Unsatisfactory Intermittent Discharges (UIDs) which must be rectified.

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<sup>61</sup> <http://www.assemblyresearchmatters.org/2016/09/09/managing-flood-risk-in-northern-ireland-are-we-prepared/>

<sup>62</sup> Sustainable Water- A Long Term Strategy for NI 2015-2040 (2016) DRDNI

- 11.5 The £160 million Belfast Sewers Project was constructed to reduce pollution of the River Lagan, reduce flooding and facilitate future development. The project involved the upgrade of over 500 sewers and the construction of over 9.5 km of storm tunnels up to 4 metres in diameter. However, large sewer tunnels cannot be used to deal with all our future drainage needs. For future sustainability there is a need to reduce the amount of rainwater entering into combined sewerage systems from road and land drainage, and instead manage surface water in a different way.
- 11.6 Belfast City Council Area is served by six Wastewater Treatment Works (WWTW) as follows:
- Belfast WWTW (Duncrue Street)
  - Edenderry Village WWTW
  - Newtownbreda WWTW
  - Whitehouse WWTW (in Antrim & Newtownabbey area)
  - Dunmurry WWTW
  - Kinnegar, Holywood (in Ards & North Down area)
- 11.7 NI Water has advised that the planning status of all of the above WWTWs is such that capacity is currently available and new connections are permitted. However, the significant future growth of the Plan area will require careful consideration and assessment to address potential capacity issues.
- 11.8 Approximately 71% of Belfast City Council area is served by the Belfast WWTW. Given the strategic importance of this WWTW, NI Water is currently assessing the capacity of the works to accommodate the projected growth of the Plan area.
- 11.9 In their response to the draft Scoping Report, NIEA has indicated that insufficient capacity in sewage treatment infrastructure can be a potential limiting factor on growth aspirations. During our previous discussions with NI Water, the council has explored the issue of capacity in relation to the potential growth scenarios developed by the Consultants appointed to review the Belfast housing growth indicators. The preferred option, as set out in the paper, has taken account of these discussions and the existing allocations within BMAP and other approvals within the system. It is recognised investment/ alternative methods of treatment will be required during the

plan period to support that level of growth projected. The ongoing engagement will ensure that the plan development is informed by the most up to date information as it becomes available and if appropriate, addressed through plan review and phasing.

11.10 The Edenderry WWTW is small and serves Edenderry village only. Whilst there is no upgrade planned for in the near future, it is unlikely that there will be significant growth within the existing village settlement. The Newtownbreda WWTW has sufficient capacity to accommodate moderate growth, although there are likely to be capacity issues at higher levels of growth. NI Water is currently considering a number of options for this works that may accommodate additional growth. The Whitehouse and Dunmurry WWTWs both have available capacity to accommodate significant growth. As regards Kinnegar, NI Water has indicated that it expects that the planned growth will be able to be accommodated (capacity confirmation awaited from PFI operator).

11.11 Northern Ireland Executive has approved the development of a Strategic Drainage Infrastructure Plan to support economic growth, protect the environment and address flood risk. This plan is required as the drainage infrastructure in many areas throughout Northern Ireland is currently inadequate to meet the requirements expected of it and the scale of the environmental and flooding problems in Belfast requires a holistic and integrated approach to future drainage provision. To deliver this, an Interdepartmental Programme called Living with Water (LWWP) has been established. The LWWP identified the following key risks for Belfast:

- Flooding is occurring with increased frequency
- Compliance with Environmental Legislation – ‘NI’ is at risk of EU Infraction<sup>63</sup>
- Capacity – many components of the drainage network do not have adequate capacity to enable new connections which could impede economic growth
- Maintenance – many components of the drainage network now require maintenance/replacement to maintain serviceability
- Amenity potential has been lost
- Climate Change – more intense storms predicted
- Drainage operational costs are a burden
- Capital investment is constrained

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<sup>63</sup> Living with Water Programme: Strategic Drainage Infrastructure Plan, An Overview (24/09/15)

11.12 According to an overview LWWP Strategic Drainage Infrastructure Plan<sup>64</sup>, the drainage infrastructure is inadequate in many towns and cities across N Ireland, with the problems being most acute in Belfast. This has resulted in:

- Instances of serious flooding across Northern Ireland occurring with increased frequency;
- Belfast Harbour area falling from moderate to bad within the WFD classification; and,
- The main WWTW (Waste Water treatment works) serving Belfast is above its theoretical design capacity.

## C.12 Soil

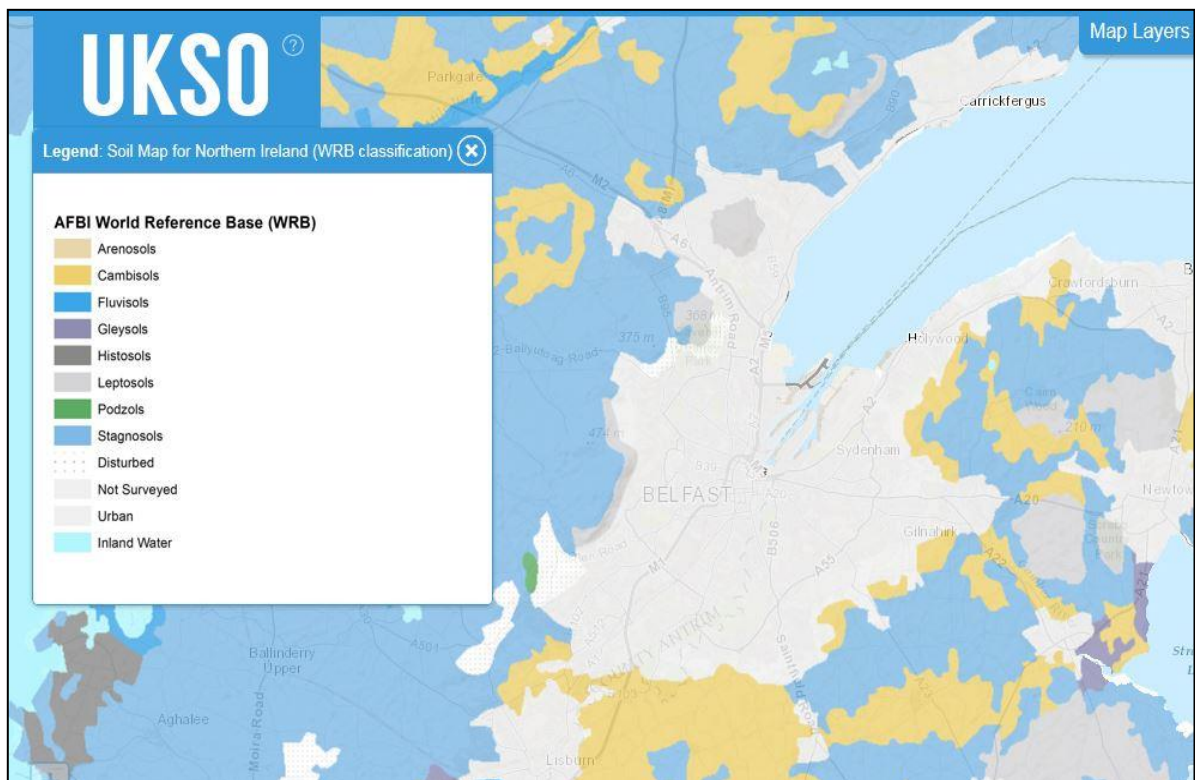
12.1 Soil is a non-renewable resource that performs many functions essential for human life, the environment and its ecosystems. These functions include; storing, filtering and transforming nutrients and water, biomass production, hosting the biodiversity pool, providing raw materials and acting as a carbon sink. Knowledge of soil types and properties can underpin management practices to develop sustainable agricultural production while maintaining the UK's carbon balance and a wide range of other services such as flood prevention, a major issue in Belfast. As well as having important ecological value, peat soils are also important for archaeological and paleo-environmental reasons.

12.2 The Regional Development Strategy 2035 recognises the importance of a fully functioning soil that reduces the risk of flood and protects underground water supplies by neutralising and filtering out potential pollutants. Threats to soil caused by development include soil sealing, loss of biodiversity and deposition of processed materials.

12.3 The UK Soil Observatory provides datasets to access UK soils data, used to underpin research. The following map shows the soils present in the Belfast LDP area:

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<sup>64</sup> <http://gsintmin01:9077/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=165&MId=5711&Ver=4> Living with Water Programme: Strategic Drainage Infrastructure Plan, An Overview (24/09/15)



**Figure 13: Map showing soils present in Belfast LDP area**

Source: <http://mapapps2.bgs.ac.uk/ukso/home.html?layer=AFBIWRB>

12.4 In Belfast, heavy clays and silt dominate the surface soils. Beneath is an alluvium deposit, known as sileach which is well known for its problematic characteristics. As the map shows there are four soil types within the Belfast Area. These are:

- Urban Soil which accounts for the majority of Belfast. Urban soil is material in the urban environment which has been disturbed, manipulated or transported by man's activities. It is also used as a medium for plant growth.
- Cambisols are present to the south and east of the city. Cambisols contain a favourable aggregate structure and high content of weatherable materials. They can usually be exploited for agriculture.
- Stagnosols are present to the west of Belfast and to the east. Stagnosols are periodically wet and mottle in the top soil, their agricultural suitability is limited because of their oxygen deficiency, resulting from stagnating water above a dense topsoil.
- Leptosols are present in the west of the city towards the Belfast Hills and contain a shallow profile depth with large amounts of gravel.



### C.13 Agriculture

13.1 The majority of the Belfast area is urban with approximately 30% of the area located within the rural landscape. It is important to understand how the soil in rural areas is utilised in order to facilitate future designations.

13.2 Less Favourable Areas (LFA) are designated under EU legislation (75/268/EEC) because of their relatively poor agricultural status. The LFA consists of Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDA) designated in 1975 and the Disadvantaged Area (DA) which was designated following reviews in 1984 and 1990<sup>65</sup>. The Northern Ireland Agricultural Census June 2017 details accurate data of agricultural land within the Belfast City Council Area. Belfast contains 31 farms, the fewest number of farms in Northern Ireland. This is broken up into the following farm types:

- 1 Cereal Farm,
- 2 General Cropping Farms,
- 19 Cattle and Sheep Less Favoured Area (LFA) Farms,
- 7 Cattle and Sheep Lowland Farms,
- 2 Mixed/other Farms

13.3 The following table shows the LFA categorisation of farms in Belfast. Most farms (68%) are in mainly less favourable areas (LFA) with 55% in SDAs.

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<sup>65</sup> <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dard/agricultural-census-ni-june-2015.pdf>

Belfast	Number of Farms	Percentage
Mainly Severely Disadvantaged Areas (SDA)	17	55%
Mainly Disadvantaged Areas (DA)	4	13%
Mainly Less Favourable Areas (LFA)	21	68%
Mainly non- Less Favourable Areas (LFA)	10	32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 15: LFA Categorisation of Farms in Belfast<sup>66</sup>**

*Source: DAERA*

13.4 According to the Northern Ireland Agricultural Census June 2017, the total land within Belfast used for crops is 99 hectares. Belfast City Council has the smallest area of land used by crops in Northern Ireland; this would be expected, with Belfast being a predominantly an urban area. The crops are made up of the following:

- 71 hectares of cereals,
- 16 hectares of other farm crops,
- 12 hectares of horticulture crops.

#### **C.14 Areas of Natural Constraint**

14.1 Regulation (EU) no 1305/2013 included a requirement to designate Areas of Natural Constraint (ANCs) to replace the existing Severely Disadvantaged Areas (SDAs). The new approach to designation is a standardised EU wide methodology which identifies constrained land by applying a set of 8 biophysical criteria and thresholds based on soil, slope and climate. According to the 2017 Agricultural Census, Belfast had 17 farms designated as SDAs. Areas of Constraint have now been designated and have replaced these.

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/agricultural-census-northern-ireland-2017>

## **C.15 Contaminated land**

- 15.1 Contaminated Land can cause wide environmental damage and has the potential to limit a healthy environment. Belfast has a legacy of contaminated land arising from its prominent past industrial use.
- 15.2 The Regional Development Strategy 2035, published in March 2012, set a regional target of 60% of new housing to be located in appropriate 'brownfield' sites within the urban footprints of settlements greater than 5,000 people.
- 15.3 Brownfield land - sometimes referred to as 'previously developed land', being land that is, or was occupied by a permanent structure within a defined settlement limit. The term may encompass vacant or derelict lands, infill sites, land occupied by redundant or underused buildings, a piece of industrial or commercial property that is abandoned or underused and often environmentally contaminated.
- 15.4 The Contaminated Land Regime is set out in Part III 'The Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997'. Contaminated Land Regime supports the principal of 'polluter pays' principle and is intended to manage issues arising from historic contamination. It is retrospective in action. Whilst the council is the primary regulator for the regime, the initial activity will focus on the preparation of site inspection strategies. However, Part III of the Order relating to Contaminated Land has not yet been commenced.

## **C.16 Current contaminated land regime**

- 16.1 The council's Environmental Health Service acts as a statutory consultee to the Belfast Planning Service and is concerned principally with the human health impacts of development through the imposition of planning conditions and informatives. NIEA is concerned with the impact of development upon the natural environment.
- 16.2 Land contamination is assessed and managed in accordance with the provisions of the CLR11 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination' risk framework, the Contaminated Land Exposure Assessment (CLEA) model and the various British Standards and supporting guidance documents.

16.3 The council does not have a Contaminated Land Register for the Belfast area but has a limited database of past industrial land uses that have the potential to give rise to land contamination. It is based upon an extract from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency's Land Use Database, which was a desk based study developed for the whole of Northern Ireland in 1997. Limited additional information held by the council has been added to this database in the intervening period. The database can be informed by referring to the various DoE land contamination Industry Profiles (1995).

### **C.17 Development within the urban footprint**

17.1 The Northern Ireland Housing Land Availability Summary Reports was compiled by the DOE (now DFI) prior to RPA in 2015. Within the old Belfast City Council boundary (pre-2015), there was a steady increase of units developed within the urban footprint. Within the period 2003/4, 92.5% of units in Belfast were developed within the urban footprint rising to 98.3% by 2012/13. From 2013/14 onwards 99.1% of units were developed within the urban footprint.

17.2 2007/8 saw the largest area of land (25.4 hectares), equating to 1,923 units, being developed in the urban footprint marking the height of the Northern Ireland property 'boom'. By 2010/11 this figure decreased to 4.9 hectares (268 units) of land being developed in the urban footprint. From 2011, this figure is steadily increasing and in 2012/14, 12 hectares of land was developed in the urban footprint equating to 644 units. Figures 14 and 15 show the Urban Footprint and Greenfield comparatives for the area development each year per hectares and the number of units developed each year.

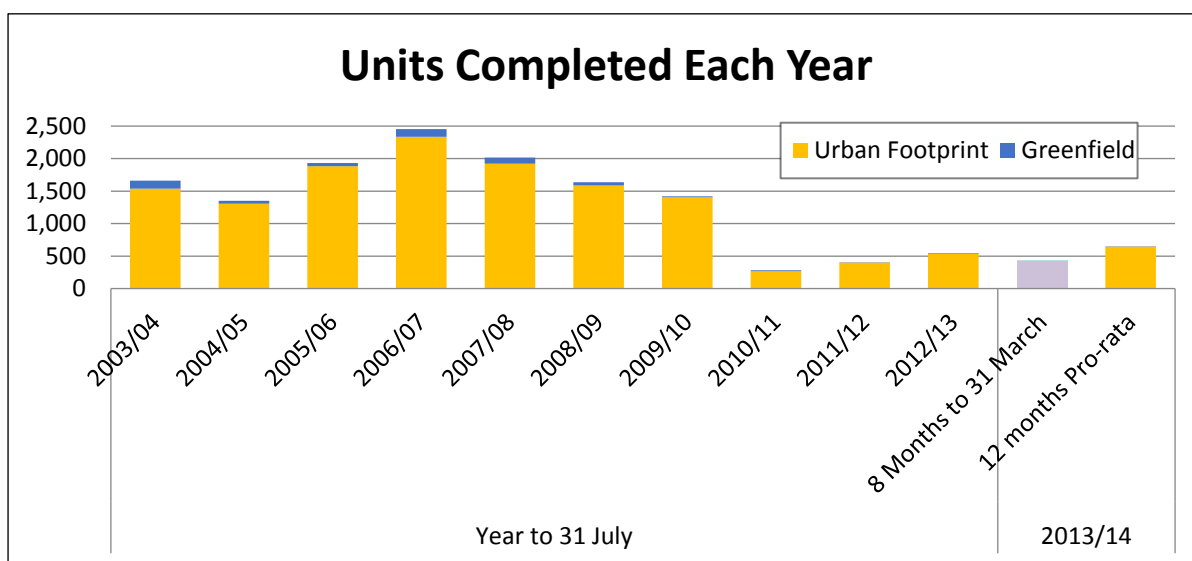


Figure 14: Number of Units Completed Each Year within the Urban Footprint and Greenfield Land<sup>67</sup>

Source: DoE

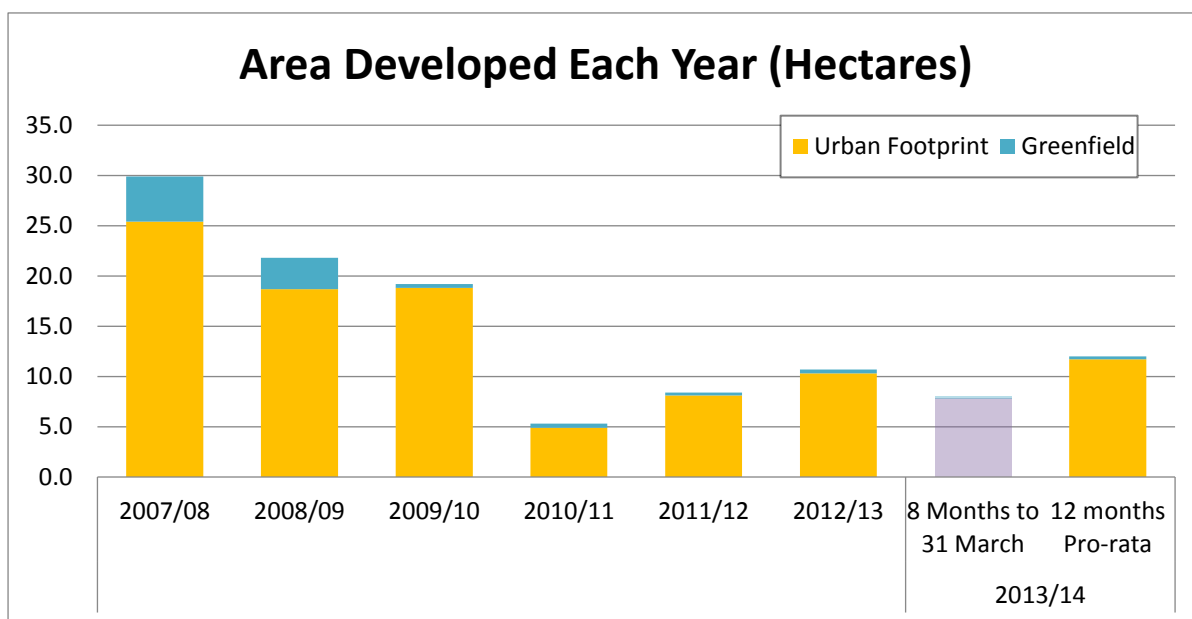


Figure 15: Area Developed Each Year (Ha) within the Urban Footprint and Greenfield Land<sup>28</sup>

Source: DoE

<sup>67</sup> The Northern Ireland Housing Land Availability Summary Reports was compiled by the DoE prior to RPA in 2015



## **D CULTURAL & BUILT HERITAGE BASELINE**

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The urban environment encompasses the totality of the built form of the city. It includes recent and contemporary developments and our built heritage assets – including archaeology, scheduled monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, areas of townscape character, historic parks and gardens, historic buildings of local importance and vernacular heritage structures. The following cultural and built heritage elements can be found in the Belfast City Council district.

### **D.1 State Care sites**

- 1.1 Archaeological sites and monuments are taken into the care of the Department under the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995. State Care sites and monuments represent all periods of human settlement in Ireland from circa 7,000 BC to the 21st century. They are protected and managed as a public asset by Historic Environment Division (HED) in DFC regulated under the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995. They have responsibility for many sites and properties throughout Northern Ireland and work closely with the Historic Monuments Council. Shandon Park Motte, Drumnadrough Fort, Giant's Ring and Shaw's Bridge are the only sites in State Care within the Belfast City Council area.

### **D.2 Scheduled monuments**

- 2.1 Archaeological sites and monuments are scheduled for protection under the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995 and the work of scheduling is ongoing. The fact that a site has not yet received statutory protection does not necessarily diminish its archaeological importance or its significance as an element in the historic landscape.
- 2.2 According to HED, the list of Scheduled Historic Monuments contains a total of 36 scheduled archaeological monuments in the Belfast City Council Area.

### **D.3 Unscheduled monuments**

- 3.1 There were a total of 144 other recorded archaeological sites and monuments in the Belfast City Council Area.

### **D.4 Undesignated heritage assets including local listings**

- 4.1 There are many sites of heritage interest which are not or have not yet been listed in HED's records. According to HED these include historic boundaries such as townland boundaries, surviving air raid shelters and some historic cemeteries. Historic environment assets not recorded on HED records are still important and the council recognises that information held by HED is one part of a much wider body of information that exists on the historic environment. The SA will review these records as we progress and the council will consider where appropriate, undesignated heritage assets including local listings as they may become available through the update of HED's datasets.

### **D.5 Listed buildings**

- 5.1 The SPPS recognises that Listed Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest are key elements of our built heritage and are often important for their intrinsic value and for their contribution to the character and quality of settlements and the countryside. It stresses that development may be permitted where this will secure the ongoing viability and upkeep of the building, providing it respects its essential character and setting. It notes that it may be appropriate for a LDP to highlight listed buildings and their settings which are integral to the character and inform broader heritage designations. There are approximately 1379 listed buildings within the Belfast City Council area.
- 5.2 The Second Survey of all Northern Ireland's building stock, is currently underway, to update and improve on the first List of buildings of special architectural or historic interest which began in 1974. This second survey is due to be completed in 2016.



## D.6 Built Heritage at Risk

6.1 The Built Heritage at Risk Register lists almost 500 buildings and monuments of architectural and historic interest throughout Northern Ireland. The buildings and monuments are deemed to be under threat and may be suitable for restoration and repair. The Buildings at Risk Register was established in 1993 and is funded and managed by Department of Communities in partnership with the Ulster Architectural Society [UAHS]. There are currently 49 buildings and monuments listed on the register within Belfast.

## D.7 Conservation areas

7.1 There are 13 Conservation Areas within the council area:

1	Adelaide Park
2	Belfast City Centre
3	Cathedral
4	Cyprus Ave
5	Kings Road
6	Knockdene
7	Linen
8	Malone
9	Malone Park
10	McMaster Street
11	Queens
12	Somerton
13	Stranmillis

7.2 The SPPS notes that in managing development within a designated Conservation Area the guiding principle is to afford special regard to the desirability of enhancing its character or appearance where an opportunity to do so exists, or to preserve its character or appearance where an opportunity to enhance does not arise. Accordingly, there will be a general presumption against the grant of planning permission for development or conservation area consent for demolition of unlisted buildings, where proposals would conflict with this principle.

7.3 In relation to the setting of designated Conservation Areas, new development in proximity needs to be carefully managed to ensure it respects its overall character and appearance. Important views in and out of the Conservation Area should be retained.

7.4 In the interests of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, development proposals should be sympathetic to the characteristic built form of the area and respect the characteristics of adjoining buildings in the area by way of its scale, form, materials and detailing. The SPSS notes that the LDP may include local policies or proposals for their protection and / or, enhancement.

#### **D.8 Areas of Townscape Character**

8.1 There are 57 Areas of Townscape Character within the council area.

8.2 The SPSS notes that in managing development within ATCs designated through the LDPs process, the council should only permit new development where this will maintain or enhance the overall character of the area and respect its built form. It states that local policies or proposals and guidance for such areas should also be included in the plan or, where appropriate, in supplementary planning guidance.

#### **D.9 Areas of Significant Archaeological Interest**

9.1 The SPSS notes the importance of LDPs in taking into account the implications of local policies and proposals on all features of the archaeological and built heritage. It states that where appropriate, LDPs should designate Areas of Significant Archaeological Interest (ASAs).

#### **D.10 Areas of archaeological potential**

10.1 The SPSS states that LDPs should highlight, for the information of prospective developers, those areas within settlement limits, where, on the basis of current knowledge, it is likely that archaeological remains will be encountered in the course of continuing development and change. These will be referred to as areas of archaeological potential.

10.2 Belfast is named as an area of archaeological potential. A large amount of excavation undertaken in Belfast in the past 17 years has highlighted the extent and survival of archaeological remains relating to the city's evolution. Information recorded during an archaeological excavation or survey is documented in the Sites and Monuments record, however it is noted that excavations conducted in Belfast to date are not all yet recorded on the SMR. Access to records within the publicly accessible archive can be arranged via appointment at the Klondyke Building in Belfast.

#### **D.11 Historic parks, gardens and demesnes**

11.1 The register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes of Special Historic Interest has been established to identify sites within Northern Ireland, which can be considered of exceptional importance. The identification of sites is based upon a clear set of criteria and on an appreciation of the character of Ulster's gardens and designed landscapes.

#### **D.12 Defence heritage**

12.1 The Historic Environment Division (HED) is responsible for Northern Ireland's defence heritage, both in its conservation and protection. Northern Ireland's defence heritage represents a significant period in our history with many 20th century defensive structures dotted around the countryside and coast of Northern Ireland. These include training trenches, gun and searchlight emplacements, pillboxes, airfields, harbours etc. The majority are derelict, some have been reused or altered, and others are in a state of decay or have been demolished. The HED identify sites on an individual basis, deciding the most appropriate form of protection through legislation and policy. There are 63 sites of Defence Heritage within Belfast City Council.

#### **D.13 Industrial heritage**

13.1 The Plan Area contains a wealth of remains of industrial heritage, all of which are reminders of the economic development in the area. Synonymous to Belfast, the Samson and Goliath cranes dominate the skyline, and numerous mills, factories, bridges, railway fixtures, graving docks and remains of the Lagan Canal infrastructure are distributed throughout the city. Many of these industrial heritage

sites have been identified for special protection as scheduled monuments under the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1991. The Industrial Heritage Record is included in the DAERA Monument's and Building Record. There are 745 sites of Industrial Heritage in Belfast.

#### **D.14 Shipwrecks**

- 14.1 There are 245 records of shipwrecks within the Belfast region which includes Belfast harbour, lough and rivers within the plan area.
- 14.2 The database of shipwreck incidents is currently maintained and updated by Marine and Fisheries Division (DAERA) on behalf of the Historic Environment Division (DFC). The database includes cases of known and unknown wreck sites and maritime casualties- where the vessel in question was salvaged or recovered<sup>68</sup>. The database is not a record of archaeological sites in every case but an indicator of the geographical and chronological past shipping loss. The shipwrecks reveal information about life, technology, trade and warfare at the time they were lost. The informing abilities of shipwrecks makes them part of our shared heritage.

#### **D.15 Landscape**

- 15.1 Whilst change is constant, the management of change is essential to achieving sustainable place making, which will be the key role for LDPs. A number of local designations play an important role in protecting landscape within the Belfast Metropolitan Area:
- Areas of High Scenic Value (AHSV) are designated to protect the setting of the Metropolitan Urban Area and other areas of particular landscape merit. There are portions of 3 AHSVs in Belfast.
  - Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs) are designated to help protect those areas within and/or adjoining settlements which are considered to be of greatest amenity value, landscape quality or local significance and are therefore worthy of protection from undesirable or damaging development. They include

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<sup>68</sup> <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/shipwrecks>

archaeological sites and monuments and their surroundings; Listed and other locally important buildings including vernacular buildings and their surroundings; River banks and shore lines and associated public access; Attractive vistas, localised hills and other areas of local amenity importance; and Areas of local nature conservation importance, including areas of woodland and important tree groups. There are 86 LLPAs in Belfast.

- Urban Landscape Wedges are open areas that are designated to separate localities within the Metropolitan Urban Area. They have a significant role in helping to define and retain the identities and character of the component parts of the urban area and preventing the merging of different city communities. Their open character can break up the visual impact of the housing mass in the area and offer additional benefits to local residents by enhancing amenity and by providing opportunities for informal and formal recreational use and provision of linkages to walking and cycling networks. These designations should be protected from built development to fulfil their amenity, recreational and biodiversity functions. There are 5 Urban Landscape Wedges within Belfast.
- Rural Landscape Wedges consist of buffer landscapes and open areas. They distinguish and maintain the separate identities of the component parts of the Metropolitan Area; prevent the merging of the component parts of the Metropolitan Area; provide an important element in defining and protecting the setting of settlements; and maintain the rural character of the countryside. Within Belfast, Hannahstown is the only complete Rural Landscape Wedge with portions of another 3 overlapping within the Plan area.

15.3 Landscape Character Assessment, including the identification of Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) is a tool in identifying the landscape features that give a locality its 'sense of place'. Such assessment grew out of the European Landscape Convention and the process can help to inform the makeup of both urban and rural areas. LCAs set a baseline that can help us understand our landscapes and can also assist in making decisions about managing development.

- 15.4 The Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment 2000 (NILCA) identified 130 distinct LCAs, of which there are 7 in Belfast. The description of each LCA in the NILCA is set out below:

#### **Belfast / Lisburn (No.97)**

The Belfast / Lisburn LCA encompasses the Belfast and Lisburn urban areas, together with their broader landscape setting. It is defined by the steep ridges and escarpments, which enclose the Lagan Valley at the head of Belfast Lough. Belfast is mostly contained within the valley, although urban development has spread along the narrow coastal strips to the north and south of the Lough and inland along the Lagan and Enler Valleys. The City of Lisburn is also cited on the River Lagan but is further upstream and enclosed by slightly lower slopes. There are long views over both urban areas from the surrounding upland landscapes. The steep escarpments and ridges on the margins of the city provide a series of landmarks. The Belfast Basalt Escarpment to the north has a rugged, untamed character; Carnmoney Hill, an outlier to the north west of the basalt escarpment, dominates the landscape setting of Newtownabbey; the Craigtlet Escarpment on the fringes of the Holywood Hills encloses East Belfast and the slopes of the Castlereagh Escarpment provide a continuous backdrop to the urban districts of South Belfast and Castlereagh. Belfast's formal parks, such as Ormeau Park, the Botanic Gardens and Victoria Park and Lisburn's Wallace Park, provide welcome breathing space for the city centre but are relatively small in relation to the city as a whole. The Lagan Valley Regional Park is on a completely different scale. This and the other smaller river corridor parks, such as the Connswater, Lagmore and Collin Glen linear parks, have a more natural character and provide a valuable link between the urban areas and their wider landscape setting. The Laganside walkways now extend the footpath links along the Lagan right through to the city centre.

#### **Craigtlet Escarpment (No.104)**

The Craigtlet Escarpment LCA is a prominent ridge of silurian rocks, which forms the escarpment to the Holywood Hills. The escarpment encloses and shelters the urban edge of east Belfast, which pushes up against the ridge, extending into the woodlands at Stormont. The government buildings stand out as a major landmark,

situated high up on the ridge. A dense network of woodlands and avenues gives the landscape a robust structure, particularly around Stormont. Green pastures extend along the ridge, divided by hedgerows and shelterbelts. The rural/urban interface is strong and well defined. There are clear views to the ridge from the surrounding lowlands and adjacent escarpments, including an important view across Belfast Lough from the M2 at Newtownabbey; any development on the ridge is highly visible.

### **Castlereagh Slopes (No. 105)**

The Castlereagh Slopes LCA comprises the steep slopes of the north-western margins of the Castlereagh Plateau, to the south east of the Belfast/Castlereagh urban area. The prominent ridge has a smooth, rolling landform and a steep gradient. It averages 130m but at Braniel Hill, reaches an approximate height of 170m. It is deeply dissected by steep glens, which are generally well wooded. The broad slopes of the ridge are divided into a patchwork of undulating pastures and hedgerows. The remnant landscapes of the many historic estates and country houses of the Lagan Valley remain an important influence. Avenues and lines of mature beech trees mark the entrances, carriage drives and former estate boundaries and the buildings themselves are often important features in the landscape.

### **Lagan Parkland (No.106)**

The Lagan Parkland LCA is an amenity parkland landscape set within the historic, designed landscapes of a series of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century estates. The undulating, steep slopes of the narrow river valley are well-wooded, with a variety of formal designed landscapes, commercial forests and natural habitats. There is a linked sequence of wooded spaces and the deep river valley seems remote from its immediate urban surroundings. Golf courses, public open space and playing fields dominate areas of flatter land on the upper fringes of the river valley. To the south of the river, a neat, rolling agricultural landscape of estate farmlands has belts of mature trees. Winding, linear woodlands follow the local streams and narrow roads, which characterise the landscape close to the foot of the Castlereagh Slopes.

### **Derrykillultagh (No. 110)**

The Derrykillultagh LCA includes the rolling, relatively elevated farmland landscapes on the margins of the Antrim basalt plateau. The area is characterised by rounded

hills and shallow slopes, although there are some gullies and the southern boundary of the landscape character area is marked by a steeper escarpment slope. Many slopes are divided by straight, narrow glens, which form a ladder pattern in views from below. The plateau descends gently to the west, where there is a gradual transition to the claylands on the edge of Lough Neagh.

The farmland landscape often has a relatively untidy character, with patches of gorse and scrub and a rather disconnected hedgerow network. The shallow valleys often contain areas of marsh and many fields are partially infested with rushes. Gorse and holly are typical hedgerow species and often mark the transition to marginal farmland. There are typically small farms and smallholdings which are surrounded by paddocks and scattered barns, although there is a gradual transition to a landscape of larger fields, hedgerow trees and more prosperous farmsteads on the western margins of the plateau. Most farmsteads consist of small, white rendered buildings sited on the mid-slopes or local ridges and connected to roads by straight, right-angled tracks. The older farmsteads are often focal points in the landscape, particularly where they are associated with lines and stands of mature trees. Networks of straight roads follow the ridges and connect linear villages; most junctions are staggered cross-roads.

### **Divis Summits (No. 111)**

The Antrim basalt plateau ends in a series of broad, rounded summits overlooking Lisburn and Belfast. The principal summits of Black Mountain, Squires Hill and Cave Hill reach up to 400m, with Divis standing at 478m. They generally have gentle slopes, with some gullies and abrupt, steep slopes in places. However, the summits along the edge of the basalt escarpment have much steeper slopes, which plummet towards Belfast. Between the summits, the upper plateau has extensive areas of shallow, partially waterlogged moss, which is surrounded, by areas of marginal farmland. The landscape is relatively open, with extensive areas of windswept moss and rough farmland. However, the valley slopes have a more farmed character, with straight, overgrown hedgerows, belts of mature trees and farmsteads. There are important archaeological remains, particularly on the summits of Cave Hill. The landscape has a rather irregular, patchy pattern, with areas of scrub and wasteland which are often associated with abandoned mineral workings, derelict farmsteads and areas of waterlogged or unfarmed land.



### **Belfast Basalt Escarpment (No. 112)**

The edge of the Antrim basalt plateau is well defined by a steep scarp slope which wraps around and contains the North-West edge of Belfast. The black basalt outcrops have a distinctive, sheer profile, which is broken by a series of steep, wooded glens. The Hills are pitted with quarries and have a rugged, almost brutal character. They provide a dramatic contrast to the dense urban areas below. The dark basalt overlies a thin band of chalk, which forms a strong contrast in colour whenever it is visible. Belfast Castle, at the northern end of the narrow strip, is set in a densely wooded designed landscape, which contrasts with the rugged, rural character of the scarp edge.

The lower escarpment slopes are a mixture of hummocky open pasture with gapping hedgerows and stands of deciduous woodland on steeper slopes. There are extensive areas of regenerating scrub and gorse. Narrow roads provide steep links between the ridge-top road and Belfast, winding up the basalt edge. The slopes are pitted with quarries. Most are abandoned and have a rugged, untidy character and many are associated with fly tipping. The quarries are prominent and a strong influence on landscape character and quality. The basalt edge provides an opportunity for panoramic views over the city of Belfast.

## **D.16 Northern Ireland Regional Landscape Character Assessment**

- 16.1 The Northern Ireland Regional Landscape Character Assessment (NIRLCA), which was published in April 2015, identifies 26 discrete areas that are referred to as regional landscape character areas (RLCA).. Each area is defined by a recognisable landscape, with its own distinct character and sense of place. The Belfast and Lagan Valley RLCA is described in NIRLCA as follows:
- 16.2 “The Lagan Valley is framed to the north by the dramatic slopes of the Belfast Hills including Black Mountain and Cave Hill, with a sharp contrast between the heavily urbanised and built up area in the valley and the exposed and upland character of the hills. To the south, the landform change is less dramatic, rising gently to undulating drumlin farmland south of Newtownbreda.

16.3 Further east, Craigantlet Escarpment runs between Dundonald and Holywood and forms part of the backdrop to Belfast. It has deep wooded glens and encroachment of development on the ridge, including the Parliament Buildings at Stormont that stand out as a major landmark on the ridge”.

#### **D.17 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**

17.1 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are designated in recognition of an area’s national importance where the landscape possess a distinctive character and features of high scenic value. The purpose of this designation is to protect and enhance the qualities of these areas for environmental fulfilment, outdoor recreation and public enjoyment. Management of these areas falls upon landowners, public bodies and voluntary bodies. The Lagan Valley AONB, designated in 1965, lies predominately within the Lagan Valley Regional Park and is the only AONB in the Belfast City Council Area.

17.3 The Lagan Valley Regional Park is a valuable asset for the people of Belfast. It has an integral position adjacent to Belfast and is a huge recreational resource covering 2116 hectares and stretching for 13 miles along the River Lagan from Belfast City to Lisburn City. Its location is situated partly within the Belfast and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council areas.

17.4 The characteristic features of the Lagan Valley AONB include riverbank scenery, diverse biodiversity, meadows, woodland, and amenity parklands. Alongside the natural environmental assets of this area, it is also rich in diverse heritage including its contribution to the development of Belfast through its cultural and industrial heritage through linen production. Containing impressive monuments of local importance including the Giant’s Ring and early Christian raths, the area became an attractive location for the early industrialists of Belfast whose successors built large houses and created the distinctive planted demesnes.

17.5 Over recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the conservation, recreation and tourism potential of the river, towpath and canal. There have been improvements in the water quality of the River Lagan over the years and water activities, such as angling, canoeing, rowing and motor boating are becoming a regular feature of the river.

## D.18 Countryside recreation

- 18.1 The natural resources within the Belfast City Council area offers a wealth of opportunities for residents to enjoy the countryside experience in an urban setting through its provision of urban parks located throughout the City. In addition, the city's unique location offers countryside recreation opportunities just outside the city limits.
- 18.2 Belfast Hills provides walking, mountain biking and rock climbing pursuits. The Belfast Hills area takes in Carnmoney Hill and Cave Hill to the north and Colin Glen, Divis and Black Mountain and Slievenacloy to the west. The operational boundary encompasses approximately 4,400 hectares (11,000 acres). From these hills, users can see a huge area that not only includes a number of key landmarks within the greater Belfast area, but also most of the counties in the north of Ireland and beyond to Scotland and the Isle of Man. Together the hills provide Belfast with a unique, stunning backdrop that dominates most of the city and offer a chance to take in magnificent views. However, much of the land within the Belfast Hills is privately owned which limits formal access.
- 18.3 **Cavehill Country Park** is managed by Belfast City Council and encompasses the heath and moorland above Cavehill, the meadows and the Milewater streams at Carr's Glen linear park, the woodlands at Hazelwood and the Belfast Castle Estate. Rich in biodiversity, the Park also offers panoramic views as well as archaeological sites of interest include the remnants of an old mill at the Milewater Stream.
- 18.4 **Colin Glen Forest Park** is managed on behalf of DAERA by the Colin Glen Trust. Colin Glen Forest Park offers a 'countryside experience' close to the city limits. Describes as 'Belfast's Green Lung', the Park was awarded a Green Flag Award – a national benchmark for quality parks and green spaces. The Park offers a range of outdoor activities including golfing, archery, gymnasium, a high ropes course (funded by BCC), are just a few to mention. BCC has committed £2.5 million towards the Parks ambitious £6million masterplan which will see the creation of a new visitors' and outdoor pursuits centre, camp sites and mountain bike trails with a view to achieve self-sufficiency as well as protect the forest.

## **D.19 Green belt**

- 19.1 Following the publication of Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 21 'Sustainable Development in the Countryside', the Department of Environment (now Department of Infrastructure) withdrew the proposed Green Belt Designation in BMAP. PPS 21 sets out planning policies for development in the countryside. With the publication of PPS 21 in its final form on 1st June 2010, the policies and provisions contained within it now take precedence over the policy provisions for all Green Belts in existing statutory and published draft Plans, with a limited number of exceptions.

## **D.20 Seascape**

- 20.1 The seascape can be defined as an area of sea, coastline and land, as perceived by people, whose character results from the actions and interactions of land with sea, by natural and/or human factors ('An Approach to Seascape Character Assessment', Natural England, 2012). Similar to 'landscape', the seascape forms part of the setting of our city and our everyday lives. The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) published the Regional Seascape Character Assessment of Northern Ireland (NIEA, 2014) to provide a strategic understanding of different areas of regional seascape character along the entire Northern Ireland coast. The Assessment contributes to the aims of the European Landscape Convention through promoting the protection, management and planning of the seascape, and to support European co-operation on landscape issues
- 20.2 The Assessment defines 'Belfast Harbour' as a Seascape Character Area (SCA), which generally relates to the portion of Belfast Lough and adjoining lands within the City Council area. The key characteristics of the seascape area are generally founded on the port, airport and associated commercial and industrial uses, as well as the important nature conservation assets. The Titanic Quarter is also located in this area, which is of significant economic, cultural and heritage interest and provides additional tourist draw. The identified forces for change include further development, land reclamation, conservation and environmental quality. The Belfast Harbour SCA adjoins Belfast Lough SCA.

## **E MATERIAL ASSETS BASELINE**

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### **E.1 Waste and recycling**

- 1.1 Waste management has changed and will continue to change dramatically over the next several years. Whilst the LDP will not designate or zone specific sites for the management of waste it will seek to locate new developments which maximise the efficient use of existing utility infrastructure whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum.
- 1.2 Moving towards more sustainable waste management is a key government objective for the future. The emphasis of waste management in NI is changing from resource management with the need to divert waste away from landfill in favour of more sustainable methods where waste is treated as a resource. It is incumbent upon the council to consider the management of waste and other public utilities when accommodating growth and that this can act as a constraint on development or a requirement for new development.
- 1.3 In terms of existing infrastructure, Belfast City Council operates:
- 4 centres for recycling household waste - Alexandra Park, Blackstaff Way, Ormeau and Palmerstown Road<sup>69</sup>;
  - 3 civic amenity sites – Agnes Street, Springfield Avenue and Cregagh Road
- 1.4 There are 5 recycling centres that are privately owned, Belfast City Recycling, Waste Beater, Avenue Metal Recycling, Avenue Recycling Ltd and All Electrical Recycling.
- 1.5 The 3 landfill sites at the Duncrue Estate have reached capacity and are no longer operational. Work is required for their permanent capping and closure.

#### **Municipal waste**

- 1.6 Three sub-regional groups were formed by local councils in Northern Ireland in recognition of the mutual benefits to be gained from a regional approach to waste

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<sup>69</sup> <http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/bins-recycling/recycling/recyclingcentres.aspx>

management planning. Belfast is part of the Waste Management Group Arc21. Arc21 represents 6 councils in the east of Northern Ireland including:

- Belfast City Council,
- Ards and North Down Council,
- Newry, Mourne and Down Council,
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council,
- Antrim and Newtownabbey Council,
- Mid and East Antrim Council.

- 1.7 Arc21 prepared a Waste Management Plan for the Belfast and surrounding region in fulfilment of its councils 'obligations under Article 23 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. Under Article 23, District Councils have a duty to prepare Waste Management Plans for the forward planning of waste management requirements for collecting, recovering, treating and disposing of controlled waste within the region<sup>70</sup>. A revision of the Plan was determined in June 2014. This plan is now out of date and the council should take account of the WMP 2015.
- 1.8 The EU Waste Framework Directive sets a target of 50% household waste recycling by 2020. This means that in Belfast, based on today's figures, must recycle at least 60,000 tonnes of our household waste by 2020. It also sets a 70% recycling and recovery target for construction and demolition wastes.
- 1.9 The EU Landfill Directive specifies that member states must reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) they send to landfill to 50% of 1995 levels by 2013 and to 35% by 2020. (BMW is the organic waste collected from households and businesses).
- 1.10 The figures below show the collected municipal waste landfill rate in Belfast City Council from 2006-2016, and municipal waste preparing for reuse, dry recycling, composting, energy recovery and landfill rates in 2017.

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<http://www.arc21.org.uk/download/1/arc21%20Waste%20Management%20Plan%20Oct%202014.pdf>

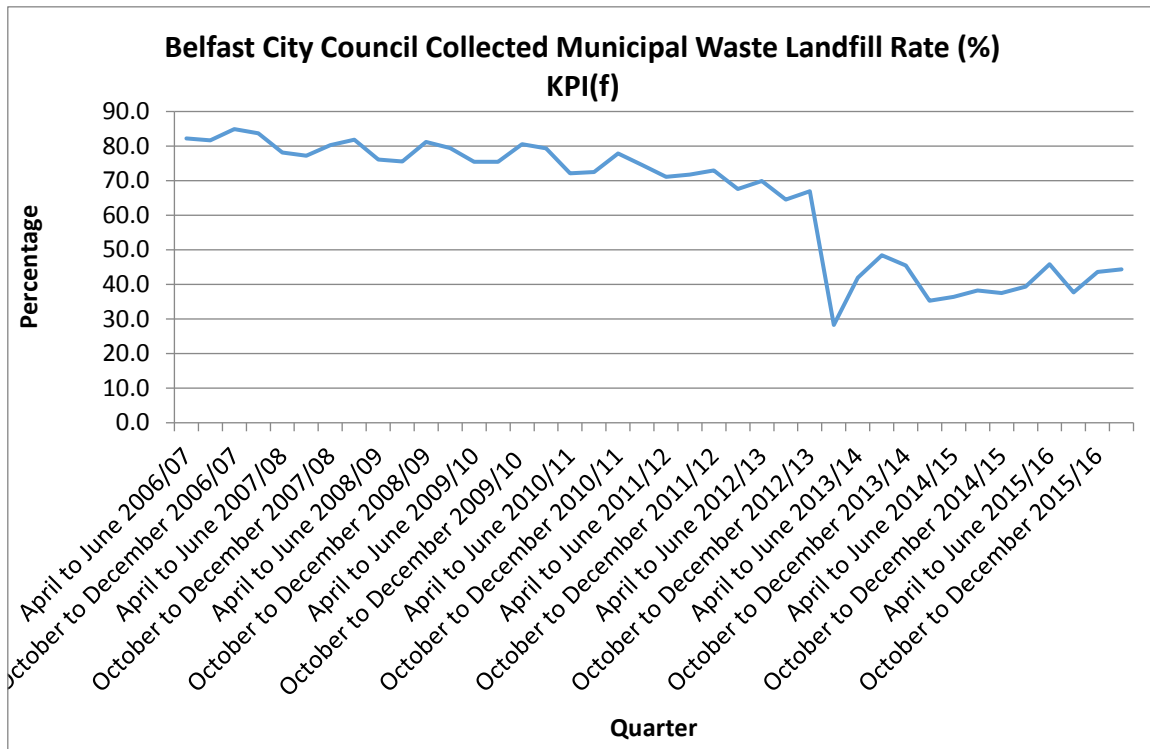


Figure 16: Northern Ireland local authority collected municipal waste management statistics

Source: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-local-authority-collected-municipal-waste-management-statistics>

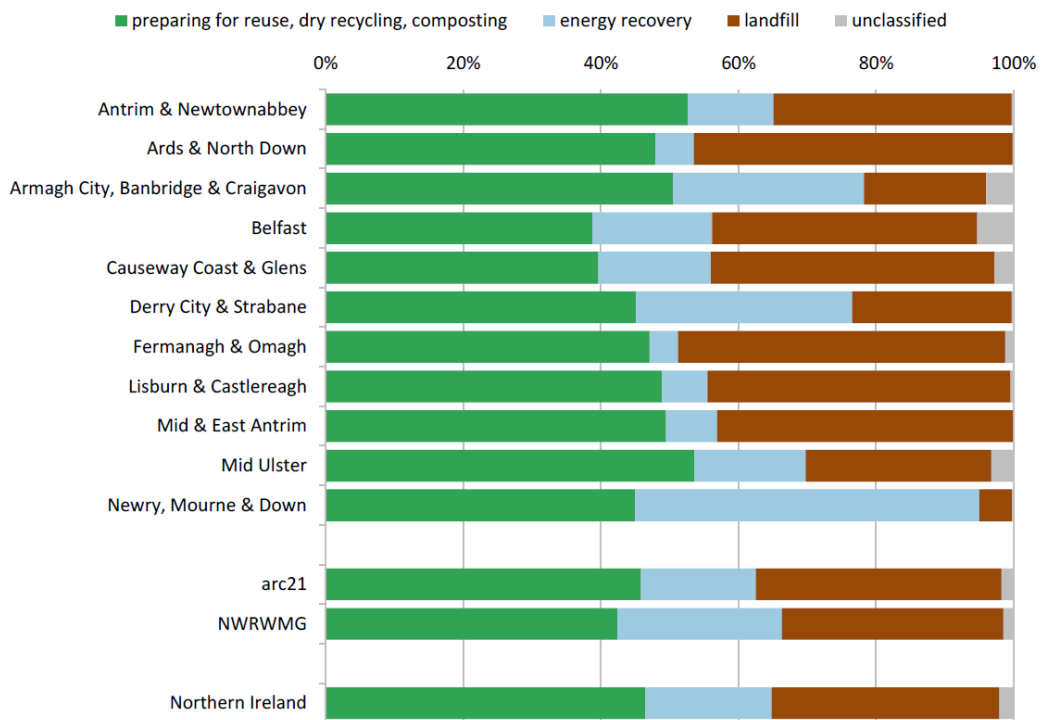


Figure 17: LAC Municipal Waste Preparing Northern Ireland, October to December 2017

Source:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/lac-municipal-waste-q3-2017-18-report.pdf>

- 1.10 Between 2006 and 2018, there has been a steady decreasing trend in the amount of household waste collected. With the onset of Local Government Reform in 2015, the Belfast City Council area increased by around 21,000 houses.
- 1.11 The council's 'Towards Zero Waste' Action Plan (ZAP) 2012-2015 established a series of tasks aimed at improving Belfast's recycling rate which increased from 32% in 2012 to 44% in 2015 which is working towards reaching the longer term goal set out by the EU Waste Framework Directive (EU 2008/98/EC) which outlined a 50% recycling rate and a 35% landfill diversion rate by 2020. In terms of benchmarking with similar cities in England shows that Belfast has outperformed its UK peer group and will now have to find alternative benchmark partners.
- 1.12 With the LGR in 2015, the recycling rate had decreased and currently stands at 40.01%<sup>71</sup>. A number of factors influenced this increase including, regional trends suggested by the then DoE in 2014 saw the overall amount of household waste increasing. Under LGR, around 21,000 households transferred to Belfast City Council from Castlereagh, Lisburn and North Down. Not all households from the new areas had access to the same recycling services and level of engagement as Belfast's residents. As a result, it will take time for the current recycling systems to embed within the transferring areas. The council is researching the viability of including glass recyclability within the current system. It is anticipated this would contribute an additional 2.5% to the council's recycling rate.
- 1.13 The Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme (NILAS) outlines the reductions of waste sent to landfill that councils must meet each year. NILAS reduced the annual targets for every council year-on-year up to 2020, limiting how much BMW we can send to landfill. If Belfast breaches its allowance, it could be fined £150 per tonne which could potentially amount to a fine of £2million.
- 1.14 Through the NILAS contract with NWP, the council has met its NILAS obligations in 2013/14 and is confident of achieving a similar result in 2014/15. Annually, this contract treats around 47,000 tonnes of residual waste and diverts approximately 30,000 tonnes from landfill. In terms of measurable environmental benefit, the

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<sup>71</sup> March 2016 figure



diversion of the tonnage from landfill to recycling has the equivalent effect of removing carbon dioxide pollution from just over 13,000 cars. In 2015/16 43,951 tonnes of waste was sent to landfill which is under the NILAS quota of 50,753 tonnes.

- 1.15 The Northern Ireland Environment Agency has released the NILAS reconciliation position for the councils regarding 2016/17 and Belfast met its NILAS obligations and used 98.5% of its landfill limit. Looking forward it is projected the council may not achieve NILAS target in 2018/19. This compounds the need to bring in more interventions to minimise waste sent to landfill for example recycling glass (within the current blue bin system), frequency of collections, increasing the amount sent through contracts for treatment before landfill.
- 1.16 The DOE's (now DAERA) "Towards Resource Management Strategy" states that we need to reach 40% recycling by 2015 and 45% by 2020. However, the Minister for the Environment has recently announced plans to introduce a new 60% recycling target for the waste we collect (LACMW) by 2020.
- 1.17 Whilst the current performance has increased steadily, challenges remain in terms of delivering the recycling target of 50% household waste for 2020 which will only be achieved through a paradigm shift in behaviour. In this regard, EU waste policy is shifting from seeking legal compliance in the current take-make-dispose economic model, towards promoting a resource-efficient, circular economy (CE) approach (i.e. an economy which extends the useful life of materials and products through design, manufacturing and reprocessing, thereby "designing out" waste – which could be described as a by-product of poor design and manufacturing processes). This however, like all EU policies will have to be reviewed in light of the UK exiting the European Union (also termed as 'Brexit').
- 1.18 At present, the council spends around £25 million annually collecting, treating, recycling and disposing of Belfast's waste. This spend ensures that the council complies with its statutory obligations and, based on 2015/16 projected recycling performance, directly and indirectly supported around 500 jobs in a range of business sectors<sup>72</sup>. The council has been progressive in many of its approaches and is one of only a few in the UK which are considering how to implement the circular economy.

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<sup>72</sup> Wealth from Waste – LGA local waste review 2013

Such an approach presents an opportunity to lever greater economic and social benefits while keeping pace with global thinking on best practice management and minimisation of waste.

- 1.19 Recycling also supports over 520 jobs in Belfast alone and is a key component in the forthcoming circular economy, so not only are residents saving money by recycling but they are creating jobs and improving the environment through increased resource efficiency. The “Towards a Resourceful Belfast: A Materials Strategy Proposition Document” explores how Belfast could benefit from moving away from the traditional waste management approach and, instead, apply a circular economy approach to generate more value and jobs for the local economy.

## **E.2 Minerals**

- 2.1 The SPSS acknowledges that mineral development can make a significant contribution to the local economy in various ways; not least by providing materials for construction such as sand, gravel and crushed rock. Because of this fact, it is important to facilitate mineral development but in a sustainable fashion which balances with the need to protect the environment. Natural mineral resources should still be developed but not at the overriding cost of the environment.
- 2.2 In the Belfast council area, there are no active quarries (Black Mountain Quarry is inert) within the plan area.
- 2.3 Belfast is dependent on the operational quarries from the surrounding six Counties especially those based in Counties Antrim (25%) and Down (24%) which produce 49% of all minerals for Northern Ireland. The majority of quarries according to the Quarry Products Association Northern Ireland (QPANI<sup>73</sup>) are based in the Mid Ulster District with 31 quarrying companies and 41 quarry sites producing 3.2Mt of aggregates each year. Table 16 shows the average quantity produced per year per county and per mineral. Figure 18 shows production of hard rock, sand and gravel production based on local geology of NI.

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<sup>73</sup> The Quarry Products Association Northern Ireland (QPANI) represent over 95% of the quarry products industry in NI

County	Average Quantity Produced per year	Average Selling Value per year
Antrim	5,755,971	23,634,794
Armagh	2,489,610	8,816,416
Down	6,149,708	24,364,355
Fermanagh	3,866,057	12,324,285
Londonderry	3,092,140	11,468,011
Tyrone	4,239,148	13,334,205
Per Mineral	Average Quantity Produced per year	Average Selling Value per year
Basalt	6,741,105	24,043,334
Sandstone	6,120,695	22,689,134
Limestone	5,174,620	16,824,827
Sand & Gravel	5,993,378	23,104,141
Other	1,562,836	7,280,629

Table 16: Average Quantity Produced Per Year per County

Source: GSNI / QPANI

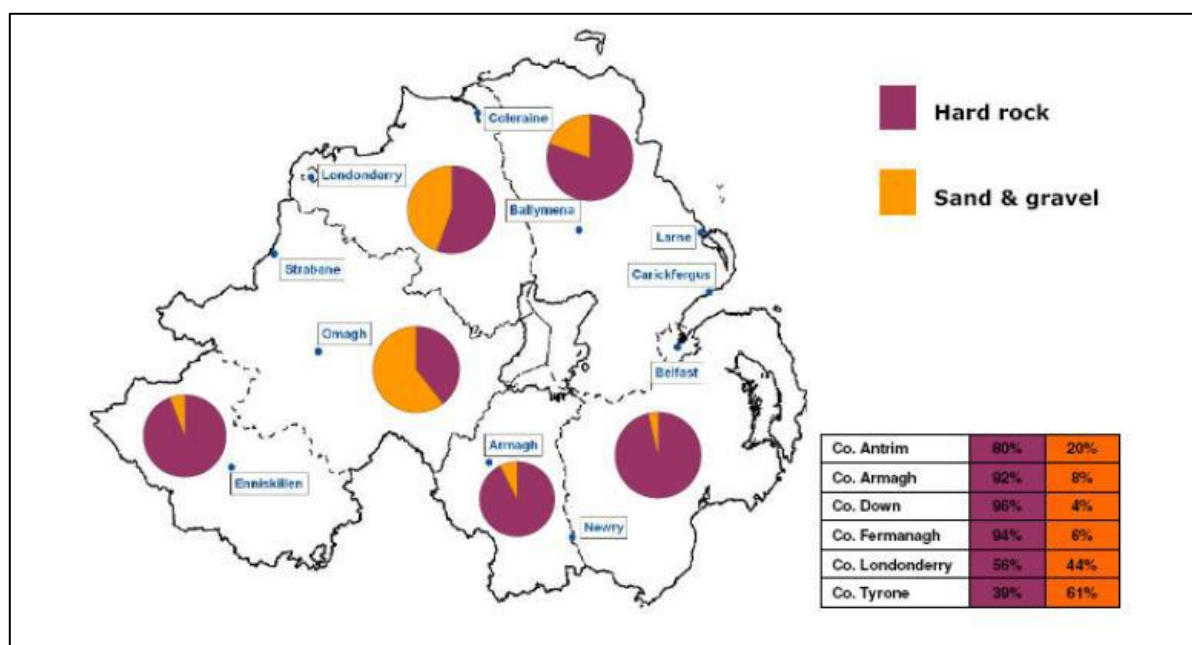


Figure 18: Production of Hard Rock and Sand and Gravel Attributable to the Local Geology

Source: GSNI / QPANI

- 2.4 Each year, the Minerals Branch in Geological Survey of Northern Ireland on behalf of the DETI collects industry data and publishes an Annual Mineral Statement – mined under the Mines Act 1969 and Quarries (NI) Order 1983. The last updated information from quarries and associated operations was produced in 2010.
- 2.5 DETI have advised that not all quarries in Northern Ireland provide responses to the Mineral Statement and therefore the figures in this paper are not fully reflective of the overall picture in Belfast or indeed in Northern Ireland.
- 2.6 While it is accepted that Belfast has no active quarry production the local economy is still dependent on the aggregate production and table 16 highlights the related companies carrying operating quarry related activities. According to QPANI, NI produces 20Mt of aggregates and supplies materials worth over £600M, employing directly and indirectly 4,000 people. Table 17 also shows the relative importance of mineral related activity to levels of employment in Belfast council area.

Company	Locations	Products / Activity	No of Employees
Conexpo	Belfast Harbour	Export of High PSV aggregates	16
Northstone Materials	Belfast Harbour, Dunmurry	Ready Mixed Concrete	10
Six West	Belfast	Mineral Planning Agents	6
McLorian Consulting	Belfast	Mineral Planning/ Environmental Agents	5
Whitemountain Quarries	Blackmountain	Asphalt Manufacture / Inert Waste landfill	5
Whitemountain Quarries	Belfast Harbour	Export of High PSV aggregates	2
Tennant Bitumen	Belfast Harbour	Bitumen	10
Lagan Bitumen	Belfast Harbour	Bitumen	10
Atlantic Bitumen	Belfast Harbour	Bitumen	10
Lagan Cement Products	Belfast Harbour	Cement import and export	2
Lagan Cement Products	Blackmountain	Ready mixed Concrete	2
Colinwell Concrete	West Belfast	Precast Concrete	15
Lafarge	Belfast	Cement	7
Larsen	Belfast Harbour	Concrete Admixtures	90
<b>Total</b>			<b>190</b>

**Table 17: Belfast Related Industries Operating Quarry Related Activities**

*Source: GSNI / QPANI*

- 2.7 Many of these industries are dependent on Belfast Harbour for exporting to the UK and onwards to Europe. An example of this is Conexpo who exports products (1 Mt annually from their quarry in County Down) globally from the Port of Belfast terminal and via company distribution hubs in Bristol, London and the Netherlands. This highlights the need for a sustainable transport infrastructure and future collaborative working with adjoining councils in the support of this industry.

### E.3 Climate change, energy consumption and energy efficiency

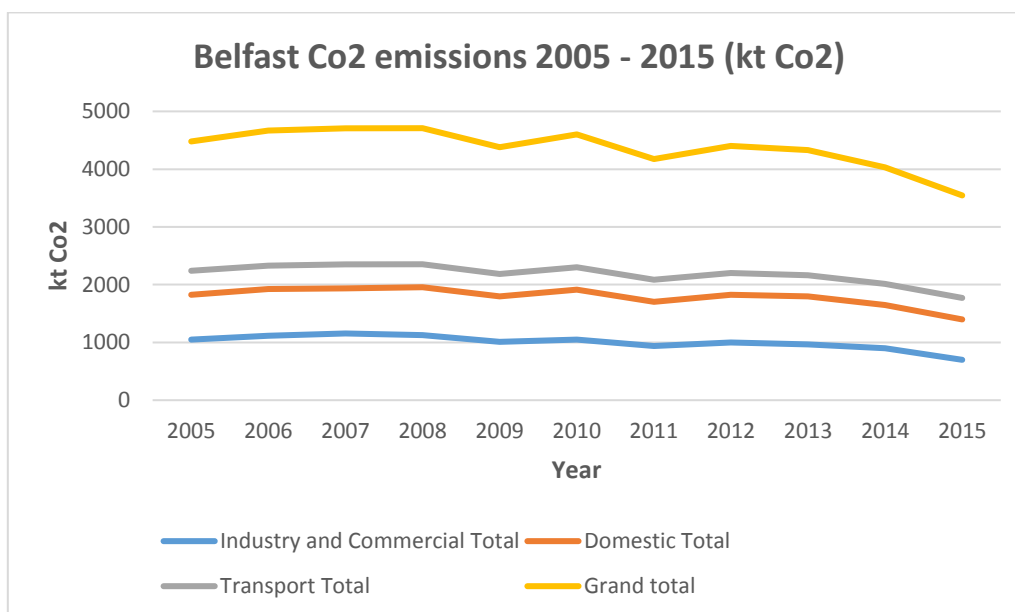
- 3.1 Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) are Methane; Nitrous Oxide; Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs); Perfluorocarbons (PFCs) and Sulphur Hexafluoride (SF6). The majority of GHGs originate from emissions made up of CO<sub>2</sub> (68% of emissions in Northern Ireland in 2016<sup>74</sup>) and often for simplicity, GHG emissions are measured in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions resulting from human activity have increased by over 600% since 1950. The core cause for this is believed to be attributed to the industrial revolution. The concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the air is around 400 parts per million by volume (ppm) and rising, compared to about 280ppm in pre-industrial times.
- 3.2 Northern Ireland accounted for 4.4% of UK emissions in 2016. UK-wide, greenhouse gas emissions decreased 8% between 2013 and 2014, with an average annual fall of 2.2% between 2009 and 2014. Northern Ireland emissions decreased (3.4%) since 2014 (base year for reporting) with a 15.9% reduction since 1990. In Northern Ireland, emissions in 2016 were 20.6 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e<sup>75</sup>; a reduction of 15.9% below the 1990 base year. Northern Ireland's target requires less emissions reduction compared to the Scottish and Welsh targets, reflecting the larger share of its emissions from difficult to reduce sectors (in particular agriculture).
- Emissions in 2016 **fell** energy supply, residential and waste sectors.
  - Emissions in 2016 **rose** in agriculture and transport.
- 3.3 Northern Ireland has a target to reduce emissions by at least 35% compared to 1990 levels by 2025. In 2016, emissions in Northern Ireland were 15.9% below their 1990 levels. The Northern Ireland Executive projections suggest that progress is falling short of what is required in order to meet the 2025 target. (Meeting Carbon Budgets – 2016 Progress Report to Parliament Committee on Climate Change June 2016.)
- 3.4 In 2015, Belfast CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions per Capita (tons) was 5.36 (ranked 15 out of 63 UK Cities (Centre for Cities Outlook January 2015)).

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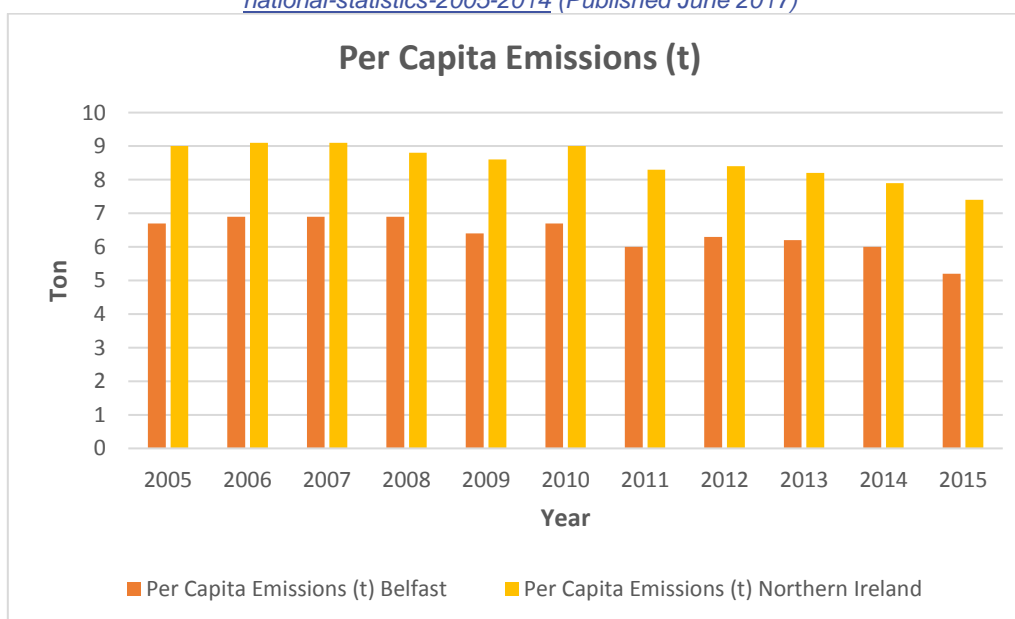
<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/ghg-inventory-statistical-bulletin-2016.pdf>

<sup>75</sup> MtCO<sub>2</sub>e – Million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. This measure can aggregate different greenhouse gases into a single measure, using global warming potentials. One unit of carbon is equivalent to 3.664 units of carbon dioxide



**Figure 19: Belfast CO2 Emissions Estimates 2005-2014**

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-2014> (Published June 2017)



**Figure 20: UK Local Authority and Regional Carbon Dioxide Emissions**

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-2014> (Published June 2017)

- 3.5 Air pollution from particulate matter is currently estimated to reduce the life expectancy of every person by an average of 7-8 months. The young and infirm are often particularly affected, as well as people living in deprived areas. Air pollution due to greenhouse gas emissions is a particularly relevant consideration when the focus

of the Local Plan is to grow the City, and to encourage City Living. In addition, emissions of sulphur (SO<sub>2</sub>), nitrogen (NO) and ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) can be deposited on land and water causing either acidification, or nutrient enrichment (eutrophication). It is important that Belfast plays its part by reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for the impacts of climate change.

- 3.6 Consideration needs to be given on how to decrease greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging the reduction of energy consumption and the move to more sustainable methods of energy production. The use of fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced by improving energy efficiencies in transportation, urban design, and buildings.

#### **E.4 Energy consumption**

- 4.1 The Department of Economy produced 'Energy in Northern Ireland 2018'<sup>76</sup> which provided the main source of information for this section. Northern Ireland has three major fossil-fuel based electricity generating plants and a number of renewable generators which make up indigenous electricity production. In general, there has been a slight downwards trend in annual electricity consumption in Northern Ireland over the period 2010-2017 with total consumption in 2017 (7,783 GWh) some 7.7% lower than in 2010.
- 4.2 Average annual domestic electricity consumption per meter in Belfast is 3,100 kWh which is lower than NI average of 3,600 kWh. Belfast has the lowest domestic electricity consumption compared to the other NI council areas.
- 4.3 The Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government (PFG) target to "Encourage achievement of 20% of electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2015" was met during 2015. The proportion reached a peak of 25.4% for the 12 month period ending December 2015.
- 4.4 The annual proportion of electricity consumption from renewable sources in Northern Ireland has risen considerably in recent years, from 8.4% in 2010 to 35.2% in 2017/18.

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<sup>76</sup> <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/energy-northern-ireland>



- 4.5 Wind is the dominant source of renewable electricity generation in Northern Ireland accounting for around 84.3% of installed capacity and volume generated. Such reliance on this source does mean that monthly renewable electricity generation volumes in Northern Ireland can be prone to large fluctuations, due to changing weather conditions.
- 4.6 In recent years, the volume of renewable electricity generated in Northern Ireland has steadily increased as has the number of sites and installed capacity at sites generating electricity from renewable sources. The volume of renewable electricity generated in 2017/18 (2,777 GWH) was around four times the volume generated in 2010 (706 GWH).
- 4.7 Belfast has the least number of renewable energy sites, 7 (0.05%) out of a total 12,701 sites in Northern Ireland. These 7 sites generate 12,457 MWh of renewable electricity which is 9% of NI's renewable electricity generation.
- 4.8 In terms of the percentage of total indigenous electricity generation accounted for by indigenous renewable generation, Northern Ireland had the second highest proportion (22.2%) of all four UK regions in 2014 using this measure. Scotland had the highest proportion (38.0%) with the UK average at 19.1%.
- 4.9 According to the Department of Communities, the rate of fuel poverty<sup>77</sup> in Northern Ireland is 42%. There are three factors which influence the impact of fuel poverty including income, the cost of energy and the domestic energy efficiency of the home. Approximately 32% of households in Belfast face fuel poverty<sup>78</sup>.
- 4.10 Belfast has the lowest levels of coal consumption in Northern Ireland at about 76 GWH, or only 2% of the Northern Ireland total. Belfast had the lowest average consumption per household at 6.2 MWh, around half the Northern Ireland average. The lower consumption per household in Belfast council area may be due factors

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<sup>77</sup> Fuel poverty is defined as 'a household is in fuel poverty if, in order to maintain an acceptable level of temperature throughout the home, it would have to spend more than 10% of its income on all household fuel'. Home Energy Conservation 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Report NIHE (2015)

<sup>78</sup> 2011 House Condition Survey – District Council Figures for Key Measures (Modelled) NIHE July 2014

such as the better availability of mains gas in that council area which would reduce the requirement for home heating oil or the housing mix in council areas.

- 4.11 Phoenix Gas operates the Gas network in Belfast. In 2014, 87% of total connections to the gas network are in Greater Belfast. Gas connections continue to rise each year.
- 4.12 The energy company 'Belfast Power Limited' have submitted a planning application for a gas powered 480-megawatt power station. The proposed facility situated on the Belfast Harbour Estate will have the capacity to produce electricity for over 400,000 homes.

## **E.5 Climate change**

- 5.1 The 2008 UK Climate Change Act established a framework to develop an economically credible emissions reductions path. The Act extends to Northern Ireland following consent by the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly. The Act requires the UK to cut emissions by at least 80% by 2050.
- 5.2 The Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) recognises the need to reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate adaptation to climate change. It states that climate change is one of the most serious problems facing the world and greenhouse emissions need to be reduced as well as the promotion of sustainable construction, consumption and production. Alongside this, the reduction and safe disposal of waste is also an imperative consideration.
- 5.3 The UK government must carry out a climate change risk assessment of the current and future national risks from climate change. The latest assessment is the Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017.

## **E.6 Climate change projections**

- 6.1 The Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2014 is the government's response to the risks and opportunities identified within the Climate Change Risk Assessment. The Programme covers the period 2014-2019 and provides strategic objectives in relation to adaptation to climate change, the

proposals and policies by which each department will meet these objectives, and the timescales associated with the proposals and policies identified.

6.2 The vision of the Adaptation Programme is 'a resilient Northern Ireland which will take timely and well-informed decisions that are responsive to the key risks and opportunities presented by climate change'.

6.3 Five objectives have been identified to achieve this vision:

- Fulfil the statutory duties;
- Work in partnership across government and with relevant stakeholders to strengthen and develop policy;
- Raise awareness of the likely effects of climate change;
- Promote and support the enhancement of scientific evidence; and
- Engage with other administrations.

6.4 The programme focuses on three main principles:

- Integrating adaptation into relevant key policy areas;
- Developing the evidence base; and
- Communication and cooperation.

6.5 The UK Climate Change Projections predicts that as a result of Climate Change the coast of Northern Ireland will experience an increase in sea level. The medium emissions scenario projection for Belfast shows an increase of 14.5cm by the 2050s and 25.3cm by the 2080s. The relative sea level rise projections are shown in Figure 21 below.

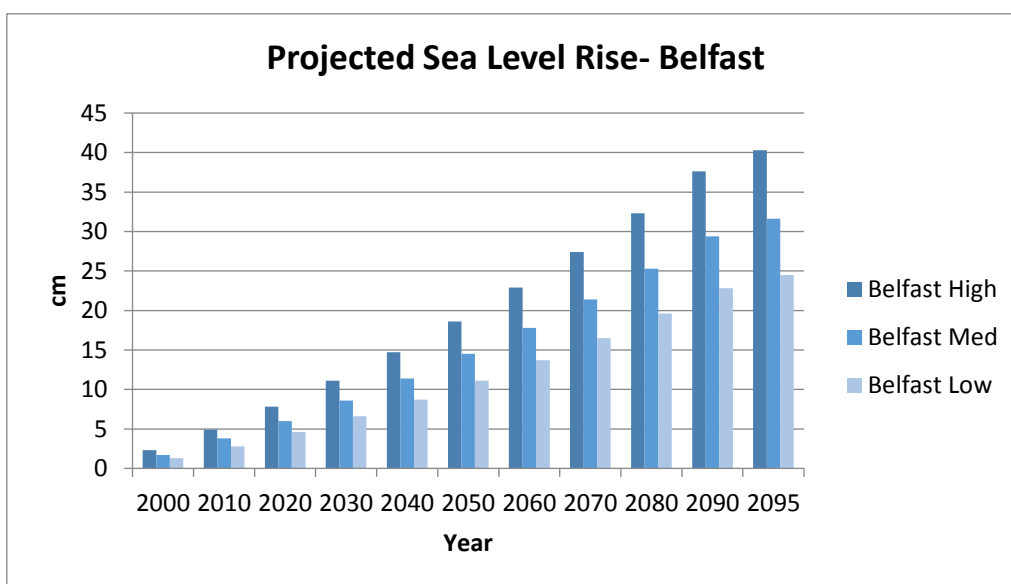


Figure 21: Relative Sea Level Rise Projections for Belfast (cm) <sup>3</sup>

Source: UK Climate Change Projections

6.6 Annual average temperatures in Northern Ireland are similar to the UK average. The observed trend is that of warming in recent decades. The 2005-2014 decade was 0.7 degrees warmer than the 1961-1990 average.

City	Daily Summer Max Temperature (C)				5-day Winter Rainfall Accumulation (mm)			
	1961-1990	2041-2060	2041-2060	2041-2060	1961-1990	2041-2060	2041-2060	2041-2060
	Observed	Low	Central	High	Observed	Low	Central	High
<b>Belfast</b>	25.9	26.5	28.5	30.9	70.3	70.6	76.9	84.6

Table 18: Daily Summer Maximum Temperature & 5-day Winter Rainfall Accumulation Projections for Belfast

Source: UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017 Evidence Report- Summary for Northern Ireland

6.7 The general trend of warming is set to continue with the maximum summer temperature in Belfast set to increase by between 0.6 to 5°C by 2060 based on the observed temperature from 1961-1990. Five day winter rainfall is projected to increase by between 0.3 to 14.3mm based on observed five day winter rainfall accumulation from 1961-1990.

6.8 As well as hotter summers and wetter winters the UK Climate Change Projections also predict increased frequency of extreme weather events such as heavy rain

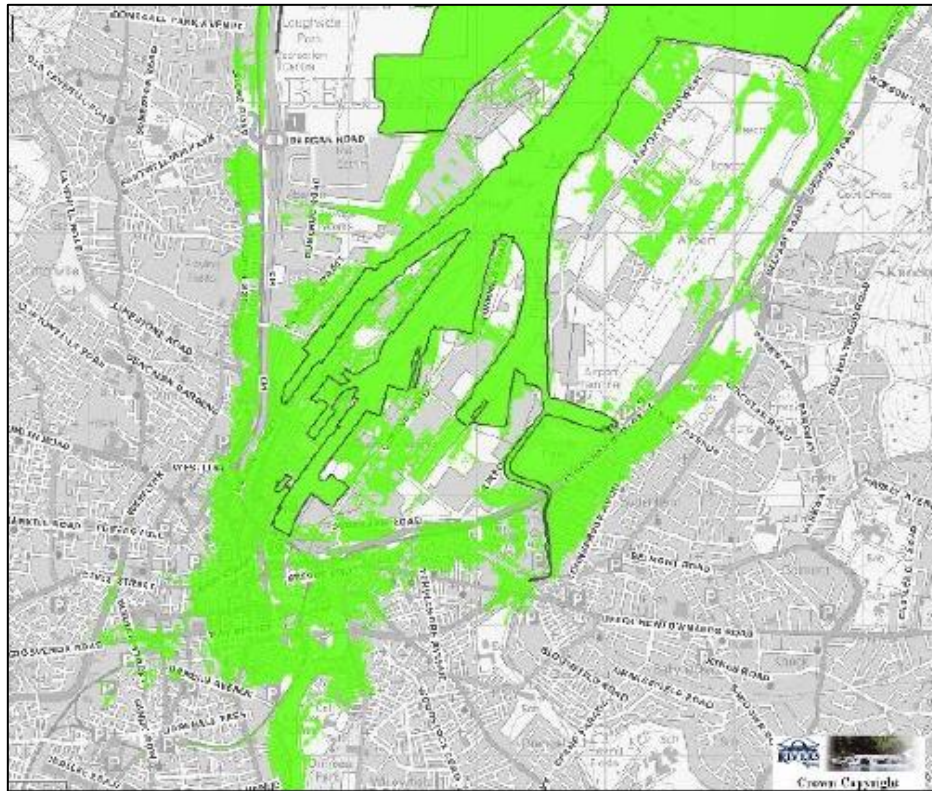
coupled with flooding, heat waves and dry spells. Key findings from the Climate Change Projections for Northern Ireland by the year 2050 are listed below:

- Reduction in summer mean precipitation of approximately 12%,
- Increase in winter mean precipitation of approximately 9%,
- Increase in summer mean temperature of approximately 2.2°C,
- Increase in winter mean temperature of approximately 1.7°C,
- Sea level rise of 14.5cm above the 1990 sea level.

6.9 The Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme lists flooding as potentially the greatest impact of climate change.

6.10 Under the Floods Directive, the Flood Risk Management Plans for Northern Ireland have been produced and highlight the flood hazards and risks in the 20 most Significant Flood Risk Areas in Northern Ireland from flooding from rivers, the sea, surface water and reservoirs.

6.11 Under the North-Eastern Flood Risk Management Plan, Belfast is designated as a Significant Flood Risk Area (SFRA). The Belfast SFRA is located within the Belfast Lough and Tidal Lagan Flood Management Area and to a lesser extent the Lagan Flood Management Area. The boundaries of the Belfast SFRA are shown in Figure 22.



**Figure 22: Belfast SFRA- Undefended Coastal Flood Plain**

*Source: North Eastern Flood Risk Management Plan*

- 6.12 According to the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment, the city of Belfast in terms of the potential adverse consequences of flooding, is ranked highest of the twenty SFRA's within Northern Ireland. The city is at risk of both tidal and fluvial flooding. Up to 9,800 properties are at risk of flooding from rivers and 6,000 at risk from both rivers and the sea.
- 6.13 The climate Change Risk Assessment 2017 reports the impact flooding can have on infrastructure. Coastal, river, surface water and groundwater flooding can have a major impact across all sectors of infrastructure. Flooding already accounts for significant losses in infrastructure services, with outages caused by flooding tending to last longer than other weather-related hazards (during extreme events, for several days and in some cases weeks). Half of all flood events in Northern Ireland are caused by surface water flooding. The flooding in 2007 caused transport in Belfast to be severely disrupted when a new underpass flooded<sup>79</sup>.

<sup>79</sup> <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/UK-CCRA-2017-Northern-Ireland-National-Summary.pdf>

- 6.14 Climate Change could have a significant impact on Belfast Harbour which accounts for 70% of Northern Ireland's seaborne trade. The harbour provides vital infrastructure services to the economy and wellbeing of communities in Northern Ireland. Being located in the North Sea-Mediterranean transport corridor the Northern Irish transport network is of international importance.
- 6.15 The Belfast Harbour Port Masterplan states that climate change projections of an increase in sea level and storm surges are a risk to ports such as Belfast given their location. These risks are increased in older parts of the port which are relatively low lying. The harbour's flood risk assessment and flood risk management plan consider the coastal impacts of climate change. The 'Harbour Resilience Group' also considers the potential impacts of climate change. The Harbour's Business Continuity Planning process incorporates climate change with a warning and informing system as well as planning and operational controls for adverse weather and storm surges. The Harbour has also participated in the development of the Belfast Coastal Flood Plan. By working closely with other agencies such as Belfast City Council the Harbour can better understand the risks of flooding and identify appropriate responses.





## F BREXIT BASELINE

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### F.1 Referendum impact

- 1.1 Following the referendum on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016, the UK voted to leave the EU. Northern Ireland voted to remain in the EU by a 56% majority. A robust assessment of the impact of leaving the EU will only be possible once the future relationship between the UK and EU has been determined. There may be a period of uncertainty in financial markets and in the economic climate generally until this is resolved.

### F.2 Environmental implications

- 2.1 In terms of the environment, the Northern Ireland Assembly produced a paper on 'Northern Ireland's environment – Background and Potential 'Brexit' Considerations' (September 2016) which states, "*It is not yet clear what the UK's relationship with the EU will be following withdrawal. Whether it mirrors any existing models or sees the development of a bespoke model unique to the UK is not known at this stage*". It goes on to say, "*A complete departure from the EU may give the UK Government more scope and control over environmental objectives. Whether this would involve a relaxation, tightening, or continuation of environmental standards remains to be seen depending on requirements to be retained by international/global agreements and priorities and negotiations between the EU and UK*"<sup>80</sup>.

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<sup>80</sup> <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/committees/agriculture-environment-and-rural-affairs/research-papers-2016/northern-irelands-environment---background-and-potential-brexit-considerations/>



## APPENDIX 6

### KEY SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

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- 1.1 Analysis of the baseline information has allowed us to identify existing conditions, problems and issues, as required by the SEA Directive. This gives us the opportunity to respond by developing sustainable plan objectives and options, and to consider how the LDP can avoid exacerbating existing problems or explore alternative solutions.
- 1.2 **Tables 9 and 10, Section 3.6** presented a very high level summary of the key issues identified from the baseline information, together with how the LDP could respond, and the likely future without the plan.
- 1.3 This appendix provides a full, expanded synopsis of all sustainability issues and their influence on the LDP preparation process and the SA, as identified through the baseline information in **Appendix 5**.

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

Themes	Key Sustainability Issues	Implications The LDP should:	Likely Evolution without LDP
<b>Population &amp; Human Health</b>	In Belfast, health inequalities exist between the most and least deprived areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide adequate access to areas of open space, sport &amp; recreation particularly via walking &amp; cycling;</li> <li>• Provide adequate access to health care facilities;</li> <li>• Use development management policies to manage the number &amp; distribution of certain use types (e.g. hot food takeaways, betting shops) which could be contributing to negative health outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p>The Belfast Agenda identifies health as a priority for Belfast and could potentially coordinate programmes to address these inequalities. Likewise the Open Space Strategy will continue to be developed; but may lack spatial planning input, and the disparity of open space across the city may not be adequately addressed.</p> <p>Without the LDP and supporting evidence, it would not be possible for the council to fully understand its spatial and development needs and to plan positively to address these.</p>
<b>Population &amp; Human Health</b>	<p>Between 2010 and 2014 Belfast had the highest rate of deaths due to obesity in NI.</p> <p>Childhood obesity in Belfast is 9 percentage points higher in comparison to the NI average.</p> <p>Within Belfast LGD, childhood obesity is 33% high in deprived areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support broader government policy aimed at addressing obesity &amp; other health &amp; wellbeing issues;</li> <li>• Influence the environment in a way that builds strong, healthy &amp; vibrant communities</li> </ul>	<p>There are likely to be programmes which seek to address specific health issues e.g. obesity.</p> <p>However, without the LDP and supporting evidence, it would not be possible for the council to fully understand its spatial and development needs and to plan positively to address these.</p>

Themes	Key Sustainability Issues	Implications The LDP should:	Likely Evolution without LDP
<p><b>Population &amp; Human Health</b></p>	<p>Segregation continues in parts of Belfast. 88<sup>81</sup> different security barriers and forms of defensible architecture, known as 'Peace walls', located within and between communities.</p> <p>These could hamper potential development in terms of housing or open space.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play an important role in the delivery of good quality housing &amp; spaces that supports the creation of more balanced communities;</li> <li>• Take account of the Council's good relations policies.</li> <li>• Encourage opportunities to foster community pride and identity through conservation or regeneration of local heritage assets, such as the retention of heritage assets in peace line areas for community use.</li> </ul>	<p>Interventions would continue at NI Executive level, Local Council and NIHE level. However, the NI Executive set ambitious targets to reduce and remove all interface barriers by 2023. Without the LDP, an updated evidence base and supporting policy would be absent to assist the removal of barriers to create shared spaces, and to maximise the accessibility of all areas within our communities. There would also be a potential lack of collaborate approaches to integrated regeneration of wider neighbourhood environments.</p>
<p><b>Housing</b></p>	<p>A crucial factor in accommodating housing growth in Belfast will be the ability to provide suitable and affordable house types, in the right locations, to meet the needs of differing household compositions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support a sustainable level of population growth;</li> <li>• Promote sustainable patterns of residential development – adequate &amp; available supply of quality housing to meet the needs of everyone;</li> <li>• Prioritise the use of previously developed/ brownfield land;</li> <li>• Tackle vacancy &amp; dereliction through the re-use of vacant buildings to accommodate housing needs;</li> <li>• Address housing affordability.</li> </ul>	<p>Without the LDP and supporting evidence, there would not be an up-to-date housing policy to accommodate local growth, meet demand for the identified annual housing supply in the area, or satisfy local requirements for housing type; including affordable housing.</p> <p>The location of suitable housing lands may not correlate to clear areas of housing stress.</p>

<sup>81</sup> Information received from BCC Good Relations Unit

Themes	Key Sustainability Issues	Implications The LDP should:	Likely Evolution without LDP
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage &amp; promote the sensitive &amp; innovative re-use of existing historic listed &amp; non-listed building stock.</li> </ul>	
<b>Housing</b>	<p>There is a shortage of programmed social housing schemes to meet social housing need.</p> <p>Welfare reforms are likely to increase the demand for smaller housing units.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate a reasonable mix &amp; balance of housing tenures &amp; types;</li> <li>Take into consideration the NIHE Housing Needs Assessment in the allocation of land required to facilitate the right mix of housing tenures.</li> </ul>	<p>Without the LDP and supporting evidence, there would be a lack of appropriate policies to address the demands of population need, including an aging population.</p> <p>This could mean people are living in houses that do not address their particular need.</p>
<b>Crime</b>	<p>A third of NI's recorded crime offences in 2014 occurred in Belfast. Anti-social behaviour is higher in Belfast than any other Council area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance the quality of life by encouraging safe &amp; accessible environments;</li> <li>Provide greater access to employment areas;</li> <li>Encourage secure by design standards;</li> <li>Improve quality of life by ensuring adequate access to employment opportunities &amp; opportunity for regeneration.</li> </ul>	<p>Alternative policies and community safety initiatives from other statutory providers will continue to provide interventions to reduce crime. Additionally there is guidance within the SPPS that encourages good design and positive place making that can 'further sustainable development and encourage healthier living; promote accessibility and inclusivity; and contribute to how safe places are and feel'.</p> <p>However, without the LDP and supporting evidence, trends could continue or worsen due to a lack of strategic direction in spatial terms.</p>

Themes	Key Sustainability Issues	Implications The LDP should:	Likely Evolution without LDP
<p><b>Open Space</b></p>	<p>There is a disparity in the provision of open space across Belfast.</p> <p>There are low levels of open and green space in the city centre.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect, enhance &amp; make open space accessible for enjoyment of the natural, cultural &amp; industrial environment;</li> <li>• Tackle issues of accessibility for sport, leisure &amp; open space in terms of social participation, cohesion &amp; inclusivity in the city;</li> <li>• Identify additional areas of open space &amp; ensure an adequate provision;</li> <li>• Encourage developer contributions via Section 76 to offset the impacts caused by developments by contributing to &amp; creating open space as per land use plans;</li> <li>• Create additional &amp; well-designed open space particular in areas lacking in provision;</li> <li>• Identify &amp; promote green linkages throughout the city &amp; to the surrounding hills;</li> <li>• Encourage more open space provision along the rivers, the waterfront, &amp; links to seascape where appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p>SPPS and PPS 8 would still prevail in terms of providing protection to open spaces.</p> <p>However, the SPPS requires LDP's to undertake an Open Space Strategy. Without the LDP and this requirement, the uneven distribution of open space may not be adequately addressed.</p> <p>Some areas across the city would have under-provision of accessible open spaces, and the city centre would continue to have a significant lack of open space.</p>



Themes	Key Sustainability Issues	Implications The LDP should:	Likely Evolution without LDP
<b>Education</b>	The 2011 census outlined that 41% of the adult population have no formal qualifications, which decreases chances of employability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure adequate access to schools, colleges &amp; universities, in particular the relocation of the University of Ulster to the North end of the City Centre;</li> <li>• Ensure community &amp; educational facilities are in the right locations, accessible and well connected.</li> </ul>	<p>Other statutory providers will continue to invest in employability and skills of the population through interventions such as the council's Skills and Employability Framework.</p> <p>However, without the LDP and supporting evidence, there may be insufficient economic and employment land to provide locations for entrepreneurs and attract inward investment. This could in turn displace Belfast as the regional economic driver as outlined in the RDS 2035.</p>
<b>Employment</b>	<p>30%<sup>82</sup> of Belfast's working age population are economically inactive, who are either not seeking employment or available for work.</p> <p>Notably, half of this group is claiming out of work or 'other' benefits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote connectivity to employment lands (especially in areas of employment deprivation);</li> <li>• Recognise the need to sustain a more responsive, flexible &amp; accessible system of higher education for the social &amp; economic benefit of Belfast;</li> <li>• Enable large scale housing developments to be planned close to existing education facilities, with good infrastructural connectivity;</li> <li>• Review the Employment Lands Assessment in Belfast.</li> </ul>	<p>Without the LDP and supporting evidence, the absence of specific policies and guidance to address local needs could further disadvantage those on lower incomes in terms of access to places of work and local amenities.</p> <p>The LDP can enable better connectivity between communities and places of work; and can zone land for economic development and regeneration specifically to the needs of the area.</p>

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<sup>82</sup> Labour Force Survey

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

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

Themes	Key Sustainability Issues	Implications The LDP should:	Likely Evolution without LDP
	<p>resulting in habitat loss and fragmentation.</p>	<p>development through key sites requirements;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect &amp; maintain sensitive landscapes from obtrusive development, &amp; explore opportunities for their enhancement;</li> <li>• Sensitively manage through the promotion of additional green &amp; blue infrastructure to add value to the provision &amp; enhancement of the City, as well as its connection to open space &amp; habitats in / around settlements;</li> <li>• Provide a greater emphasis on the protection of trees &amp; woodlands, &amp; their positive contribution to the social, cultural &amp; physical environment benefits i.e. habitats, flood protection and amenity value.</li> </ul>	<p>addressed to some extent by planning policy.</p> <p>However, given the current pressures for growth and development within the district, an up-to-date LDP and supporting evidence can help to conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity; by directing development away from sensitive locations; and managing new development so that its design minimises effects on the natural environment and helps to create and connect habitats.</p> <p>The LBAP is currently being updated by the council and sets Belfast's local priorities for action on habitats and species. The LDP can identify, map and define the sites requiring protection obtrusive development. Without the LDP to provide guidance on siting, scale and nature of development; there would be significant risk to sites of nature conservation.</p>

Themes	Key Sustainability Issues	Implications The LDP should:	Likely Evolution without LDP
<b>Air Quality</b>	The heavy reliance on vehicular travel leads to road traffic congestion, which in turn adversely effects air quality and CO2 emissions in Belfast.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce reliance on private car journeys by supporting development which is located suitably close to services, amenities &amp; established transport corridors;</li> <li>• Promote the use, development &amp; improvement of sustainable modes of transport;</li> <li>• Take account of air quality management areas;</li> <li>• Continue to protect &amp; increase tree coverage across Belfast.</li> </ul>	<p>The policies and guidance set out in SPPS (and associated PPS's) would provide some protection to air quality, particularly through the Environmental Impact Assessment screening. Existing legislation will seek to continue to manage air quality to acceptable thresholds.</p> <p>However, without the LDP and supporting evidence, development could not be directed to sustainable locations or encouraged to increase provision of sustainable transport infrastructure.</p> <p>The increasing trend for car ownership and travel would likely continue, along with a subsequent increase of air polluting emissions.</p>
<b>Water</b>	The LWWP outlined that without major investment in waste water and sewage infrastructure in Greater Belfast, it may not be possible to permit any new connections that will impact significantly on an already stretched infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the infrastructure requirements for future land supply;</li> <li>• Conduct an urban capacity study;</li> <li>• Make provision for waste water &amp; sewage infrastructure as required;</li> <li>• Consider the spatial implications of other statutory plans;</li> <li>• Increase green &amp; blue infrastructure;</li> <li>• Promote the use of SUDS;</li> </ul>	<p>The LWWP would continue to progress.</p> <p>However, without the LDP and supporting evidence, there is the potential that development would be difficult to coordinate, resulting in ad-hoc, piecemeal development and supporting infrastructure.</p>

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	<p>This will have an adverse effect on the economic growth strategy for Belfast.</p> <p>All water bodies within the River Lagan, tidal Lagan and inner Belfast Lough are currently failing to meet their WFD objectives, which is being addressed through the LWWP and the North-East River Basin Management Plan (NE RBMP).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet the requirements of the NE RBMP.</li> </ul>	<p>Utility providers may find it difficult to plan for growth and expansion in their networks in the absence of the LDP.</p> <p>The knock-on effects of this could result in delays and the inability to adequately address water quality, which could contravene the WFD requirements.</p>
<p><b>Contaminated Soils</b></p>	<p>Belfast has significant areas of previously developed or brownfield land.</p> <p>Many existing brownfield sites have remained undeveloped or vacant for extended periods, highlighting concerns over potential viability of the land for housing development which could hinder the delivery of the LDP's growth aspirations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct an urban capacity study;</li> <li>• Identify re-use of existing brownfield sites, which should be prioritised for development;</li> <li>• Exercise the precautionary principle to sites which may include priority habitats or are of special biodiversity interest;</li> <li>• Identify previously developed brownfield land in settlements outside the city for potential economic development use.</li> </ul>	<p>The council and NIEA, as a statutory consultee to the Planning Service, will continue to regulate the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 as much as possible, and will continue to assess and manage land contamination through the provisions of CLR11.</p> <p>However, the LDP can encourage sustainable management of contaminated land by directing development to suitable locations.</p>

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<p><b>Cultural &amp; Built Heritage</b></p>	<p>Belfast has a rich cultural and built heritage, which could potentially be under pressure from new development that is not in keeping with the character of the area.</p> <p>Alongside this, some of Belfast's heritage assets are in neglect and decay, with one fifth of NI's building and monuments recorded on the Built Heritage Risk Register.</p> <p>There is opportunity to seize on the tourism potential of several underutilised heritage assets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to protect, conserve &amp; enhance the historic environment that will allow sympathetic, heritage led development which preserves historic assets (designated &amp; non-designated) &amp; their setting;</li> <li>• Look for opportunities to bring vacant and/or derelict historic buildings back into positive use;</li> <li>• Retention, protection and restoration of heritage assets can in turn facilitate maintenance of craft skills and encourage the use of traditional materials.</li> <li>• Respond to local needs, demands &amp; development pressures on local heritage assets;</li> <li>• Develop a tall buildings policy to retain the environmental &amp; cultural character of the city setting i.e. retaining views of the escarpment and Belfast Hills;</li> <li>• Encourage &amp; promote the sensitive &amp; innovative re-use of existing historic listed &amp; non-listed building stock;</li> <li>• Recognise the character of townscape &amp; landscape;</li> </ul>	<p>The SPPS provides some level of protection, particularly through PPS 6.</p> <p>However, without the LDP and supporting evidence, sites that have not been formally designated, such as those on a local list, will have limited protection and could be at risk of inappropriate development. This increases the potential risk of erosion of the historic character and townscape.</p> <p>The number of sites on the Built Heritage at Risk Register is likely to increase. Without the LDP to coordinate the protection and enhancement of sites, it may be difficult to offer enhancements to assets on this register. The updated Listed Buildings Register could also provide additional protection to key buildings.</p>

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



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<b>Waste</b>	<p>There are challenges in managing and accounting for all waste streams.</p> <p>It is projected the Council may not achieve regional landfill obligations, with increasing pressure to deliver recycling targets set by NI Executive &amp; Europe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare adequately, having regard to the new Council Waste Management Plan &amp; its spatial implications;</li> <li>• Facilitate the management of waste facilities as required;</li> <li>• Promote &amp; support innovative ways to tackle waste.</li> </ul>	<p>The council have European and Regional targets set to incrementally manage the reduction of waste and encourage recycling in the City. The council will still explore opportunities for further reducing waste including the feasibility of a circular economy approach to generate more value and jobs for the local economy through innovative waste solutions.</p> <p>The LDP may not therefore have much direct impact on waste reduction or management, however it can encourage these opportunities further through the provision of positive land-use planning and allocation.</p>
<b>Climate Change</b>	<p>Rising greenhouse gas emissions are causing an increase in global temperatures, which is giving rise to more intense rainfalls and rising sea levels.</p> <p>Consequently, this will lead to significant threat of flooding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage &amp; support measures to address &amp; adapt to climate change;</li> <li>• Avoid areas of highest flood risk when allocating sites for development;</li> <li>• Promote natural &amp; man-made flood mitigation schemes which can fulfil flood management functions;</li> <li>• Encourage sustainable transport;</li> <li>• Encourage sustainable building design &amp; construction standards;</li> <li>• Protect, enhance &amp; create new green space.</li> </ul>	<p>The NI Climate Change Adaptation Programme will continue to provide the strategic objectives in relation to climate change adaptation. The Climate Change Risk Assessment will continue as the statutory requirement of the UK Climate Change Act, published every 5years.</p> <p>The Cross Departmental Working Group on Climate Change will continue to review cross departmental action on climate change on an annual basis. The Group will ensure targets for the reduction of greenhouse gases, set out in</p>

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			<p>the Programme for Government are met. However, and notwithstanding the strategic measures above, the threat of flood risk would continue under projected climate trends, and the magnitude and extent of the impact from flood risk is likely to increase. This requires positive management via local response. The LDP and supporting evidence would enable the sequential allocation of sites for development, avoiding the highest risk areas as a first principle.</p>
<p><b>Renewable Energy</b></p>	<p>Belfast is still reliant on fossil fuels which contribute to greenhouse gases and poor air quality.</p> <p>The lack of renewable energy interventions could pose a risk to energy security in Belfast, and make the city less competitive in the global market.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the reduction of fossil fuel emissions;</li> <li>• Support renewable &amp; low carbon technologies;</li> <li>• Encourage more sustainable modes of transport &amp; increased green infrastructure to absorb &amp; reduce greenhouse gases, through the implementation of the green &amp; blue infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<p>The existing PPS was formulated in 2009 and was a reactive policy. In its current form it does not fully deal with decentralisation of renewable energy generation, or encourage and promote district heating systems.</p> <p>The draft Programme for Government outlines targets for renewable energy consumption (40% of energy from renewable source and 10% heat from renewable source). The LDP and supporting evidence would provide a strategic framework to deliver these targets through the planning system.</p>

Key Sustainability Issues, Implications & Likely Evolution without LDP



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