



Subject:	External Engagement on Preferred Options Paper for LDP
Date:	17 May 2016
Reporting Officer:	Keith Sutherland, Development Planning and Policy Manager, ext 3578
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Is this report restricted?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Please see Note 1 in Part 3</i>		
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>If ‘No’ please see Note 2 in Part 3</i>		

1.0	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Purpose At the April workshop it was suggested that party briefings would be useful and it may be appropriate to carry out early engagement with external statutory stakeholders and the Belfast Area Partnerships (BAP).
1.2	The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and the Plan Timetable are expected to be approved by the Department of Infrastructure (DoI) [formerly DoE] in mid May 2016. This means that the development plan process can officially commence.
1.3	The purpose of this paper is to : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inform members of the proposed party briefings• Seek approval for early external engagement with BAPs and highlight formal engagement with statutory stakeholders• Update members on the finalisation of the SCI and Plan Timetable• Highlight the emerging communication requirements for the Local Development Plan (LDP)

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>Members are asked to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree early engagement with the Belfast Area Partnerships • Note continued external engagement with key statutory stakeholders • Note the ongoing work on the SCI and Plan Timetable • Note that a more comprehensive engagement and communication plan will be presented in June
3.0	Main Report
3.1	At the last Committee workshop on 21 April 2016 it was suggested that LDP party briefings were carried out as part of the preparation leading up to the Preferred Options Paper in the autumn. A range of potential dates have been reserved for the week commencing 23 May 2016.
3.2	At the workshop Members proposed that officers engage with the Belfast Area Partnerships (BAP) at this early stage and that committee approval is sought for this part of the ongoing communications. The purpose of the engagement will be to update the BAPs on the LDP process and work carried out to date.
3.3	It should be noted that the ongoing work with statutory partners continues and will be supplemented by the research findings. These early discussions are critical to ensure formal consultation timelines can be met later in the Plan process.
3.4	In the first stage of the LDP, council had to submit a SCI and Plan Timetable. The timetable sets out a series of key stages in the production of the LDP in accordance with the statutory requirements prescribed in the Planning Act (NI) 2011 and associated Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (NI) 2015.
3.5	The SCI and the Timetable are expected to be approved by DoI in mid May 2016. This means that the development plan process can officially commence.
3.6	In considering the broader approach to communications for the LDP preparation, an internal workshop was held in early May with Corporate Communications to explore the process for the LDP within the context of the Belfast Agenda. The purpose of the workshop was to ensure the communication and engagement requirements for the Plan are set within the council context.
3.7	A key issue arising from the workshop is the requirement for clear messages and to establish the resources required to implement the SCI. There are immediate priority actions in relation to the SCI and Timetable but it is the longer term commitments that will necessitate a comprehensive approach and dedicated resources to ensure effective processes and delivery.
3.8	The publication of the Preferred Options Paper will trigger the beginning of the formal engagement process and with it a myriad of communication-related actions across a range of media. It is crucial that the engagement and communication elements are placed front and centre within the LDP process. Work will continue on the engagement and communication strategy that will be presented to the committee at the June meeting.

4.0	Finance and Resource Implications
4.1	This is a new element of work for the Planning and Place Department and the impact of the additional workload will be kept under review
5.0	Equality or Good Relations Implications
5.1	The ongoing work has been developed in line with the Council's Equality and Good Relations frameworks and policies.