



Subject:	Local Development Plan - Metropolitan Area Spatial Working Group
Date:	20 June 2017
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<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
	To present for consideration a proposal to establish joint working arrangements with other planning authorities in the metropolitan area in the preparation of the new Local Development Plans.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	It is recommended that the Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• agrees to the establishment of the proposed Working Group linked to the work of the LDP and covering the five planning authority areas in the Metropolitan area;</li><li>• nominates two Members to serve on the proposed Working Group, supported by Council officers; and</li><li>• notes the draft Terms of Reference appended to the report as the basis for consideration and if appropriate agreement at the first working group meeting.</li></ul>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	All Councils across Northern Ireland are currently preparing their Local Development Plans (LDPs) and a number have already published their Preferred Options Papers (POPs). Whilst each council is the planning authority for its own area and is responsible for preparing its LDP there are common or shared issues faced by councils.
3.2	The common issues have either a sub-regional dimension, generally affecting all councils across the metropolitan area or cross boundary implications. For example, the housing market area is not confined to individual local government boundaries and it extends from Belfast City well into adjacent local government districts, including Lisburn & Castlereagh,

	<p>Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey and Ards &amp; North Down. In this regard, it is important that discussion takes place with other councils in the sub-regional area to seek consistency in housing allocations to support the aims of the Regional Development Strategy.</p>
3.3	<p>There are other cross-boundary issues that warrant co-operation between councils including sustainable travel, retail development, waste management, infrastructure and environmental protection. Continued engagement is required throughout all stages of the LDP process to support a joined-up and sustainable approach.</p>
3.4	<p>Informal discussions have already taken place with adjoining councils, at officer level, as part of the LDP preparatory work. These have included discussion on policy approaches, timetable, shared priorities, potential cooperation, engagement and governance. This work has been useful in terms of shared learning and the early information exchange. The DfI guidance suggests that collaboration between councils in plan-making is important to the soundness of each LDP, which is assessed through the independent examination procedure. The soundness assessment methodology includes a 'consistency test' that explores whether the LDP has given due regard to other relevant plans, policies and strategies relating to any adjoining council's district.</p>
3.5	<p>It is proposed to establish a working group across the four councils in the metropolitan area to support the ongoing LDP process. It is envisaged that this will provide a mechanism to share information and seek, as far as possible, to agree a common approach to LDP policies, objectives and proposals in an effort to minimise the potential for conflicts between individual LDPs. The Working Group should include Members and officers and it is anticipated that the participation in such arrangements will demonstrate that the new Belfast LDP can meet the consistency test of soundness.</p>
3.6	<p>It is understood that Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Council has recently agreed to participate in a Working Group and has nominated up to two Members to serve on the group. Whilst other councils in the area have not yet formally considered the establishment of the working group, it is suggested that such joint working arrangements are necessary to ensure soundness of all LDPs. The detailed governance arrangements for any Working Group will require formal agreement by the participants at the first meeting and an outline of a draft Terms of Reference is attached to this report (Appendix 1).</p>
3.7	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u>  The proposed working group will require attendance by nominated City Council Members and planning officers. It is envisaged that formal meetings of the group would occur not more than four times annually.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u>  There are no relevant equality or good relations implications attached to this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1: Draft Terms of Reference for Metropolitan Area Working Group

## **APPENDIX 1: DRAFT METROPOLITAN AREA SPATIAL WORKING GROUP**

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **Aim and Objectives**

- To provide a liaison forum on spatial planning including cross boundary aspects of economic development, housing, transport, and general infrastructure issues arising at regional and sub regional level.
- To lead and co-ordinate the activity to support the 2011 Planning Act and SPPS suggestions that the LDP process should include a joined up approach to addressing issues that consider to cross administrative boundaries
- To advise strategic consultees and partners on matters of collective interest in the fields of activity listed above.
- To seek agreement on local cross boundary priorities in the fields of activity set out above.
- To ensure that regional policy development, local transport plans and joint working is appropriately linked to the decision making role of the Local Planning Authorities on Local Development Plan documents and related Community Planning.
- To assist in the establishment of detailed arrangements for integration between spatial, infrastructure and public service planning activity in appropriately defined localities, where appropriate linked to the Programme for Government.

#### **Purpose**

Specifically the Partnership will:

- share information and analysis on spatial planning, economic development, housing, transport, and general infrastructure issues at regional and sub regional level;
- share information and analysis on cross administrative boundary spatial planning, economic development, housing, transport, and general infrastructure issues;
- review progress against any Timetables, Implementation Plans or monitoring agreements— including relevant national and local targets;
- develop and communicate consensus views that seek to inform, assist and influence Government, Government agency and Regional institutions / bodies in their policy formulation and decision making roles;
- inform consideration of economic development, housing, transport, general infrastructure funding requirements by providing partners with advice and support to ensure they have the capacity to engage in the LDP process;
- make links with the DfC /NIHE and inform the commissioning of delivery work that assists partnership working on housing and a shared evidence base;
- make links with the other sub-regional structures that inform the plan development and other process relevant to the spatial development of the region.

## **Accountability and Working Methods**

The Metropolitan Area Spatial Working Group can only operate by consensus or reference to the parent organisations of the participants. Through consensus it is accountable to the constituent District Councils and any other organisations that are agreed to form part of the working group.

The Working Group will report to the respective Councils on its progress in delivery of any agreed objectives.

The Working Group will should be assisted in achieving agreed objectives by the existing delivery bodies / agencies or structures including:

- Economic and broader development issues  
District Councils and through the other sub-regional partnerships, including where appropriate existing Community Planning structures.
- Spatial and Infrastructure Planning  
District Councils and District Community Planning Partnerships, supported by the Heads of Planning and Strategic Planning groups to pick up common and cross boundary issues.
- Housing  
Northern Ireland Housing Executive  
Housing Organisations
- Transport/ Accessibility  
DfI through its officer level joint working arrangements on transport. The Working Group should receive reports on and provide input to the Local Transport Plans. There will need to be a strong reporting and delivery link to transport planning studies and projects developed for specific localities to feed into District led work on LDPs.

## **Working Group Principles**

The Working Group is formed as a thematic partnership and committed to working to the general principles and procedures established for Community Planning and other structures:

- Visible commitment and 'ownership' by the various member organisations and individual representatives
- Mutual trust and respect
- Openness and transparency
- Effective communication and accountability
- Removal of barriers to equality of access and opportunity
- Effective decision making
- The working group is a forum for liaison and information sharing and the development of consensus views on matters of mutual interest.
- Consensus views will be used to advise and influence the relevant decision making bodies including:
  - Government and its agencies (including specific Departments)

- Regional agencies particularly Northern Ireland Housing Executive and NIEA
- The Department for Infrastructure as the Transport Authority
- The District CPPs (as the broader locality based co-ordinating partnership)

Other infrastructure and service providing bodies and partnerships that are affected by, and can influence, local economic development, housing, transport, general infrastructure and spatial planning activity

The working group should work closely with other partnerships where there are cross over issues. It will work with CPPs and other locality based partnerships where it is appropriate that a more detailed level of partnership working is undertaken on areas covered by the terms of reference.

**Membership/ Chairman and Deputy Chairman**

Local authorities will take the roles of Chair and Vice Chair on an annual rotation as follows:

Year	Chair	Vice chair