



Subject:	LDP - Update
Date:	11 June 2019
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Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultation on the draft Plan Strategy (dPS) and the next stage in the Local Development Plan (LDP) process;• Preparation of the Council’s Housing Land Availability Report for the 2018/19 monitoring period and its accompanying online map portal; and• Additional research commissioned as part of the LDP evidence base.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the updates.
3.0	Background
3.1	<p>The draft Plan Strategy (dPS) is the first of two documents that will comprise the new Local Development Plan (LDP). The dPS is more strategic at this stage (in line with government guidance) setting out an over-arching strategy and general operational policies that will apply across the city. The dPS is ambitious, striving through a plan led approach to achieve the thriving socially inclusive city, reflecting the objectives at the heart of the Belfast Agenda. It will also realise the Regional Development Strategy’s (RDS 2035) ambition for Belfast as the regional economic driver.</p>
3.2	<p>The dPS was published last Autumn for a formal consultation that closed on 15th November 2018. A further eight week consultation period on the submissions received last Autumn, to allow for counter-representations, closed on 26th April 2019. This report therefore provides an update on the outcome of this counter-representation process and outlines the next stage in the LDP process.</p>
3.3	

3.4	<p>As part of the new statutory responsibilities the Council produces the Housing Land Availability Summary Report annually to inform the plan process. The latest report for 2018/19 (Appendix 1) outlines the position in respect of housing development and provides a snapshot of the amount of land available for new residential development at the 1st April 2019. This regular monitoring is an important element of the evidence base for the preparation of the LDP and will be supported by an online map portal (publicly available) showing the status of all existing housing monitor sites. The web based portal will seek to illustrate some of the key information contained within the report in a map based form.</p> <p>Alongside the regular housing monitor and other publications, additional research has also been commenced to help broaden the LDP's evidence base and inform the Council's response to the draft Plan Strategy consultations. This includes research to consider the potential impact of the LDP's proposed policies on the residential property development sector and broader market areas (Appendix 2) and the preparation of technical responses to consultation comments submitted in relation to the Housing Growth Options Report.</p>
4.0	<p>Main Issues</p>
4.1	<p>Consultation on the dPS and next stage in the LDP process</p> <p>The 109 representations received in response to the dPS consultation were published on the Council's website on 1st March 2019, with an opportunity for the submission of counter-representations during an eight week consultation period to 26th April 2019. In accordance with the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations, counter representations were invited in relation to a site specific policy comments. In total, 63 counter-representations were received from 14 stakeholders in relation 14 different policies referenced in 26 of the original representations.</p>
4.2	<p>The Council is required to publish these counter-representations as soon as reasonably practical and prior to submission of the dPS to the Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) in anticipation of an Independent Examination (IE) being proposed. The representations and counter-representations will be taken into account as part of this IE process and it is intended that the submission of documents will take place during the Summer 2019. The purposes of the IE will be to determine the soundness of the dPS. Soundness relates to how the dPS has been produced, how it has taken account of regional policy and its coherence, consistency and effectiveness.</p>
4.3	<p>Following the IE convened by the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC), an Advisory Report of their findings will be issued to Dfi, which will then issue a binding report to the Council. This Dfi report can require that the dPS be adopted as originally prepared, or with modifications. Through formal adoption and publication by the Council, the dPS will become a primary consideration when determining future planning applications for development in the city.</p>
4.4	<p>Housing Land Availability Summary Report for the 2018/19 monitoring period</p> <p>The Planning Act (NI) 2011 will require the Council to produce annual reports for Dfi outlining the extent to which the objectives set out in the LDP are being achieved. As the Council is currently preparing the first LDP for Belfast under this new legislation, the production of Annual Monitoring Reports has not formerly commenced. However, to inform and provide evidence for the plan, annual Housing Land Availability Monitor Reports (referred to as the 'Housing Monitor' reports) are prepared by the Council.</p>
4.5	<p>The primary purpose of the Housing Monitor is to inform the formulation of the Council's new LDP and monitor the performance of policies. As an ongoing information resource it will also help the Council identify where a shortfall in potential land supply might exist and</p>

4.6	<p>can inform the development sector on the availability of land that may be suitable for housing.</p>
4.7	<p>The Housing Land Availability Summary Report for 2018/19 (Appendix 1) presents the headline figures from a register of potential housing land maintained by the Council, based on current planning policy designations and planning permissions. This provides a snapshot of the amount of land available for new homes and capacity for future housing units as of 1st April 2019, as well as providing the net gains in housing units for the 2018/19 period. This differs from the new dwelling completion statistics published routinely by central Government which only provide a total for new build homes, without accounting for units lost as a result of redevelopment.</p>
4.8	<p>This information is summarised within the report in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each settlement within the District, including settlement areas in the case of Belfast City; • Whether land falls within the existing urban footprint¹ or is classified as greenfield land; and • The type of land use zoning (i.e. land zoned for housing or land zoned for mixed use development) or all other land.
4.9	<p>During the 2018/19 monitoring year 830 units were completed on 20.9 ha of land across the District. 398.6 ha of land remains, with potential capacity for 22,074 residential units. The total number of dwellings completed in the district has increased by 25.9% from 659 in 2017/18 to 830 in the current monitor year. The proportion of dwellings completed within the Urban Footprint is recorded at 84.1% and, as at 1st April 2019, almost 40% of the remaining potential available for future dwellings is on land zoned for housing or mixed use development.</p>
4.10	<p>It is emphasised that the monitor represents a register of housing land based on current policy designations and planning permissions, rather than an accurate picture of viable housing land. It is the role of an Urban Capacity Study (UCS) to assess the suitability, availability and achievability of land, alongside the identification of new sites that could be later zoned for residential use as part of the LDP process. An UCS was last completed in March 2018 and was formerly published as part of the dPS evidence base in Autumn last year.</p>
4.11	<p>As part of the ongoing work to make information more accessible, the Housing Monitor report will be published alongside an online map portal showing the status of the existing housing monitor sites and key information contained within the tables of the report, for example: the site area developed and the remaining area potential; the number of dwelling units complete and the remaining unit potential.</p>
4.12	<p>Additional background research</p> <p>As part of the evidence base to inform the LDP, consultants were appointed to undertake a detailed study of the future population and housing growth potential for Belfast. The Housing Growth Options Report (October 2016), and subsequent Addendum (December 2017) provided additional detail on the mix of size and type of housing associated with the preferred growth scenario and were published alongside the dPS as part of the evidence base. A number of submissions submitted in response to the dPS consultation related to this Housing Growth Options Report and the level of growth proposed within that report.</p>

¹ The continuous built-up area of the settlement.

4.13	<p>To ensure the LDP evidence base is comprehensive and maintained during the process, updated technical responses to the comments received have been developed. This work will ensure the robustness of the underlying evidence is maintained through technical clarifications and is intended to supplement the existing work to further inform the LDP as it moves through the IE process.</p> <p>Alongside this work to maintain the LDP evidence base and inform the Council's responses to consultations, further studies were completed with the support of external expertise in 2018 to provide a high level assessment of potential market impacts from emerging housing policies across different sectors of the City. This latest report makes recommendations to help maximise opportunities and minimise any potentially adverse impacts and concludes that, notwithstanding reservations about the application of the LDP to the City Centre core, there is no overriding impediment to the draft policies set out in the dPS contributing to the supply of affordable housing in Belfast. Whilst there are geographic differences in the impacts and potential going forward, it suggests that some new affordable housing products should be prioritised to encourage uptake. A copy of the final report is included at Appendix 2.</p>
5.0	Appendices
	Appendix 1 – Housing Land Availability Summary Report 2018/2019
	Appendix 2 – Report to Belfast City Council's Development Planning and Policy Unit to Consider the Impact of its Proposed Housing Policies (as set out in Belfast LDP Draft Plan Strategy) on the residential Property Market Located in the Planning Area, April 2019, Colliers International