



Local Development Plan 2032

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)
September 2023

LCCC

**Lisburn &
Castlereagh
City Council**

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Non-Technical Summary

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Regulation 43 of the Habitats Regulations, requires an appropriate assessment to be undertaken of plans and projects which are likely to have a significant effect on an international site in Northern Ireland or Ireland, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This is known as Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and provides for assessment of the implications of a land use plan for international sites in view of their conservation objectives. For this report international sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites.

This HRA report is prepared in support of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's Plan Strategy. It records the assessment of the draft Plan Strategy as modified and its potential impacts on international sites.

Overview of the Plan Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment

A draft HRA was first undertaken in 2019 in support of the draft Plan Strategy. This is Final HRA to be consulted on. Publication of the Final HRA follows the independent examination and the receipt by the Council of a direction from the Department for Infrastructure under the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. This assesses the Plan Strategy as directed to be modified in the direction from the Department for Infrastructure. It takes account of the views of the Planning Appeals Commission expressed in the independent examination report. It takes account of up-to-date information.

Overview of the Plan Strategy

The Plan Strategy provides a plan-led policy framework for making day-to-day decisions to help Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (the Council) deliver sustainable development for employment, homes and infrastructure in a high-quality environment across the Council area. It sets out how the area will change and grow until 2032. The nature of the Plan Strategy is that it has the potential to have a significant effect on some international sites, therefore the Council is undertaking a HRA in its role as a competent authority to ensure the legal requirements of the Habitats Regulations are fully met.

International Sites Overview

A total of 15 international sites that have a theoretical connection to the plan area were identified. On further review it was found that 14 of these sites might be affected by the Plan Strategy. There are only two international sites partly within the Council area, Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA and Ramsar site, which include the water body of Portmore Lough. Sites beyond the Council area with an ecological connection were also included, for example Belfast Lough SPA and Ramsar site which is connected via the River Lagan. On a precautionary basis, all sites within 10km of the plan area were also considered. Appendix 4, Maps 1 to 4 illustrate these sites in relation to the Council area.

Screening of the Plan

All of the Plan Strategy proposals were reviewed in Section 4, from the Vision and Plan Objectives and the Strategic Policies and Spatial Strategy in Part 1 to the Operational Policies in Part 2. Following the screening of the Plan Strategy it concluded that, in the absence of mitigation, there is potential for likely significant effects to arise from ninety plan policies, in addition eight plans or projects were identified for consideration of in combination effects. These were all screened-in for appropriate assessment.

Appropriate Assessment

Those policies and plans or projects screened-in were assessed in Section 5. It was found that measures were incorporated which can be considered to be mitigation to avoid the Plan Strategy having adverse effects on the integrity of international sites.

Conclusions of the HRA

On the basis of the analysis set out below, the Council can conclude the Plan Strategy (with the modifications set out in the direction made by the Department for Infrastructure) will not adversely affect the integrity of any international sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

1 Introduction

Local Development Plan 2032

The Plan Strategy for Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Local Development Plan (LDP) sets out how the area will change and grow over the period up to 2032. It provides:

- a vision for Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council towards the end of the plan period;
“The Local Development Plan (LDP) will respond to the needs of the community in providing a sustainable economy, society and environment. It will support a thriving, vibrant and connected place in which people live, work, visit and invest; and an attractive, green and quality place which will enhance the wellbeing and quality of life for all.”
- a set of objectives to deliver the vision;
- a strategy for the growth of the area - how much development should be provided, where it should go and where it should not go;
- a suite of detailed operational policies to guide development; and
- details of how the Plan Strategy will be monitored and reviewed.

The Plan Strategy is the first of two development plan documents which will comprise the LDP. The Plan Strategy provides a plan-led policy framework for making day-to-day decisions to help Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (herein referred to as ‘the Council’ or ‘Council area’) deliver sustainable development including future housing, employment, retail and infrastructure provision across the Council area.

The Plan Strategy is the first document in a two-stage process, the second being the Local Policies Plan. Together these will constitute the Council’s new Local Development Plan (LDP). The purpose of the LDP is to inform the general public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested parties of the policy framework and land use proposals that will guide development decisions within the Council area.

The Plan Strategy follows the publication of the Preferred Options Paper (POP) in March 2017. In preparing it the Council has taken account of the representations received on the POP, further inputs from key consultees, stakeholders and, in particular, the elected Councillors through Member Workshops and Planning Committee meetings.

The LDP will provide a plan framework to support the economic, social and environmental needs of the Council area in line with regional strategies and policies, providing for the delivery of sustainable development. It is intended to provide a ‘plan-led’ framework for rational and consistent decision-making by the public, private and community sectors and those affected by development proposals; in particular, it will be the primary document against which the Council will assess and decide on planning applications.

The Plan Strategy is set out in two parts which are subdivided as follows:

Plan Strategy Part 1

- Chapters 1&2 Introduction, Policy and Spatial Context
- Chapter 3 Vision and Plan Objectives
- Chapter 4 Strategic Policies and Spatial Strategy
- Chapter 5 Monitoring and Review
- Appendices 5 appendices that provide detail that informs the Plan Strategy

Plan Strategy Part 2 - Operational Policies which are topic-based and grouped under the six plan objectives as follows:

- A Quality Place - Enabling Sustainable Communities and Delivery of New Homes
- B. A Thriving Place - Driving Sustainable Economic Growth
- C. A Vibrant Place - Growing our City, Town Centres, Retailing and Other Uses
- D. An Attractive Place - Promoting Sustainable Tourism, Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation
- E. A Green Place - Protecting and Enhancing the Historic and Natural Environment
- F. A Connected Place - Supporting Sustainable Transport and Other Infrastructure

Overview of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area

The Council area has a population of approximately 142,640 people and covers 520 km². It shares a land boundary with five Council areas: Belfast City Council; Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council; Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council; Ards and North Down Borough Council; and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. The main centre is Lisburn City located at the heart of the Council's urban area.

Existing Plans and Local Policies Plan

Extant plans will continue to have effect until the next stage i.e. LPP. This is set out in the transitional arrangements in The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015¹.

Transitional arrangements in respect of Plan designations are set out on page 16 of Part 1 of the Plan Strategy. BMAP in its post-inquiry forms was at an advanced stage and therefore remains a material consideration.

The existing area plans that apply to Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council are:

- Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP) 2001
- Lisburn Area Plan (LAP) 2001
- Carryduff Local Plan 1988-1993
- Ballymacoss Local Plan
- Lisburn Town Centre Plan
- Lagan Valley Regional Park Local Plan 2005.

Once both documents of the LDP are adopted, they will replace the existing area plans.

The LPP will set out the Council's local policies with site specific proposals for the development and use of land within the Council area and contain designations and zonings to deliver the vision and plan objectives. Another draft HRA will be prepared to assess the potential impacts of the draft LPP on international sites. The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 state that the old Development Plans will cease to have effect upon adoption of the new LDP at LPP stage.

Requirement for HRA

The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended), commonly referred to as the Habitats Regulations, implemented the requirements of the Habitats² and Birds Directives³. Regulation 43 of the Habitats Regulations requires an appropriate assessment to be undertaken of plans and projects which are likely to have a significant effect on an international site in Northern Ireland, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This is known as Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and provides for assessment of the implications of a land use plan for international sites in view of their conservation objectives. Regulation 64B applies the assessment provisions to land use plans as defined in the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. International sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2015/62/schedule/made>

² Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

³ Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (codified version)

and Ramsar sites. This final HRA Report is prepared in support of the Plan Strategy, it records the assessment of the Plan Strategy and its potential impacts on international sites.

Approach to HRA

The overall approach for this HRA has been developed in accordance with the Habitats Regulations. The HRA follows the guidance set out in the Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook⁴ (the HRA Handbook) and is also informed by the reference material in Appendix 1. Current subscribers to the Handbook include the Department of Agriculture, the Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) which represents the Statutory Nature Conservation Body for Northern Ireland. The approach is detailed in Appendix 2 of this report where case law relevant to HRA for plans is also referred to.

Step 1: Deciding whether a plan should be subject to HRA

The European Commission (EC) Guidance (referenced in Appendix 1) does not specify the scope of a plan which should be subject to the Directive and related transposing legislation, but it does state that the key consideration is whether it is likely to have a significant effect. The HRA Handbook F.3. recommends reviewing proposals against a number of questions. These may lead to plans being exempted, eliminated or excluded from the need for HRA. The Plan Strategy does not directly relate to the management of any international site therefore it cannot be exempted from the requirement of the Habitats Regulations. The Plan Strategy is part of the LDP and clearly represents a strategic and local development plan. The requirement for planning permission to be determined in light of the relevant land use plan, necessarily means that LDPs have considerable influence on development decisions and that, as such, they must be subject to HRA in their own right. The outcome of this step is that the Plan Strategy requires HRA as a strategic and local development plan.

The nature of the Plan Strategy is that it has the potential to have a significant effect on the selection features of some international sites therefore we are undertaking a HRA in our role as a competent authority. Shared Environmental Service (SES) based in Mid and East Antrim Borough Council provides support to Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and all other Councils in Northern Ireland on HRAs for plans and projects. SES has therefore, in conjunction with the Council, prepared this HRA for the Plan Strategy to ensure the legal requirements of the Habitats Regulations are fully met.

In preparing this HRA opportunities to strengthen the Plan Strategy were identified and have already been incorporated in the policies and supporting text. Examples include adding wording to the Policy or the Policy Justification and Amplification to highlight the potential for impacts on international sites.

This version of the HRA is being published following the Independent Examination and the receipt by the Council of a direction from the Department for Infrastructure under the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. This assesses the Plan Strategy as directed to be modified in the direction from the Department for Infrastructure. It takes account of the views of the Planning Appeals Commission expressed in the Independent Examination report. It takes account of up to date information.

Context for draft HRA

Appendix 2 explains that the requirement for planning permission to be determined in light of the relevant land use plan, necessarily means that LDPs have considerable influence on development decisions and that, as such, must be subject to HRA in their own right. Many policies represent a continuation of a previous policy, however each was considered on its own merits in the assessment. Many of the proposals affect multiple locations or locations which have not been defined at Plan Strategy.

⁴ Tyldesley, D., and Chapman, C., (2013) *The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook*, February 2019 edition UK: DTA Publications Ltd.

Other Regulations

An assumption is made that existing regulations and legislation that are independent of planning are implemented and enforced by the relevant authority. Relevant examples are the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, Water Abstraction and Impoundment (Licensing) Regulations (Northern Ireland 2006, Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (NI) 2013 and the Drainage (Northern Ireland) Order 1973, all as amended.

Consideration of Mitigation

A ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) in 2018 known as '*People over Wind*' clarified how mitigation should be assessed through HRAs as detailed in Appendix 2. In light of this, measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been adverse effects on the integrity of international sites are not taken into account in Stage 1 and instead will be assessed at Stage 2 appropriate assessment. Stage 1 Assessment does consider essential features and characteristics of the plan and takes account of regional and strategic context and other regulatory controls that will apply to development under the plan.

HRA at other Stages of Plan Making and Development Management

The LPP will be subject to HRA, at which stage revised or new zonings and local policies will be assessed. The need for HRA will also be considered for individual projects at the development management stage and assessment carried out where required.

Climate Change

It is acknowledged that increased levels of development that will arise from the plan have the potential to add to anthropogenic drivers of climate change. However, the causes of climate change are global and much of the action required must take place at national and international levels as well as at the local level. The conservation objectives for SPAs do not refer to climate change. Those for SACs address climate change as follows: '*Northern Ireland faces changes to its climate over the next century. Indications are that we will face hotter, drier summers, warmer winters and more frequent extreme weather events.*' The action recommended is '*When developing SAC management plans, the likely future impacts of climate change should be considered and appropriate changes made.*' Therefore, while climate change is acknowledged, specific measures have not been addressed in the conservation objectives.

2 Identification of international sites potentially affected

'Long-list' of international sites

Step 2a: 'Long-list' of international sites that should be considered in the HRA

International sites that are connected with the Council area were firstly identified. These include sites within or immediately adjacent to the Council area; with an ecological connection such as a hydrological link; those within 10km; and those that are connected by infrastructure. Ecological connection includes pathways through rivers or marine waters and supporting habitat for site selection features. All sites within 10km of the Council area were included to consider potential impacts of aerial emissions. Infrastructural connectivity is related to the potential linkage of sites to the Council area by infrastructure services such as water abstraction or wastewater discharges which are discussed further in Section 3. The outcome is a 'long-list' of 15 sites that are in or potentially connected to the Council area. Appendix 4, Maps 1 to 4 illustrate these sites in relation to the Council area.

Table 1 Sites Connected with Council Area

Site Name	Connection with plan area			
	Within or Adjacent	Ecological	Within 10km	By Infra-structure
Aughnadarragh Lough SAC			●	
Belfast Lough Open Water SPA		●	●	●
Belfast Lough Ramsar		●	●	●
Belfast Lough SPA		●	●	●
East Coast (Northern Ireland) Marine pSPA		●	●	●
Eastern Mourne SAC				●
Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Ramsar	●	●	●	●
Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA	●	●	●	●
Montiagh Moss SAC		●	●	
Outer Ards Ramsar		●	●	●
Outer Ards SPA		●	●	●
Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay SAC		●	●	●
Strangford Lough Ramsar		●	●	
Strangford Lough SPA		●	●	
Strangford Lough SAC		●	●	

Step 3: Gathering information about the international sites

Information for each site identified at Step 2a was compiled on selection features, conservation objectives, conservation status, potential threats to site integrity from planning related development and location relative to the plan area and any plan designations. This is presented in Appendix 3 with the conservation objectives for each site provided as separate Annex A.

'Short-list' of international sites

Step 2b: 'Short-list' of sites that should be considered in the HRA

Taking account of the information gathered in Step 3, and the 'long-list' of sites identified at Step 2a, a further scan was carried out to determine the effects that could potentially affect international sites as a result of the plan. This step is recorded in Appendix 3, Table A.3.1. No further sites were identified through the scan in A3.1.

The information about the international sites in Appendix 3 was then examined to determine whether the connectivity with the plan area is such that there could be a realistic risk to their selection features. As a result of this step it was found that, while there are theoretical pathways to 15 international sites, it is not conceivable that the Plan Strategy could undermine the conservation objectives for 1 site. This site is therefore eliminated from further consideration due to separation distance and absence of a viable pathway for effects as detailed in Appendix 3, Table A3.1. This results in a list of 14 sites to be further assessed.

The outcome is summarised in Table 2 which records the potential mechanisms through which impacts could affect the 14 international sites listed. The potential effects are as follows and are discussed in Section 3:

- Direct Impacts
- Aquatic Environment
- Marine Environment
- Mobile Species
- Recreational Pressure
- Growth – Water Supply
- Growth – Wastewater
- Growth – Aerial Emissions
- Aerial Emissions (other)
- Disturbance (other)
- Introduced Species

Table 2 Potential Effects on International Sites

	Direct Impacts	Aquatic Environment	Marine Environment	Coastal Processes	Mobile Species	Recreational Pressure	Growth - Water Supply	Growth - Wastewater	Growth - Aerial Emissions	Aerial Emissions (other)
Aughnadarragh Lough SAC										•
Belfast Lough Open Water SPA		•	•					•		
Belfast Lough Ramsar		•	•					•		•
Belfast Lough SPA		•	•					•		•
East Coast (Northern Ireland) Marine pSPA		•	•	•						
Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Ramsar	•	•			•	•		•		•
Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA	•	•			•	•		•		•
Montiaghs Moss SAC										•
Outer Ards Ramsar			•							
Outer Ards SPA			•							
Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay SAC	•	•			•	•		•		•

Strangford Lough Ramsar		●	●					●		●
Strangford Lough SPA		●	●					●		●
Strangford Lough SAC		●	●					●		●

Step 4: Discretionary discussions on the method and scope of the appraisal

The Statutory Nature Conservation Body for sites in Northern Ireland is represented by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). NIEA has published Conservation Objectives for SACs and SPAs and further information that NIEA may hold about international sites which is not in the public domain was requested. NIEA provided a spreadsheet on Condition of Features in Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs) and international sites in 2017 and provided updates where available in October 2019. NIEA was invited to comment on the draft HRA during the draft Plan Strategy consultation period and its representations have informed this assessment.

3 Potential Impacts of Development

The scanning and site selection table A.3.1, Appendix 3, has identified the potential mechanisms through which the Plan might exert an influence over international sites. These are summarised in Section 2, Table 2 which identifies the sites that could be affected by each impact. This section discusses the potential for each of these effects to arise from the Plan Strategy and informs Sections 4 and 5.

Direct Effects

All sites within the plan area are potentially vulnerable to direct impacts. These can lead to degradation or loss of habitat or direct effects on species. There are no European sites wholly within the LDP area. The only European sites partially within the LDP area are Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA/Ramsar site which include the water body of Portmore Lough.

Direct effects on international sites will be considered in screening the Plan Strategy in Section 4 and will also be considered at LPP when reviewing or allocating zoned land.

Effects upon the aquatic and marine environment

This covers direct impacts upon the aquatic or marine environment from contamination of surface water or changes in flow regime. Indirect impacts from water supply or disposal of wastewater are covered separately below. While there a number of freshwater, wetland and marine sites that are hydrologically linked to the plan area, such effects are generally limited to proposals in close proximity to an international site. Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA/Ramsar site could theoretically be vulnerable to direct effects on the aquatic environment. The LDP does not extend to any coastal area therefore the plan has no direct impacts on the marine environment. Maps 5 and 6 illustrate the major catchments and river sub-basins within the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area.

Water pollution causes deterioration of (or failure to improve) water quality, due to direct runoff of pollutants including fuel, chemicals and sediments from development during construction or operation. Development on brownfield sites may lead to risk of release of contaminants which needs to be assessed and, where necessary, remediation carried out.

Many of the mainland uses in the LDP are already zoned and are committed, including Housing and Employment Land. The settlement limits, land use zonings and key site requirements contained in the existing area plans will be retained until the adoption of the LPP. It is the council's intention to review the existing settlement limits and land use zonings as part of the preparation of the draft Local Policies Plan.

Housing land is distributed within the settlement hierarchy. An element of housing in the countryside is also allowed for, to sustain the rural area in accordance with the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS). The Settlement Hierarchy is identified in the Spatial Strategy Map in Part 1 of the draft Plan Strategy. In Lisburn, Castlereagh and Carryduff some of the zoned housing areas are potentially hydrologically connected to the coastal international sites. Zoned housing land at Glenavy and Lower and Upper Ballinderry may be hydrologically connected to Lough Neagh. Feumore is a small settlement partly within Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Ramsar site. There is very limited scope for development within the settlement limit and the location is such that HRA will be triggered at application stage. Theoretically there may be pathways from undeveloped housing land during construction and operation for pollutant release to coastal international sites and to Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA/Ramsar. This is subject to HRA for development management and to other regulatory consents.

Existing areas for Employment are identified in the Spatial Strategy Map. Growth is anticipated to occur at the two Strategic Mixed Used sites at West Lisburn/Blaris and Purdysburn/Knockbracken. The Maze provides an additional land reserve for regionally significant proposals. As for housing there may be pathways from undeveloped economic/industrial land to coastal European sites.

A number of areas of zoned economic land are identified in the existing area plans and remain undeveloped. At LPP stage existing and proposed employment and mixed use zonings will be reviewed and key site requirements may be identified, this will be subject to HRA.

Effects upon the aquatic and marine environment will be considered in screening the Plan Strategy in Section 4 and will also be considered at LPP when reviewing or allocating zoned land.

Effects upon the coast

This includes direct impacts upon coastal processes. Such effects are generally limited to proposals in close proximity to an international site.

The LDP area does not extend to any coastal area.

Effects on mobile species

Most animal species range beyond the international sites for which they are selection features. Land which is outside the boundary of a designated site but provides functional support for those selection features is referred to as supporting habitat. Potentially development can affect such supporting habitat or the selection features utilising it.

Mobile species in the Council area include whooper swans, a selection feature of Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA and Ramsar site, that use fields adjacent to Portmore Lough and in the Lagan valley south of Halfpenny Gate. Flight paths for whooper swan could potentially be disrupted by development such as wind turbines and overhead electricity lines. These potential impacts are assessed under RE1 Renewable Energy Development and UT1 in Section 4.

Effects on mobile species will be considered in screening the Plan Strategy in Section 4. Functionally linked land or pathways that may be used by mobile species will also be a consideration at LPP when reviewing or allocating any zoned land.

Effects of recreational pressure

This impact mechanism is directly related to general increases in housing development and associated increases in recreational pressure from new residents moving into an area. It may also arise where there are specific proposals to focus recreational development. Recreation has the potential to have a significant effect if it is intensified to a degree that it causes erosion, habitat damage or persistent disturbance, or if the water sports season is extended to when wintering birds are present.

The population of the Council area is expected to grow to 159,847 by 2032, a projected population increase of 12%. The only European sites partially within the LDP area are Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA and Ramsar site which includes Portmore Lough Nature Reserve. There is one access point to Lough Neagh at the Sandy Bay Marina. The shoreline of Lough Neagh and Lough Beg in the Council area is approximately 9.1 km long which limits the scope for further recreational development. Population growth in the main urban areas could theoretically increase recreational pressure at Strangford Lough. The closest urban area is Dundonald which is over 5km from Strangford Lough. Of the zoned housing land in Dundonald more than half is already developed. Therefore, while it may slightly increase occasional visitors it will not generate a significant increase in regular visitors. In addition A Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Plan for Strangford and Lecale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Strangford Lough Marine Protected Area was prepared by Outdoor Recreation NI (May 2018) which informs management of visitor pressures.

Effects of recreational pressure on international sites will be considered in screening the Plan Strategy in Section 4 and will be a consideration at LPP when reviewing or allocating zoned land.

Effects of development growth

This impact mechanism is directly related to general increases in housing and economic development and associated increases in demand for water and treatment of wastewater from new residents or

businesses moving into an area or expansion of existing businesses. The Housing Growth Indicators identified a future need for 10,700 dwelling units across the Council area which is supported with the overall strategic housing allocation (SHA) for the plan of 12,375 dwelling units (as amended following the IE). The Maze Lands are recognised as a site of regional significance for economic development and the two 'Major Employment Locations', West Lisburn/Blaris and Purdysburn are identified to drive a range of opportunities for job creation.

Water Supply

It is the responsibility of NI Water to ensure that a safe supply of drinking water for the population is maintained. The Council area is supplied by a series of impounding reservoirs and water treated at water treatment plants. Water is supplied from Lough Neagh through Dunore Point and Castor Bay Water Treatment Works. The Council area is also supplied by Fofanny Dam which is adjacent to Eastern Mourne SAC. NI Water is satisfied with the sufficiency of the water supply to the Council area over the plan period therefore development under the plan is not expected to necessitate development of any new public water supplies.

NI Water published Water Resource & Supply Resilience Plan (WR&SR Plan) in March 2020. This Plan shows how the company will manage and develop water resources to make sure there is enough water to meet future supply needs. The WR & SR Plan takes into account changes in population, housing, water usage and incorporates any predicted changes to our climate. This includes how water supplies would be maintained during critical periods such as severe winters, drought and also includes a drought plan. The WR & SR Plan acknowledges the need to take account of adopted and emerging Local Development Plans to ensure it complies with the area's aims, objectives and long term vision in terms of growth, constraints and opportunities.

A Habitats Regulations Assessment has been carried out to consider the potential of the options contained within the WR & SR Plan and the Drought Plan to significantly affect internationally important nature conservation sites (SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites), either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

This concludes:

'Three water resource options and five resilience options have been assessed in this HRA screening report. For four options it was determined there were no, or very weak pathways to European sites and no further assessment within the HRA process was required. However, four options included in the draft WR & SR Plan were identified as requiring HRA Stage 2 AA [appropriate assessment]. For these options, LSEs [likely significant effects] could be mitigated through the implementation of standard mitigation such as adherence to noise and vibration management plans, species protection plans and pollution management plans. No in-combination effects were identified for the options included in the draft WR & SR Plan. However, project-level HRA should revisit the potential for in-combination effects, once an appropriate level of detail about the timing and design of projects is available.'

In light of the sufficiency of the water supply to the Council area over the plan period and the HRA of the WR&SR Plan effects that might undermine the conservation objectives can be excluded.

Waste Water Treatment

Wastewater Treatment Works discharge to a number of designated areas. This is reflected in those sites for which there are hydrological connections. All planning applications that indicate mains sewage treatment are referred to NI Water to confirm whether capacity exists.

NIW (March 2022) identified that the following Settlement Wastewater Treatment Works are at or near their capacity in the Plan Area:

NIW (June 2023) identified that the following Wastewater Treatment Works are at or near their capacity in the Plan Area:

- Drumbeg
- Glenavy
- Moneyreagh

In addition it advised that wastewater network capacity issues have been identified in the following catchments:

- Annahilt
- Drumbeg
- Dromara
- Dunmurry
- Glenavy
- Kinnegar
- Lisburn
- Maghaberry
- Moneyreagh
- Newtownbreda
- Ravernet

Where a potential development cannot connect to the mains sewerage network, or where NI Water has indicated that consented capacity at the receiving works is limited or restricted, or there are network constraints, then a project will not be able to proceed unless it satisfies operational policy WM2. This requires *'Development relying on non mains sewage treatment will only be permitted where it is demonstrated to the Council and its statutory consultees that there is sufficient capacity to discharge treated effluent to a watercourse and that this will not create or add to a pollution problem or create or add to flood risk'*. This means that, should there be credible evidence of a real risk to any international sites, then sufficient information will be available to assess whether the development could have a likely significant effect and whether that can be mitigated by a suitable wastewater treatment solution. The Justification and Amplification (J&A) adds that *'The method of non mains sewage disposal must be to the satisfaction of the Council's Environmental Health Department and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. A consent to discharge under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 will also be required from the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the onus is on the developer/householder to ensure such consent is, or can be agreed for the development proposed.* The J&A also indicates that a package treatment plant is preferable to the use of a septic tank for non mains sewage treatment and dispersal. Therefore there are sufficient measures to ensure that development that might undermine the conservation objectives of international sites cannot proceed.

The Water Utility Regulation Group of DAERA regulates sewage discharges and is also a competent authority under the Habitats Regulations. Every consent granted outlines the required quality and quantity of the discharge into the water environment and takes into account the requirements of relevant regulations.

In light of the NIW capacity constraints in the District, it is considered that the demand for wastewater treatment arising as a result of the level of growth enabled by the Plan Strategy could result in such pressures that could undermine conservation objectives of international sites. Potential impacts of waste water will also be a consideration at LPP when reviewing or allocating any zoned land.

Aerial emissions (traffic)

Housing and economic development tends to be linked with increased traffic and emissions from traffic have been shown to be linked to impacts on vegetation within 200m of the road edge. Beyond 200m significant vegetation level effects associated with traffic emissions (including deposition) have not been observed in scientific studies.

Effects of aerial emissions from traffic on international sites will be considered in screening the Plan Strategy in Section 4 and will also be a consideration at LPP when reviewing or allocating any zoned land.

Aerial Emissions (Other)

Deposition of aerial pollutants can damage habitats and species through toxic effects and nutrient enrichment. Nitrogen deposition is identified as a threat for many international sites. Livestock production and associated landspreading of manure, slurry or litter, is a significant source of nitrogen deposition, particularly in the form of ammonia. For the purposes of screening for this HRA sites within 10km have been considered. The current advice from DAERA is that all livestock developments within 7.5km of an international site should be modelled for ammonia distribution. Policy COU12 Agricultural and Forestry Development applies to livestock development.

Potential effects of aerial emissions from agriculture on international sites will be considered in screening the Plan Strategy in Section 4 and will also be a consideration at LPP when reviewing or allocating any zoned land.

Disturbance (Other)

Noise, light or activity during construction and operation can have adverse impacts on sensitive species and mammals and birds in particular. Salmon passage can also be affected by vibration from piling or lighting. Such disturbance from construction or additional built development can occur within or adjacent to international sites or functionally linked land. It may create barrier effects to species; result in changes in species breeding, roosting, commuting and foraging behaviour; or increase predation. Construction can be planned to avoid causing disturbance at critical times and development can be designed or located to avoid disturbance to sensitive species during operation.

Potential effects of disturbance on international sites will be considered in screening the Plan Strategy in Section 4 and will also be a consideration at LPP when reviewing or allocating any zoned land.

Introduced Species

New development has the potential to introduce invasive or non-native species or cause their spread to other sites. The introduction of invasive species, non-native, competitive or predatory species can adversely affect habitats and species. Watercourses are prone to the spread of invasive species such as giant hogweed and Himalayan balsam which are easily transferred by water if released as a result of development. Invasive species may also be transported to new sites by machinery. Development that extends navigable waters or which introduces new boating may also increase the potential for spread of invasive species or waterborne diseases of protected species to waters where they are not currently present. Introduced species such as *Rhododendron ponticum* which is highly invasive on peatlands can displace habitats for which a site has been designated.

Potential effects of introduced species on international sites will be considered in screening the Plan Strategy in Section 4 and will also be a consideration at LPP when reviewing or allocating any zoned land.

4 Screening draft Plan Strategy for Likely Significant Effects

Overview of screening

Step 5: Screening the draft/proposed plan for likely significant effects

The approach to screening the proposals is detailed in Appendix 2. All of the Plan Strategy proposals were reviewed, from the Vision and Plan Objectives and the Strategic Policies and Spatial Strategy in Part 1 to the Operational Policies in Part 2. Appendix 5 presents the full review of the draft Plan Strategy. The outcome of the screening of proposals and policies is summarised below and informed by the findings of Section 3 above.

Screening introductory chapters (Chapters 1 to 2)

These chapters introduce the plan and present the regional and local policy context and profile of the Council area. They are administrative text that does not direct development. Further assessment is not required.

Screening the Vision and Plan Objectives (Chapter 3)

The Vision is an overall aspiration for the Council area. Delivery of the Vision is through the Plan Objectives and the Strategic Policies and Spatial Strategy in Part 1 and the Operational Policies in Part 2. There are six Plan Objectives, each followed by a series of sub-objectives which illustrate the main objective. The objectives all represent general policy statements. Further assessment is not required.

Screening the Strategic Policies and Spatial Strategy (Chapter 4)

SP01 to SP07 are strategic high-level policies which provide a framework for delivering sustainable growth, place-making and well-being and they are delivered through subsequent policies. The spatial strategy is a set of high level statements which are delivered through the Strategic Policies and Operational Policies. This also sets out the settlement hierarchy, any potential effects and implications will be assessed under related policies. The remaining strategic policies are grouped under the six Plan Objectives identified under the Spatial Strategy. With the exception of SMU01 and SMU02 all were found to be general statements of policy which, in themselves, cannot lead to development but will be delivered through operational policies.

Part 1 Chapter 4 states:

'a range of strategic policies have been developed to support the implementation of the operational policies contained in Part 2 of the Plan Strategy...'

'These strategic policies underpin the Spatial Strategy of the Plan and must be read together and in conjunction with other planning policy, including the RDS 2035, SPPS and Operational Policy in Part 2 of this Plan Strategy'.

These policies are therefore screened-out of further assessment.

A Quality Place (SP08 –SP10)

The Strategic Housing Allocation is set out in Table 3 in SP08. No greenfield extension of settlements is required to allow for future housing growth. Housing in the countryside is provided for in SP09 however it is constrained through operational policies. Approvals will be monitored through the annual housing monitor and the related policies subject to review if the annual average build in the countryside exceeds 54 units. SP10 is a general statement of policy providing for community infrastructure. The strategic housing policies and potential effects are considered in relation to water supply and wastewater treatment capacity in Section 3 and will be assessed through the operational policies.

A Thriving Place (SP11 – SP13)

These strategic policies relate to economic growth in settlements and the countryside with SP13 providing for minerals development. The Plan retains a supply of employment land, both developed/undeveloped, which will continue to meet the district's economic needs throughout the period of the plan. Strategic Mixed Use (SMU) sites will serve to attract inward investment while Local Employment sites will help support local employment needs through providing a range of sites suitable for all economic sectors. All sites will be subject to review at the Local Policies Plan.

SMU01 West Lisburn/Blaris and SMU02 Purdysburn/Knockbracken have potential to generate pathways for effects, may have a likely significant effect on an international site and are screened-in for further assessment.

The strategic policy for mineral development SP13 has been informed by regional and local policy, which aims to support sustainable economic growth whilst recognising the limits of our natural resources and the need to protect and improve the quality of our natural environment. Further work in identifying mineral safeguarding areas and areas of mineral constraint will be taken forward at the Local Policies Plan stage. There are two sand processing sites at Sandy Bay which are within Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Ramsar site but are excluded from the SPA. Potential effects will be assessed under related operational policies.

A Vibrant Place (SP14 – SP15)

SP14 aims to protect and enhance the range of town centre uses and SP15 seeks to promote the evening and night-time economy in the city and town centres to promote their vitality and vibrancy. These strategic policies, in themselves, cannot lead to any development or change.

An Attractive Place (SP16 – SP17)

SP16 seeks to facilitate sustainable tourism growth by identifying appropriate opportunities and safeguarding tourism assets from harmful development. A key asset is Lagan Valley Regional Park, for which there is a pathway to Belfast Lough SPA and related sites, and where opportunity exists to further enhance its tourism/recreational potential. These opportunities will be further explored at the Local Policies Plan stage which will be subject to HRA. The Lagan Navigation consists of the potential restoration of the 27 mile route from Belfast Harbour through Lisburn and on to Lough Neagh and its reopening would create opportunities for water-based tourism and outdoor recreation. This could have implications for Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA and Ramsar site and Belfast Lough SPA and related sites, however it is a long term aspiration which is not reflected in current tourism strategies. The current focus is on the Discover Waterways Lisburn project within Lisburn.

SP17 will support development proposals that protect and enhance existing open space, provide new open space, support and protect a network of accessible green and blue infrastructure and support and promote the development of strategic and community greenways.

These are all strategic high-level policies, the delivery of which is detailed through operational policies, and are therefore screened out of further assessment.

A Green Place (SP18 – SP19)

SP18 is intended to protect and enhance the historic environment and archaeological remains. SP19 is to protect and enhance natural heritage. Both policies are general statements of policy that are broadly protective and, in themselves, cannot lead to any development or change.

Local Development Plan designations under SP19 include Areas of High Scenic Value (AoHSV) one of which, Portmore Lough, includes all of the portion of Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA and Ramsar site in our Council area and also extends inland from these international sites. Other designations are Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs) within or adjoining settlements, Landscape Wedges and Sites of Local Nature Conservation Interest (SLNCIs). These designations are carried forward from the existing

development plan however further work in reviewing existing and future AoHSVs, LLPAs, Landscape Wedges and SLNCIs will be assessed as part of the Local Policies Plan.

A Connected Place (SP20 –SP24)

These strategic policies provide for infrastructure. SP20 provides for accessibility while promoting public transport, active travel and a shift away from private car dependency. SP21 facilitates the delivery of renewable energy generation in the most appropriate locations to help meet the regional target for renewable energy production. SP22 supports development proposals that facilitate the delivery of sustainable telecommunications and other utilities infrastructure requirements to meet need and encourage future proofing while minimising environmental impacts. SP23 aims to facilitate the delivery of waste management infrastructure in the most appropriate locations while ensuring environmental protections are in place. SP24 supports development proposals that reduce the risks and impacts of flooding and encourages the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems. These are all strategic high-level policies, the delivery of which is detailed through operational policies, and are therefore screened out of further assessment.

Screening the Operational Policies (Part 2)

Part 2 contains 114 operational policies in topic-based sections grouped under the six Plan Objectives identified under the Spatial Strategy.

A Quality Place

A Quality Place includes policies for 1. Housing in Settlements, 2. Community Facilities in Settlements and 3. Development in the Countryside.

Policies HOU4, HOU6, HOU10, COU1, COU 15 and COU16 are general statements of policy or listing acceptable criteria and cannot have any effect on an international site. These policies are screened-out from further assessment.

All other HOU, CF and COU policies enable development, have potential to generate pathways for effects on international sites and have been screened-in for further assessment

A Thriving Place

A Thriving Place includes policies for 4. Economic Development and 5. Minerals Development.

Policy ED8 relates specifically to incompatibility of other development with neighbouring economic development uses. The policy test is therefore solely about protecting existing economic uses - no wider remit and does not require further assessment.

MD2 MD6, MD7, MD8 and MD9 are policies listing acceptable criteria or constrain development in the interests of visual impacts, environmental protection, safety and amenity. They cannot lead to development or other change and are screened-out from further assessment.

All other ED and MD policies allow for development and have been screened-in for further assessment.

A Vibrant Place

A Vibrant Place includes policies for 6. Town Centres, Retailing and Other Uses.

These policies set out criteria for what is acceptable as retailing, business or community development, with a presumption in favour of town centres and settlements. All the TC policies enable development, have potential to generate pathways for effects on international sites and have been screened-in for further assessment.

An Attractive Place

An Attractive Place includes policies for 7. Tourism and 8. Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation.

TOU8 Safeguarding of Tourism Assets, is both a protective policy and one that cannot lead to development or other change.

TOU1 is a policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals and enables tourism development in settlements. TOU2 to TOU7 are not spatially specific and the scale of development is hard to predict, particularly for TOU6 which allows for major tourism development the nature of which is unknown. All these policies could theoretically be relevant to schemes which might impact upon international sites and are therefore all screened-in for further assessment.

OS1 Protection of Open Space is generally a protective policy but does permit exceptions which enable development. Each of the policies OS2 to OS6 lists the general criteria for testing the acceptability and sustainability of proposals, they also enable development. All specifically include criteria within the policy that are protective of the natural environment in terms of disturbance and/or pollution. The OS policies contain protective caveats which could be construed to be mitigation for the protection of international sites and are therefore all screened-in for further assessment.

A Green Place

A Green Place includes policies for 9. Historic Environment and Archaeology and 10. Natural Heritage.

HE3 is a general environmental safeguarding policies and screened-out from further assessment.

All other HE policies enable development and have potential to generate pathways of effects on international sites. These policies have been screened-in for further assessment.

Policies NH2-NH6 are general plan-wide environmental/site safeguarding policies, which cannot have any adverse effect on an international site and some of which may afford protection to supporting habitat for site selection features. Further assessment is not required.

NH1 applies to all development under the LDP and reinforces the requirements of the Habitats Regulations. This policy is intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on international sites and is screened-in to be considered further through appropriate assessment.

A Connected Place

A Connected Place includes policies for 11. Access and Transport, 12. Renewable Energy, 13. Telecommunications, 14. Utilities, 15. Waste Management, 16. Flooding, 17. Advertisements.

TRA1, TRA4, TRA5, TRA6, TRA8, FLD2 and FLD3 are all statements of policy and cannot affect any international sites, these policies are screened-out from further assessment.

All other TRA, RE, TEL, UT, WM, FLD and AD policies enable development, have potential to generate pathways for effects or contain protective caveats which could be construed to be mitigation for the protection of international sites and are therefore all screened-in for further assessment.

Outcome of screening

Table 3 summarises the strategic and operational policies that are screened in for further assessment. These will be assessed in relation to the sites listed in Table 2, and their selection features and conservation objectives which are presented in Annex A.

Table 3 Policies having a likely significant effect and requiring further assessment

Part 1
STRATEGIC MIXED USE POLICIES
SMU01 West Lisburn/Blaris
SMU02 Purdysburn/Knockbracken
Part 2
A QUALITY PLACE
HOU1 New Residential Development
HOU2 Protection of Land Zoned for Housing
HOU3 Site Context and Characteristics of New Residential Development
HOU5 Public Open Space in New Residential Development
HOU7 Residential Extensions and Alterations
HOU8 Protecting Local Character, Environmental Quality and Residential Amenity in Established Residential Areas
HOU9 The Conversion or Change of Use of Existing Buildings to Flats or Apartments
HOU11 Specialist Accommodation
HOU12 Accommodation for the Travelling Community
CF01 Necessary Community Facilities in Settlements
CF02 Protection of a Local Community Facility
COU2 New Dwellings in Existing Clusters
COU3 Replacement Dwellings
COU4 The Conversion and Reuse of Buildings for Residential Use
COU5 Affordable Housing
COU6 Personal and Domestic Circumstances
COU7 Dwellings for Non-Agricultural Business Enterprises
COU8 Infill/Ribbon Development
COU9 Temporary Caravan
COU10 Dwellings on Farms
COU11 Farm Diversification
COU12 Agricultural and Forestry Development
COU13 Necessary Community Facilities in the Countryside
COU14 The Conversion and Reuse of Buildings for Non-Residential Use
A THRIVING PLACE
ED1 Economic Development in Cities and Towns
ED2 Economic Development in Villages and Small Settlements
ED3 Expansion of an Established Economic Development Use in the Countryside
ED4 Redevelopment of an Established Economic Development Use in the Countryside
ED5 Major Economic Development in the Countryside
ED6 Small Rural Projects
ED7 Retention of Zoned Land and Economic Development

ED9 General Criteria for Economic Development
MD1 Environmental Protection
MD3 Areas of Mineral Constraint
MD4 Valuable Minerals
MD5 Unconventional Hydrocarbon Extraction
A VIBRANT PLACE
TC1 Town Centre, Retailing and Other Uses
TC2 Lisburn City Centre Primary Retail Core and Retail Frontage
TC3 Town Centres
TC4 District and Local Centres
TC5 Villages and Small Settlements
TC6 Petrol Filling Stations and Roadside Service Facilities
AN ATTRACTIVE PLACE
TOU1 Tourism Development in Settlements
TOU2 Proposals for Tourism Amenity in the Countryside
TOU3 Proposals for Tourist Accommodation in the Countryside
TOU4 Self-Catering Tourist Accommodation in the Countryside
TOU5 Holiday Parks in the Countryside
TOU6 Proposals for Major Tourism Development in the Countryside
TOU7 General Criteria for Tourism Development
OS1 Protection of Open Space
OS2 Intensive Sports Facilities
OS3 Noise-Generating Sports and Outdoor Recreational Activities
OS4 Facilities ancillary to Water Sports
OS5 Floodlighting of Sports and Outdoor Recreational Facilities
OS6 Outdoor Recreation in the Countryside
A GREEN PLACE
HE1 The Preservation of Archaeological Remains of Regional Importance and their Settings
HE2 The Preservation of Archaeological Remains of Local Importance and their Settings
HE4 Archaeological Mitigation
HE5 Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes of Special Historic Interest
HE6 Change of Use and/or Extensions or Alterations to a Listed Building
HE7 Control of Advertisements on a Listed Building
HE8 Demolition or Partial Demolition of a Listed Building
HE9 Development affecting the Setting of a Listed Building
HE10 New Development in a Conservation Area or Area of Townscape Character/Area of Village Character
HE11 The Control of Advertisements in a Conservation Area or Area of Townscape Character/Area of Village Character
HE12 Demolition or Partial Demolition in a Conservation Area or Area of Townscape Character/Area of Village Character
HE13 The Conversion and Reuse of Non-Listed Buildings
HE14 Enabling Development
NH1 European and Ramsar Sites – International
A CONNECTED PLACE
TRA2 Access to Public Roads

TRA3 Access to Protected Routes
TRA7 Car Parking and Servicing Arrangements in New Developments
TRA9 Park and Ride/Park and Share Car Parks
TRA10 Provision of Public and Private Car Parks
TRA11 Temporary Car Parks
RE1 Renewable Energy Development
RE2 Integrated Renewable Energy
TEL1 Telecommunications Development
UT1 Utilities
WM1 Waste Management Facilities
WM2 Treatment of Waste Water
WM3 Waste Disposal
WM4 Land Improvement
WM5 Development in the Vicinity of Waste Management Facilities or Waste Water Treatment Works
FLD1 Development in Fluvial (River) Flood Plains
FLD4 Artificial Modification of Watercourses
FLD5 Development in Proximity to Reservoirs
AD1 Amenity and Public Safety

Consideration of in combination assessment with other plans and projects in screening

Consideration must be given to any cumulative effects of proposals during plan preparation. These include potential cumulative effects from the plan with ‘in combination’ effects with other relevant plans and projects.

The plans and projects identified below are likely to give rise to developments causing effects that could combine or interact with those of the Plan Strategy and will be considered further as part of the appropriate assessment in Section 5.

- Regional Development Strategy 2035
- Strategic Planning Policy Statement
- Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council - Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Development Plan 2030 Draft Plan Strategy
- Ards and North Down Borough Council - Ards and Down Area Plan 2015; North Down and Ards Area Plan 1984-1995; and draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP)
- Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council - Armagh Area Plan (AAP) 2004; Armagh Area Plan 2004, Alteration No.1 - Armagh Countryside Proposals; Banbridge / Newry and Mourne Area Plan (BNMAP) 2015; Craigavon Area Plan (CAP) 2010; Craigavon Town Centre Boundaries and Retail Designations Plan 2010; and Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan (DSTAP) 2010
- Belfast City Council - Belfast Local Development Plan 2035 Plan Strategy
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council - Down Area Plan 2015; Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015

5 Appropriate Assessment

Step 6: The Appropriate Assessment

Following the screening of plan proposals, as summarised in Table 3, it has been found that there is potential for likely significant effects to arise from ninety development plan policies as identified in Table 3. In combination effects are also assessed.

Protective Measures in the draft Plan Strategy

The Preamble to Part 2 of the draft Plan Strategy sets out how the operational policies apply to development. It makes clear that all policies, including NH1, apply to any development that will be brought forward under the adopted Plan Strategy.

‘For the purposes of ensuring sustainable development these operational policies must not be read in isolation from one another. Proposals must comply with all policy requirements contained in the operational policies, where relevant to the development.’

Part 2 Section E includes Policy NH1 European and Ramsar Sites – International, reiterates the legislative requirements of the Habitats Regulations in relation to international sites as follows:

‘NH1 European and Ramsar Sites - International

Planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal that, either individually or in combination with existing and/or proposed plans or projects, is not likely to have a significant effect on:

- a) a European Site (Special Protection Area, proposed Special Protection Area, Special Areas of Conservation, candidate Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Community Importance)*
- b) a listed or proposed Ramsar Site.*

Where a development proposal is likely to have a significant effect (either alone or in combination) or reasonable scientific doubt remains, the Council, through consultation with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), is required by law to carry out an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. Only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site, can the Council agree to the development and impose appropriate mitigation measures in the form of planning conditions.

In exceptional circumstances, a development proposal which could adversely affect the integrity of a European or Ramsar Site may only be permitted where:

- a) there are no alternative solutions; and*
- b) the proposed development is required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest; and*
- c) compensatory measures are agreed and fully secured.*

As part of the consideration of exceptional circumstances, where a European or a listed or proposed Ramsar site hosts a priority habitat or priority species listed in Annex I or II of the Habitats Directive, a development proposal will only be permitted when:

- a) it is necessary for reasons of human health or public safety or there is a beneficial consequence of primary importance to the environment; or*
- b) agreed in advance with the European Commission.’*

For most policies the fact that all relevant parts of the plan, including NH1, must also apply is sufficient. This ensures that site selection features are a consideration when a proposal is being developed and reduces the potential for tensions between NH1 and other development management policies.

Mitigation measures

The consideration of measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of a plan on an international site has been progressed to Stage 2 appropriate assessment. The first step in this appropriate assessment is to assess or incorporate mitigation measures which might be relied upon to avoid any adverse effects to the integrity of the international sites potentially affected. For this plan it was found that case-specific policy caveats which have been incorporated will provide sufficient mitigation to ensure policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any international site.

This section therefore considers the policies identified in Table 3 above in light of potential mitigation measures which have been incorporated into the plan. With the approach in Appendix 2, Step 6 in mind the policies as grouped within their relevant chapter which were identified as having a likely significant effect were considered further below. All policies considered to have potential to generate pathways for effects have been screened-in for further assessment.

Strategic Policies (Part 1)

A Thriving Place

Policies SMU01 West Lisburn/Blaris and SMU02 Purdysburn/Knockbracken allow for strategic mixed use development providing a combined total of approximately 186 hectares of land zoned for mixed use and have potential to generate pathways for effects on international sites. Development of the sites will only be permitted subject to a Masterplan and these policies set out the key requirements whereby development will be permitted.

As all policies must be read together and in conjunction with other planning policies, including policy NH1 these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any international sites.

No further policy amendments are required to A thriving Place Strategic Policies.

Operational Policies (Part 2)

A Quality Place

The HOU, CF and COU policies identified in Table 3 all enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on international sites.

Policies COU11 Farm Diversification and COU12 Agricultural and Forestry Development specify that planning permission will only be granted where it is demonstrated that *'it will not have an adverse impact on the natural or historic environment'*.

Policy COU12 enables agricultural development including ammonia emitting elements which could impact international sites in Northern Ireland and/or Ireland.

Deposition of aerial pollutants can damage habitats and species through toxic effects and nutrient enrichment. Nitrogen deposition is identified as a threat for many international sites. Habitats such as peatlands, wetlands and woodlands containing lichens and bryophytes are particularly sensitive to the effects of ammonia. The majority of Northern Ireland's designated sites are exceeding their critical levels, the concentration at which environmental damage occurs, for ammonia. Livestock production and associated landspreading of manure, slurry or litter, is a significant source of nitrogen deposition, particularly in the form of ammonia. Increased or more intensive agricultural activities may further exacerbate this pressure.

The policy clearly addresses ammonia emissions stating *'Ammonia (NH₃) is an air pollutant largely emitted from agriculture which is known to have a damaging impact on biodiversity including sensitive habitats, and ecosystem resilience, as well as human health. It is produced by many common farming activities, such as the housing of livestock, the storage and spreading of manure and slurry and the application of fertiliser. Reducing ammonia emissions across Northern Ireland is a key priority of DAERA. In assessing all applications for agriculture and forestry development, DAERA is legally obliged to consider the impact of ammonia emissions and subsequent nitrogen deposition that a proposed building development would have on the environment. The Council will consult with DAERA as necessary regarding this issue.'* This ensures that the need to consider adverse environmental effects of intensive farming or animal husbandry is clear.

As operational policies must not be read in isolation from one another, proposals must comply with all policy requirements including NH1 and in view of policy caveats and constraints on development, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any international sites.

No further policy amendments are required to A Quality Place Operational Policies.

A Thriving Place

The ED and MD policies identified in Table 3 all enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on international sites.

Economic Development Policies 1-8 will also be required to meet all the criteria in ED9 which states that any proposal *'meets the requirements of Policy NH1.'* The J&A indicates that 'Environmental issues relating to economic development are not only important in themselves but can make sound economic sense.

While minerals development is significantly constrained through caveats within the MD policies there are exceptions that could enable direct effects on international sites. There is potential for effects from run off of sediment on aquatic habitats in designated sites or functionally linked land to which there is a hydrological pathway.

Policy MD1 includes a caveat to constrain development in designated areas *'Minerals development within or in close proximity to an area that has been designated, or is proposed for designation to protect its landscape, scientific, natural or built heritage significance will not normally be granted permission where this would prejudice the essential character of the area and the rationale for its designation.'*

Furthermore, the J&A states *'The Council, having regard to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011 (WANE), where necessary, will balance the case for a particular mineral working proposal against the need to protect and conserve the environment.'*

Policy MD5 prohibits unconventional hydrocarbon extraction until there is sufficient and robust evidence on all environmental impacts. The J&A states *'Until proven otherwise unconventional methods of extraction will not be permitted'*. The act of exploration is generally small scale and short duration however it potentially could affect sites directly or via hydrological pathways and there is potential for exploration over the plan period as research advances.

As operational policies must not be read in isolation from one another, proposals must comply with all policy requirements including NH1 and in view of policy caveats and constraints on development, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any international sites.

No further policy amendments are required to A Thriving Place Operational Policies.

A Vibrant Place

The TC policies identified in Table 3 all enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on international sites.

No specific caveats for the protection of international sites are included in the TC policies, however, as operational policies must not be read in isolation from one another and proposals must comply with all policy requirements including NH1 these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any international sites.

No further policy amendments are required to A Vibrant Place Operational Policies.

An Attractive Place

The TOU and OS policies identified in Table 3 all enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on international sites.

TOU1 to TOU6 are not spatially specific and the scale of development is hard to predict, particularly for TOU6 which allows for major tourism development the nature of which is unknown. All these policies could theoretically be relevant to schemes which might impact upon Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA and Ramsar site and for this reason were screened in for appropriate assessment. The tourism policies could potentially have indirect effects on international sites through increasing visitor numbers and thus disturbance levels.

TOU7 General Criteria for Tourism Development applies to any proposal for a tourism use, outlined in Policies TOU1 to TOU6. Any extension/alteration to existing tourism uses will also be required to meet all the TOU7 criteria including: i) it does not adversely affect features of the natural or historic environment; j) it is capable of dealing with any emission or effluent in accordance with legislative requirements; k) all proposals that may affect a European or Ramsar site must meet the requirements of NH1.

TOU7 J&A states *'Within the Council area there is one Special Protection Area (SPA) and the Ramsar site at Lough Neagh including the water body of Portmore Lough which could be adversely affected by cumulative disturbance effects. Such disturbance could arise directly from a tourism development or indirectly through increasing visitor pressures beyond the development.'*

All the OS policies include criteria within the policy that are protective of the natural environment in terms of disturbance and/or pollution. Policy OS3, Noise-Generating Sports and Outdoor Recreational Activities J&A states *'...can also be disruptive to farm animals and wildlife and have a detrimental effect on the natural and historic environment'*. OS4, Facilities ancillary to Water Sports, specifies that there must be no conflict with the provisions of any local management plan associated with the body of water. The J&A goes on to clarify: *'Management plans drawn up for particular water areas, for example River Basin Management Plans or natural heritage designations such as Ramsar sites, seek to control and address the compatibility of varying demands on waterbodies.'* OS6 applies to all outdoor recreation development and could theoretically be relevant to schemes which might impact upon international sites. Proposals for outdoor recreational use in the countryside will be permitted where all the criteria are met including: a) there is no adverse impact on features of importance to natural environment/nature conservation, or the historic environment. The J&A states *'Special care will be exercised in areas of nature conservation, heritage importance or landscape amenity value. Proposals in such areas will also need to be considered in relation to the Council's operational policies relating to the Historic Environment and Natural Heritage (Policies HE1-HE14 and NH1-NH6).'*

The TOU and OS policy caveats ensure that NH1 will be an important consideration for all tourism development and that potential indirect disturbance of site selection features must be considered in applying all of the tourism policies.

As operational policies must not be read in isolation from one another, proposals must comply with all policy requirements including NH1 and in view of policy caveats and constraints on development, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any international sites.

No further policy amendments are required to An Attractive Place Operational Policies.

A Green Place

The HE and NH policies identified in Table 3 all enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on international sites.

Some of the HE policies could be considered as site safeguarding/preservation policies due to their nature and constraints, however they do enable development and therefore have potential to generate pathways for effects on international sites.

Policy NH1 is intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on international sites. NH1 applies to all development under the LDP, it is considered the policy faithfully reflects the legislative requirements of the Habitats Directive and will ensure no adverse effect on any international sites.

As operational policies must not be read in isolation from one another, proposals must comply with all policy requirements including NH1 and in view of policy caveats and constraints on development, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any international sites.

No further policy amendments are required to A Green Place Operational Policies.

A Connected Place

The TRA, RE, TEL, UT, WM, FLD and AD policies identified in Table 3 all enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on international sites.

The TRA, TEL and AD policies do not include specific caveats for the protection of international sites, however, must be read in conjunction which and comply with NH1.

RE1 and RE2 support renewable energy development. RE1 states *'The generation of energy from renewable resources will be permitted provided the proposal, and any associated buildings and infrastructure, will not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on: c) biodiversity or the natural or historic environment; d) local natural resources, such as air quality or water quality.* A potential impact of renewable energy is disruption of flight paths, this would be addressed through criterion c).

UT1 Utilities specifies that proposals for all overhead electricity lines and associated infrastructure will be subject to criteria including *'b) avoidance of areas of nature conservation, the historic environment or archaeological interest where possible, in particular where there is the potential for significant effects upon any International Site either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.'* The bird features of Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA and Ramsar site are mobile and therefore vulnerable to disruption of flight paths. This may be a consideration in routing overhead lines or mitigation in the form of line markers may be implemented. The policy J&A ensures that such potential impacts must be considered stating *'The potential of overhead lines to disrupt the flight paths of birds, including site selection features of Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site is also a consideration'*.

WM1 details criteria for environmental protection and applies to WM2 and WM3. The second part of WM2 Treatment of Waste Water, relating to non mains sewage treatment, also serves as a general plan-wide environmental safeguarding policy stating, *'Development relying on non mains sewage treatment will only be permitted where it is demonstrated to the Council and its statutory consultees that there is sufficient capacity to discharge treated effluent to a watercourse and that this will not create or add to a pollution problem or create or add to flood risk'*. WM4 includes an environmental protection criterion and WM5 avoids conflicting land uses.

The FLD policies are related to flooding. Potential impacts arising from surface water (pluvial) flood risk has been considered through Policy FLD3 whereby development will only be permitted where the applicant can demonstrate any risk can be managed through adequate drainage arrangements. This must be demonstrated through a Drainage Assessment (DA). Where development exceeds the identified thresholds, with the exception of minor development a DA will also be required where *'surface water run-off from the development may adversely impact on other development or features of importance to nature conservation, archaeology or historic environment features.'*

As operational policies must not be read in isolation from one another, proposals must comply with all policy requirements including NH1 and in view of policy caveats and constraints on development, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any international sites.

No further policy amendments are required to A Connected Place Operational Policies.

Step 7: Amending the plan until there would be no adverse effects on site integrity

Integrity test taking account of mitigation measures

Having identified potential case specific policy restrictions and caveats in respect of aspects of the Plan which were identified as having a likely significant effect, it is now necessary to apply the integrity test, taking account of these mitigation measures. Following incorporation of the mitigation measures identified above the re-screening of the elements of the Plan which are affected by the mitigation measures is set out in Table 4 below.

Table 4 Applying the integrity test following incorporation of mitigation measures

PLAN PROPOSAL/POLICY	RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES	INTEGRITY TEST CONCLUSION
STRATEGIC MIXED USE POLICIES		
SMU01 West Lisburn/Blaris	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of constraints on development, policy caveats and Policy NH1 these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any international sites.
SMU02 Purdysburn/Knockbracken		
A QUALITY PLACE		
HOU1 New Residential Development	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of constraints on development, policy caveats and Policy NH1 these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any international sites.
HOU2 Protection of Land Zoned for Housing		
HOU3 Site Context and Characteristics of New Residential Development		
HOU5 Public Open Space in New Residential Development		
HOU7 Residential Extensions and Alterations		
HOU8 Protecting Local Character, Environmental Quality and Residential Amenity in Established Residential Areas		
HOU9 The Conversion or Change of Use of Existing Buildings to Flats or Apartments		
HOU11 Specialist Accommodation		
HOU12 Accommodation for the Travelling Community		
CF01 Necessary Community Facilities in Settlements		
CF02 Protection of a Local Community Facility		
COU2 New Dwellings in Existing Clusters		
COU3 Replacement Dwellings		
COU4 The Conversion and Reuse of Buildings for Residential Use		
COU5 Affordable Housing		
COU6 Personal and Domestic Circumstances		
COU7 Dwellings for Non-Agricultural Business Enterprises		
COU8 Infill/Ribbon Development		
COU9 Temporary Caravan		

COU10 Dwellings on Farms		
COU11 Farm Diversification		
COU12 Agricultural and Forestry Development		
COU13 Necessary Community Facilities in the Countryside		
COU14 The Conversion and Reuse of Buildings for Non-Residential Use		
A THRIVING PLACE		
ED1 Economic Development in Cities and Towns	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of constraints on development, policy caveats and Policy NH1 these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any international sites.
ED2 Economic Development in Villages and Small Settlements		
ED3 Expansion of an Established Economic Development Use in the Countryside		
ED4 Redevelopment of an Established Economic Development Use in the Countryside		
ED5 Major Economic Development in the Countryside		
ED6 Small Rural Projects		
ED7 Retention of Zoned Land and Economic Development		
ED9 General Criteria for Economic Development		
MD1 Environmental Protection		
MD3 Areas of Mineral Constraint		
MD4 Valuable Minerals		
MD5 Unconventional Hydrocarbon Extraction		
A VIBRANT PLACE		
TC1 Town Centre, Retailing and Other Uses	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of constraints on development, policy caveats and Policy NH1 these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any international sites.
TC2 Lisburn City Centre Primary Retail Core and Retail Frontage		
TC3 Town Centres		
TC4 District and Local Centres		
TC5 Villages and Small Settlements		
TC6 Petrol Filling Stations and Roadside Service Facilities		
AN ATTRACTIVE PLACE		
TOU1 Tourism Development in Settlements	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of constraints on development, policy caveats and Policy NH1 these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any international sites.
TOU2 Proposals for Tourism Amenity in the Countryside		
TOU3 Proposals for Tourist Accommodation in the Countryside		
TOU4 Self-Catering Tourist Accommodation in the Countryside		
TOU5 Holiday Parks in the Countryside		
TOU6 Proposals for Major Tourism Development in the Countryside		
TOU7 General Criteria for Tourism Development		
OS1 Protection of Open Space		
OS2 Intensive Sports Facilities		
OS3 Noise-Generating Sports and Outdoor Recreational Activities		
OS4 Facilities ancillary to Water Sports		
OS5 Floodlighting of Sports and Outdoor Recreational Facilities		
OS6 Outdoor Recreation in the Countryside		
A GREEN PLACE		
HE1 The Preservation of Archaeological Remains of Regional Importance and their Settings	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of constraints on development, policy caveats and Policy NH1 these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any international sites.
HE2 The Preservation of Archaeological Remains of Local Importance and their Settings		
HE4 Archaeological Mitigation		
HE5 Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes of Special Historic Interest		

HE6 Change of Use and/or Extensions or Alterations to a Listed Building		
HE7 Control of Advertisements on a Listed Building		
HE8 Demolition or Partial Demolition of a Listed Building		
HE9 Development affecting the Setting of a Listed Building		
HE10 New Development in a Conservation Area or Area of Townscape Character/Area of Village Character		
HE11 The Control of Advertisements in a Conservation Area or Area of Townscape Character/Area of Village Character		
HE12 Demolition or Partial Demolition in a Conservation Area or Area of Townscape Character/Area of Village Character		
HE13 The Conversion and Reuse of Non-Listed Buildings		
HE14 Enabling Development		
NH1 European and Ramsar Sites – International		
A CONNECTED PLACE		
TRA2 Access to Public Roads		
TRA3 Access to Protected Routes		
TRA7 Car Parking and Servicing Arrangements in New Developments		
TRA9 Park and Ride/Park and Share Car Parks		
TRA10 Provision of Public and Private Car Parks		
TRA11 Temporary Car Parks		
RE1 Renewable Energy Development		
RE2 Integrated Renewable Energy		
TEL1 Telecommunications Development		
UT1 Utilities		
WM1 Waste Management Facilities		
WM2 Treatment of Waste Water		
WM3 Waste Disposal		
WM4 Land Improvement		
WM5 Development in the Vicinity of Waste Management Facilities or Waste Water Treatment Works		
FLD1 Development in Fluvial (River) Flood Plains		
FLD4 Artificial Modification of Watercourses		
FLD5 Development in Proximity to Reservoirs		
AD1 Amenity and Public Safety		
	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of constraints on development, policy caveats and Policy NH1 these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any international sites.

Consideration of in combination effects

It was found that there are protective measures and overarching policies in the Plan Strategy that will ensure that development causing an adverse effect on site integrity cannot be approved. It will be important that HRAs for individual developments also consider in combination effects before planning permission is granted.

The Policy Clarification for NH1 is explicit that a development proposal will be subject to appropriate assessment where it is 'likely to have a significant effect (either alone or in combination) or reasonable scientific doubt remains' on a SAC, SPA or Ramsar site. Policy NH1 therefore ensures that any development approved under the plan will have to demonstrate compliance with the 'in combination' provisions of the Habitats Regulations. There is therefore no risk of a residual effect at this Plan Strategy HRA stage, which might act in combination with other plans and projects as identified in Table 5.

On the basis of the underlying reasoning supporting Principle 6 of Section C.8.1 of the HRA Handbook, reliance on Policy NH1 provides the basis upon which effects which might act in combination with other plans and projects including those considered below can be ruled out.

Table 5 Plan or Project Identified for consideration of in combination effects

Plan or Project	Possible significant effects from plan or project	Is there a risk of in combination effects	Possible significant effects in combination
<p>Regional</p> <p>Regional Development Strategy 2035</p>	<p>Potential in-combination effects may arise where there is a requirement to provide for new infrastructure or where new development occurs, such effects may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disturbance to habitats/species; • Species mortality; • Alterations to water quality and/or water movement; • Release of contaminated material (soils, runoff); and • Introduction or spread of invasive species. 	<p>The RDS has been subject to AA and mitigation measures recommended. It is not considered that there is potential for in-combination effects to arise, however in the absence of mitigation or appropriate consideration of potential adverse effects upon European Sites, adverse in-combination effects may occur and cannot be excluded.</p>	<p>No, The mitigation measures contained within individual plans prioritise the avoidance of effects where possible and provide measures to minimise effects. In combination effects from projects which arise from implementation of the RDS will not be significant, especially when viewed in light of the mitigation in the Plan Strategy against policy NH1 which will require Appropriate Assessment.</p>
<p>Strategic Planning Policy Statement</p>	<p>Potential in-combination effects may arise where there is a requirement to provide for new infrastructure or where new development occurs, such effects may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disturbance to habitats/species; • Species mortality; • Alterations to water quality and/or water movement; • Release of contaminated material (soils, runoff); and • Introduction or spread of invasive species. 	<p>The SPSS has been subject to SEA. No significant adverse environmental effects were identified and mitigation was not required, therefore it is not considered that there is potential for in-combination effects to arise.</p>	<p>No. No significant adverse effects were identified from the SPSS in the absence of mitigation measures. In combination effects from projects which arise from implementation of the SPSS will not be significant, especially when viewed in light of the mitigation in the Plan Strategy against policy NH1 which will require Appropriate Assessment.</p>

Plan or Project	Possible significant effects from plan or project	Is there a risk of in combination effects	Possible significant effects in combination
<p>County</p> <p>Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Development Plan 2030 Draft Plan Strategy</p>	<p>Potential in-combination effects may arise where there is a requirement to provide for new infrastructure or where new development occurs, such effects may include: • Disturbance to habitats/species; • Species mortality; • Alterations to water quality and/or water movement; • Release of contaminated material (soils, runoff); and • Introduction or spread of invasive species.</p>	<p>This Neighbouring Council draft Plan Strategy has been published and was subject to SA and AA which incorporates robust mitigation measures into the plan itself to avoid effects. In the absence of mitigation or appropriate consideration of potential adverse effects upon European Sites, adverse in-combination effects may occur and cannot be excluded</p>	<p>No. The mitigation measures contained within the projects prioritise the avoidance of effects and provide measures to minimise effects. In combination effects from projects which arise from the implementation of these plans will not be significant, especially when viewed in light of the mitigation in the Plan Strategy against policy NH1 which will require Appropriate Assessment.</p>
<p>Ards and North Down Borough Council - Ards and Down Area Plan 2015; North Down and Ards Area Plan 1984-1995; and draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP)</p>	<p>Potential in-combination effects may arise where there is a requirement to provide for new infrastructure or where new development occurs, such effects may include: • Disturbance to habitats/species; • Species mortality; • Alterations to water quality and/or water movement; • Release of contaminated material (soils, runoff); and • Introduction or spread of invasive species.</p>	<p>This Neighbouring Council is currently advancing their draft Plan Strategy for publication which will replace the existing area plans. The draft Plan Strategy will have been subject to AA which incorporates robust mitigation measures into the plan itself to avoid effects. In the absence of mitigation or appropriate consideration of potential adverse effects upon European Sites, adverse in-combination effects may occur and cannot be excluded.</p>	<p>No. The mitigation measures contained within the projects prioritise the avoidance of effects and provide measures to minimise effects. In combination effects from projects which arise from the implementation of these plans will not be significant, especially when viewed in light of the mitigation in the Plan Strategy against policy NH1 which will require Appropriate Assessment.</p>
<p>Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council - Armagh Area Plan (AAP) 2004; Armagh Area Plan 2004, Alteration No.1 - Armagh Countryside Proposals; Banbridge / Newry and Mourne Area Plan (BNMAP) 2015; Craigavon Area Plan (CAP) 2010; Craigavon Town Centre Boundaries and Retail Designations Plan 2010; and Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan (DSTAP) 2010</p>	<p>Potential in-combination effects may arise where there is a requirement to provide for new infrastructure or where new development occurs, such effects may include: • Disturbance to habitats/species; • Species mortality; • Alterations to water quality and/or water movement; • Release of contaminated material (soils, runoff); and • Introduction or spread of invasive species.</p>	<p>This Neighbouring Council is currently advancing their draft Plan Strategy for publication which will replace the existing area plans. The draft Plan Strategy will have been subject to AA which incorporates robust mitigation measures into the plan itself to avoid effects. In the absence of mitigation or appropriate consideration of potential adverse effects upon European Sites, adverse in-combination effects may occur and cannot be excluded.</p>	<p>No. The mitigation measures contained within the projects prioritise the avoidance of effects and provide measures to minimise effects. In combination effects from projects which arise from the implementation of these plans will not be significant, especially when viewed in light of the mitigation in the Plan Strategy against policy NH1 which will require Appropriate Assessment.</p>
<p>Belfast City Council - Belfast Local Development Plan 2035 Plan Strategy</p>	<p>Potential in-combination effects may arise where there is a requirement to provide for new infrastructure or where new development occurs, such effects may include: • Disturbance to habitats/species; • Species mortality; • Alterations to water quality and/or water movement; • Release of contaminated material (soils, runoff); and • Introduction or spread of invasive species.</p>	<p>This Neighbouring Council Plan has been subject to SA and AA which incorporates robust mitigation measures into the plan itself to avoid effects. In the absence of mitigation or appropriate consideration of potential adverse effects upon European Sites, adverse in-combination effects may occur and cannot be excluded.</p>	<p>No. The mitigation measures contained within the projects prioritise the avoidance of effects and provide measures to minimise effects. In combination effects from projects which arise from the implementation of these plans will not be significant, especially when viewed in light of the mitigation in the Plan Strategy against policy NH1 which will require Appropriate Assessment.</p>

Plan or Project	Possible significant effects from plan or project	Is there a risk of in combination effects	Possible significant effects in combination
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council - Down Area Plan 2015; Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015	Potential in-combination effects may arise where there is a requirement to provide for new infrastructure or where new development occurs, such effects may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disturbance to habitats/species; • Species mortality; • Alterations to water quality and/or water movement; • Release of contaminated material (soils, runoff); and • Introduction or spread of invasive species. 	This Neighbouring Council is currently advancing their draft Plan Strategy for publication which will replace the existing area plans. The draft Plan Strategy will have been subject to AA which incorporates robust mitigation measures into the plan itself to avoid effects. In the absence of mitigation or appropriate consideration of potential adverse effects upon European Sites, adverse in-combination effects may occur and cannot be excluded.	No. The mitigation measures contained within the projects prioritise the avoidance of effects and provide measures to minimise effects. In combination effects from projects which arise from the implementation of these plans will not be significant, especially when viewed in light of the mitigation in the Plan Strategy against policy NH1 which will require Appropriate Assessment.
Local	Potential in-combination effects may arise from this project on international sites. Such effects may include: disturbance to habitats/species; Species mortality; Alterations to water quality and/or water movement; and Release of contaminated material (soils, runoff).	All project elements will require a HRA to be undertaken. In the absence of mitigation or appropriate consideration of potential adverse effects upon European Sites, adverse in-combination effects may occur and cannot be excluded.	No. This project is subject to HRA and should a robust AA conclude no adverse effects and that the decision-maker is subject to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995, then there can be no in combination effects with the Plan Strategy, especially when viewed in light of the mitigation in the Plan Strategy against policy NH1 which will require Appropriate Assessment.
Knockmore Link Road LA05/2018/1155/F	Potential in-combination effects may arise from this project on international sites. Such effects may include: disturbance to habitats/species; Species mortality; Alterations to water quality and/or water movement; and Release of contaminated material (soils, runoff).	All project elements will require a HRA to be undertaken. In the absence of mitigation or appropriate consideration of potential adverse effects upon European Sites, adverse in-combination effects may occur and cannot be excluded.	No. This project is subject to HRA and should a robust AA conclude no adverse effects and that the decision-maker is subject to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995, then there can be no in combination effects with the Plan Strategy, especially when viewed in light of the mitigation in the Plan Strategy against policy NH1 which will require Appropriate Assessment.
Blaris/Lisburn Mixed use development LA05/2018/1154/O	Potential in-combination effects may arise from this project on international sites. Such effects may include: disturbance to habitats/species; Species mortality; Alterations to water quality and/or water movement; and Release of contaminated material (soils, runoff).	All project elements will require a HRA to be undertaken. In the absence of mitigation or appropriate consideration of potential adverse effects upon European Sites, adverse in-combination effects may occur and cannot be excluded.	No. This project is subject to HRA and should a robust AA conclude no adverse effects and that the decision-maker is subject to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995, then there can be no in combination effects with the Plan Strategy, especially when viewed in light of the mitigation in the Plan Strategy against policy NH1 which will require Appropriate Assessment.
Draynes Farm' Residential development and associated roads LA05/2017/1124/F	Potential in-combination effects may arise from this project on international sites. Such effects may include: disturbance to habitats/species; Species mortality; Alterations to water quality and/or water movement; and Release of contaminated material (soils, runoff).	All project elements will require a HRA to be undertaken. In the absence of mitigation or appropriate consideration of potential adverse effects upon European Sites, adverse in-combination effects may occur and cannot be excluded.	No. This project is subject to HRA and should a robust AA conclude no adverse effects and that the decision-maker is subject to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995, then there can be no in combination effects with the Plan Strategy, especially when viewed in light of the mitigation in the Plan Strategy against policy NH1 which will require Appropriate Assessment.

6 Conclusions

Outcome of HRA

Step 8: Preparing the HRA Record

The Plan Strategy has been subject to screening under the Habitats Regulations. All proposals and policies have been considered in respect of the potential for likely significant effects upon any international site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. For all these objectives the implications can be assessed under related policies. The assessment is therefore undertaken through the consideration of related policies.

Following the initial screening exercise, ninety policies were identified as having a likely significant effect in the absence of mitigation. Mitigation measures, in the form of case-specific policy caveats, were incorporated in respect of these policies and reviewed as part of an appropriate assessment. The rationale for these is set out in Section 5 and they are summarised in Table 4.

On the basis of the analysis set out above, the Council can conclude that the Plan Strategy (with the modifications set out in the direction made by the Department for Infrastructure) will not adversely affect the integrity of any international sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

The Local Policies Plan (LPP) is the second stage of the LDP and will identify settlement limits, zonings and detailed boundaries of environmental designations and, where appropriate, introduce local policies or key site requirements for these zonings and designations. Another draft HRA will be prepared to assess the potential impacts of the draft LPP on international sites. The information about international sites in Appendix 3, which will be updated, will be important as a starting point for the HRA at LPP. Following independent examination of the draft LPP that HRA will be finalised and adopted by the Council and published alongside the adopted LPP.

Abbreviations

AoHSV	Areas of High Scenic Value
AoMC	Areas of Minerals Constraint
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
CMS	Construction Method Statement
CSM	Common Standards Monitoring
DAERA	The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EC	European Commission
FCS	Favourable Conservation Status
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
J&A	Justification and Amplification
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
LDP	Local Development Plan
LLPA	Local Landscape Policy Areas
LPP	Local Policies Plan
NA	Not Applicable
NIEA	Northern Ireland Environment Agency
pSPA	Proposed Special Protection Area
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SES	Shared Environmental Service
SLNCI	Sites of Local Nature Conservation Interest
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPPS	Strategic Planning Policy Statement
WR&SR	Water Resource & Supply Resilience Plan
WWTW	Waste Water Treatment Works

Glossary

Adverse effect on site integrity	An effect on the qualifying features of an international site which would undermine the achievement of the conservation objectives for that site and which would have a negative effect on the coherence of its ecological structure and function, across its whole area, that enables it to sustain the habitats, complex of habitats and/or the levels of populations of the species for which the site is or will be designated.
Competent Authority	For the purposes of the Habitats Regulations the expression ‘competent authority’ includes government departments, district councils and statutory undertakers, and any trustees, commissioners, board or other persons who, as a public body and not for their own profit, act under any statutory provision for the improvement of any place or the production or supply of any commodity or service.
Cumulative Impact	A number of developments in a locality or a continuous activity over time that together may have an increased impact on the environment.
De Minimis	Having no appreciable effect.
Global Status	The global status is an expert judgement of the overall value of the international site for the conservation of the relevant Annex I habitat. Sites have been graded A, B or C.
International sites	Collective term that includes European SACs, SPAs, SACs, pSPAs, SCIs and Ramsar sites (the latter is a wider international designation).
Habitats Regulations	The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended).
In combination effect	Refers to effects that may be likely significant effects when considered in combination with effects from other plans or projects.
Likely significant effect	An effect that cannot be ruled out on the basis of objective information. Likely in this context means there is a risk or possibility that an effect will be significant. An effect is significant if it would undermine an international site’s conservation objectives.
Mitigation measures	Measures to avoid, cancel or reduce the effects of a plan or project on an international site.
Natura 2000 (N2K)	The European network of special areas of conservation and special protection areas under the Wild Birds Directive, provided for by Article 3(1) of the Habitats Directive.
Ramsar site	Site listed under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance adopted at Ramsar, Iran in 1971. As a matter of policy these sites are treated in the same way as international sites.
Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)	Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are sites that have been adopted by the European Commission and formally designated by the government of each country in whose territory the site lies.
Special Protection Area (SPA) The Directives	Area classified under Article 4 of the EU Birds Directive 1979 and 2009. Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (codified version). These Directives are referred to as the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive respectively and together are called ‘The Directives’ for the purposes of this report.

Appendix 1: References & Evidence Sources

In the absence of specific Northern Ireland guidance on carrying out Habitats Regulations Assessment for plans and programmes reference has been made to other sources of guidance and relevant documents including those listed below:

Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites, Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (2001), European Commission Environment DG

DAERA (2015 – 2017) Conservation Objectives (*Online*) Available at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/protected-areas> (Accessed October 2019)

DAERA (2019) Data Layers for designated and proposed European and Ramsar sites Available at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/download-digital-datasets> (Accessed October 2019)

Habitats Regulations Appraisal of Plans Guidance for Plan-Making Bodies in Scotland Version 3.0, (2015) Scottish Natural Heritage (Initially Prepared by David Tyldesley and Associates) (Accessed September 2019)

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) (Dates vary) Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS). (*Online*) Available at <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1393> (Accessed October 2019)

JNCC (Dates vary) Standard data forms generated from the Natura 2000 Database submitted to the European Commission. (*Online*) Available at <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-161> (Accessed October 2019)

NI Water (2019) draft Water Resource & Supply Resilience Plan <https://www.niwater.com/managing-northern-irelands-water-resources/> (Accessed October 2019)

Outdoor Recreation NI (2018) A Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Plan for Strangford and Lecale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Strangford Lough Marine Protected Area. Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership <http://www.strangfordlough.org/> (Accessed October 2019)

Spatial NI (2017) Data Layers for Local Government boundaries (*Online*) Available at <https://www.spatialni.gov.uk/> (Accessed October 2019)

Tyldesley, D., and Chapman, C., (2013) *The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook*, February 2019 edition UK: DTA Publications Ltd

Appendix 2: The Approach to Habitats Regulations Assessment for Plans

Introduction

This appendix sets out the approach to carrying out Habitats Regulations Assessments for Local Development Plans (LDPs) in Northern Ireland in the context of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended). It is informed by the Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook⁵ (HRA Handbook) which is regularly updated to reflect case law. The HRA Handbook is aimed at statutory bodies, local authorities, and other 'competent authorities'. It is a definitive source of detailed guidance that is regularly updated for good practice and monitored by a barrister specialising in environmental law and the Habitats Regulations in particular. In places reference is made to relevant sections of the HRA Handbook where more detail can be found and, at times, extracts of the HRA Handbook are quoted.

The context for HRA is set out firstly. This is followed by an overview of how HRA applies to plans and the consideration of mitigation. Finally the stages and steps for the HRA process, as applied to Local Development Plans in Northern Ireland, are detailed. HRA is an iterative process carried out in parallel with plan preparation. The HRA will be modified in light of consultation and representations on and any amendments to the draft Plan Strategy. The record of the HRA will be completed and published with the adopted plan (Plan Strategy or Local Policies Plan).

The Directives and Regulations

The Directives are Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (codified version). These Directives are referred to as the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive respectively and together are called the Directives for the purposes of this report. The overall aim of the Directives is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest. Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas are designated to afford protection to habitats and species listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives. These designations form a suite of sites that are collectively known as the Natura 2000 network.

The Directives are implemented through the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) commonly referred to as the Habitats Regulations. For the purposes of the Habitats Regulations the expression 'competent authority' is construed in accordance with Regulation 5. Competent authorities include government departments, district councils and statutory undertakers, and any trustees, commissioners, board or other persons who, as a public body and not for their own profit, act under any statutory provision for the improvement of any place or the production or supply of any commodity or service. Councils as planning authorities are competent authorities. Regulation 43 (1) of the Habitats Regulations requires competent authorities to make an appropriate assessment of plans and projects which are likely to have a significant effect on an international site in Northern Ireland, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. For this report international sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), proposed SPAs and Ramsar sites.

Applying HRA to Local Development Plans

LDPs are prepared under the provisions of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the Planning Act) and the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (NI) 2015. The Planning Act requires the LDP

⁵ Tyldesley, D., and Chapman, C., (2013) *The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook*, February 2019 edition UK: DTA Publications Ltd.

to be produced in two stages – the first being the Plan Strategy, followed upon adoption, by the Local Policies Plan.

The approach to HRA for a plan differs to that for a project. In the case of projects the precise location of development is known and more detailed information is generally available, or can be obtained about construction, operation and other stages of the development thus enabling full assessment.

By comparison, a Plan Strategy is a strategic level plan setting out a framework for development but generally lacking detail of where and when developers will bring forward development. This will not be known until after the plan has been published. Therefore the approach to HRA for LDPs differs to that for projects. The plan does however steer how and where projects may be brought forward.

The assessment of strategic plans can present a challenge in terms of deciding what effects may come about as a result of the plan and which cannot occur due to other strategic and regulatory requirements with which the LDP and development management decisions must comply. The view could be taken that, given that a policy is included to meet the requirements of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS), and that all planning applications must comply with the Habitats Regulations, then the draft Plan Strategy cannot result in an adverse effect on the integrity of any international site. However, this argument has been rejected by the Courts who have ruled⁶ that the requirement for planning permission to be determined in light of the relevant land use plan, necessarily means that those plans have considerable influence on development decisions and that, as such, land use plans must be subject to HRA in their own right. As a result, to terminate the HRA on this basis would not only be contrary to case law but it would also miss the opportunity to draw attention to the extent of international sites in, or connected to, the Council area and to inform land use planning in such a way as to minimise the regulatory burden of compliance with the Regulations at the later project HRA stage.

There are a number of pieces of case law that clarify how the Directives should be interpreted as applying to plans. The key points are summarised here, these are detailed in the Habitats Regulations Handbook and the relevant section of Handbook content is referenced accordingly (e.g. F.x.x or C.x etc.).

EC v UK⁷ detailed in F.10.1.5.

- A. Land use plans can potentially have significant effects on European sites, despite the subsequent need for planning permission at 'project' level stage.
- B. Assessment of land use plans must therefore be secured under the provisions of the Habitats Directive.
- C. The assessment of plans has to be tailored to the stage of plan making.
- D. The assessment should be 'to the extent possible based on the basis of the precision of the plan'.

Feeney⁸ (UK High Court) F.10.1. reinforced this.

- 'Each appropriate assessment must be commensurate to the relative precision of the plans at any particular stage and no more. There does have to be an appropriate assessment at the Core Strategy stage, but such an assessment cannot do more than the level of detail of the strategy at that stage permits.'

⁶ Refer para 55 in EC v UK Case C-6/04 (2005)

⁷ Case C-6/04: Commission of the European Communities v United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland judgment of the Court 20 October 2005.

⁸ Sean Feeney v Oxford City Council and the Secretary of State CLG para 92 of the judgment dated 24 October 2011 Case No CO/3797/2011, Neutral Citation [2011] EWHC 2699 Admin

Boggis⁹ Court of Appeal & EC v UK C.7.5.2.

The implications for HRA of plans are that the HRA should be proportionate to the level of detail. There should be “*credible evidence that there was a real, rather than a hypothetical, risk*”

- The plan has weight as planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan (unless material considerations indicate otherwise).
- HRA should concentrate on aspects of the plan that could, realistically, be likely to have a significant effect.
- A likely significant effect should not be assumed for:
 - policies and proposals that are no more than general policy statements or which express a general aspiration or intent;
 - policies which generate no more than theoretical risks, or vague or hypothetical effects; or
 - policies or proposals for which meaningful assessment can be made at this stage, where no particular significant effect on any particular international site can actually be identified.
- Reliance should not simply be placed on a general international site protection policy as this does not address potential tensions or conflicts in the plan between site protection and policies or proposals which could significantly affect international sites.
- Tensions in the plan must be resolved in favour of protecting the international sites from harm.
- Policies or proposals with a high potential for significant adverse effects on international sites should be removed or subject to mitigation measures.

Assessing and applying mitigation measures

CJEU Case C323/17 (People over Wind & Sweetman)¹⁰ C.5, F7.1

On 12 April 2018, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) issued a judgment, *Case C323/17 (People over Wind & Sweetman)*, which ruled that Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive must be interpreted as meaning that mitigation measures, referred to in the judgment as measures which are intended to avoid or reduce effects, should be assessed within the framework of an appropriate assessment. It is therefore no longer permissible to take account of measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of a plan or project on an international site at the Stage 1 test of likely significance.

In light of this Stage 1 Assessment does consider essential features and characteristics of the plan; it also takes account of regional and strategic context and other regulatory controls that will apply to development under the plan. However measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been adverse effects on the integrity of international sites are not taken into account in Stage 1 and instead are assessed at Stage 2 appropriate assessment.

The consideration of mitigation differs between projects and plans, although for both cases it is not appropriate to take account of mitigation measures which might be incorporated into the plan at the screening stage. The first step in appropriate assessment is therefore to seek to incorporate mitigation measures which might be relied upon to avoid any adverse effects to the integrity of the international site.

⁹ Peter Charles Boggis and Easton Bavants Conservation v Natural England and Waveney District Council, High Court of Justice Court of Appeal case C1/2009/0041/QBACF Citation No [2009] EWCA Civ. 1061 20th October 2009

¹⁰ Case C-323/17 Request for a preliminary ruling, *People Over Wind* and Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta, 12th April 2018

Feeney v Oxford City Council¹¹ F10.1.

Case law has established that it is acceptable in principle to include policies within a Local Plan which are conditional upon certain conditions being met.

Abbotskerswell v Teignbridge (2014)¹² F10.1.

In this case the High Court specifically endorsed an approach which potentially relies upon matters being finalised after the adoption of the plan. The competent authority must however be satisfied that the measures can be delivered in practice.

This is captured in the HRA Handbook F.10.1 (emphasis added):

‘Because the integrity test incorporates the application of the precautionary principle as a matter of law, and because plan assessments are, by their nature, less precise than project assessments, it is important for the assessment process to eliminate the prospect of adverse effects on site integrity in so far as that is possible at the level of specificity inherent in the nature and purpose of the particular plan.’

F.10.1.2 of the Handbook refers to mitigation measures which might be relied upon to show that there would be no adverse effects on site integrity. Examples are provided as follows:

‘mitigation measures that may be introduced during or after the ‘appropriate assessment’ stage may be:

- a) Case-specific policy restrictions;*
- b) Case-specific policy caveats;*
- c) Prescribing how adverse effects on site integrity will be avoided by mitigation measures in a lower level or more detailed plan, to be confirmed by a more detailed Habitats Regulations Assessment at that level;*
- d) Deleting aspects of the plan that will probably fail the tests of the Directive at project application stage;*
- e) Ensuring that there are no proposals that could adversely affect the integrity of a European site that if retained in the plan may lead to a case for the proposal to be permitted, using the incorporation in the plan as the imperative reason of overriding public interest in its favour, because the plan relies on it being, or assumes that it will be, implemented;*

To be an appropriate restriction or caveat (in (a) or (b) above), enabling the plan-making body to ascertain no adverse effect on the integrity of a European site, the restriction must be:

- case-specific;*
- explicit; and*
- added to the policy and not merely added to the explanatory text or commentary, or not merely inserted into the implementation or monitoring chapters.’*

Co-ordination with other Habitats Regulations Assessments

The Habitats Regulations provides for co-ordination between competent authorities at Regulation 47. While Regulation 47 does not strictly apply to HRA for Local Development Plans it does establish the principle that a competent authority can place weight on a HRA carried out by another competent authority. This is subject to the proviso that the competent authority should be satisfied that the earlier HRA was robust and has not become outdated by further information or developments. No guidance has been issued by DAERA as allowed for under 47(3) however the Department for

¹¹ Sean Feeney v Oxford City Council and the Secretary of State CLG para 92 of the judgment dated 24 October 2011 Case No CO/3797/2011, Neutral Citation [2011] EWHC 2699 Admin

¹² Abbotskerswell Parish Council v Teignbridge District Council [2014] EWHC 4166 (Admin)

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) published guidance¹³ in 2012 to meet the equivalent regulation for England. Paragraphs 5 – 7 of that guidance are referred to here as an expansion of how it interprets co-ordination between competent authorities.

'5. The Regulations transposing the Habitats Directive enable competent authorities to adopt the reasoning or conclusions of another competent authority as to whether a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European site, or will adversely affect the integrity of a European site. They also provide that a competent authority is not required to assess any implications of a plan or project that would be more appropriately assessed by another competent authority.'

6. Competent authorities should adopt the reasoning, conclusion or assessment of another competent authority in relation to the appropriate assessment requirements for a plan or project, if they can. This can happen when all or part of the appropriate assessment requirements have already been met by another competent authority. It could also happen if one competent authority is completing all or part of the appropriate assessment requirements on behalf of others. Competent authorities remain responsible for ensuring their decisions are consistent with the Habitats Directive, so must be satisfied:

- No additional material information has emerged, such as new environmental evidence or changes or developments to the plan or project, that means the reasoning, conclusion or assessment they are adopting has become out of date*
- The analysis underpinning the reasoning, conclusion or assessment they are adopting is sufficiently rigorous and robust. This condition can be assumed to be met for a plan or project involving the consideration of technical matters if the reasoning, conclusion or assessment was undertaken or made by a competent authority with the necessary technical expertise.*

7. Due to these conditions there may be cases where it is not appropriate to adopt the reasoning, conclusions or assessment of another competent authority, or it is only appropriate to adopt some elements of an earlier assessment. In addition, even where the conditions are met, a competent authority may need to undertake additional work to supplement the assessment they have adopted in order to meet the full appropriate assessment requirements.'

The application and implications of the DEFRA guidance has been considered in detail within Part C.12 of the HRA Handbook. Therefore it is accepted as good practice that consideration may be given to HRAs carried out by other competent authorities where they are applicable to development to be brought forward under the LDP.

HRA the Stages and Steps - Overview

HRA is normally described in four stages:

- Stage 1: Screening for likely significant effects;
- Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment and the Integrity Test;
- Stage 3: Alternative Solutions; and
- Stage 4: Imperative reasons of overriding public interest and compensatory measures.

The approach to HRA for LDPs in Northern Ireland is described through 11 Steps across Stages 1 and 2. These steps are not named as such in the HRA Handbook however the section which applies to each step is referenced and Figure A.1.1 illustrates each step in the HRA process.

¹³ [Defra guidance on competent authority co-ordination](#), July 2012

Stage 1 involves firstly deciding whether a plan or project should be subject to HRA (Step 1). Steps 2, identifying international sites, and 3, gathering information about those sites, help to identify the international sites which the plan may affect and compiles information about those sites. Step 4 allows for discretionary discussion with the Statutory Nature Conservation Body and other stakeholders. The final step of Stage 1 is the preliminary screening of the plan to determine which elements of it are likely to have a significant effect on an international site and identify the sites that may be affected.

Stage 2 is referred to as 'appropriate assessment' and assesses the implications of the plan or project for international sites in view of the sites' conservation objectives. A plan can only proceed if it can be ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of an international site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans.

If Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment finds that there would be an adverse effect on site integrity then alternative solutions which are financially, legally and technically feasible need to be considered further in Stage 3. Alternative solutions are already considered in preparation of many plans, for example through the Preferred Options Paper for Local Development Plans and in carrying out Strategic Environmental Assessment which requires consideration of reasonable alternatives. Compliance with regional policies and strategies also means that environmental effects will have been taken into account. It is therefore rare for HRAs for LDPs to progress beyond Stage 2.

Stage 4 applies in the event that there is an imperative reason of public interest which overrides the risk and harm to sites, and priority features where appropriate. It provides for compensatory measures to protect the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network to be identified, delivery detailed and the government notified. As already noted, it is rare for HRAs for LDPs to progress beyond Stage 2. Stage 3 and 4 are not therefore detailed further in this approach.

Stage 1: Screening Plan for Likely Significant Effects

Step 1: Deciding whether a plan should be subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment

This involves considering the nature of the plan and its individual proposals to determine whether there is a requirement to carry out a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and is further detailed in HRA Handbook F.2. and F.3.

The following questions help determine whether the document being reviewed is a plan in the context of the Directives.

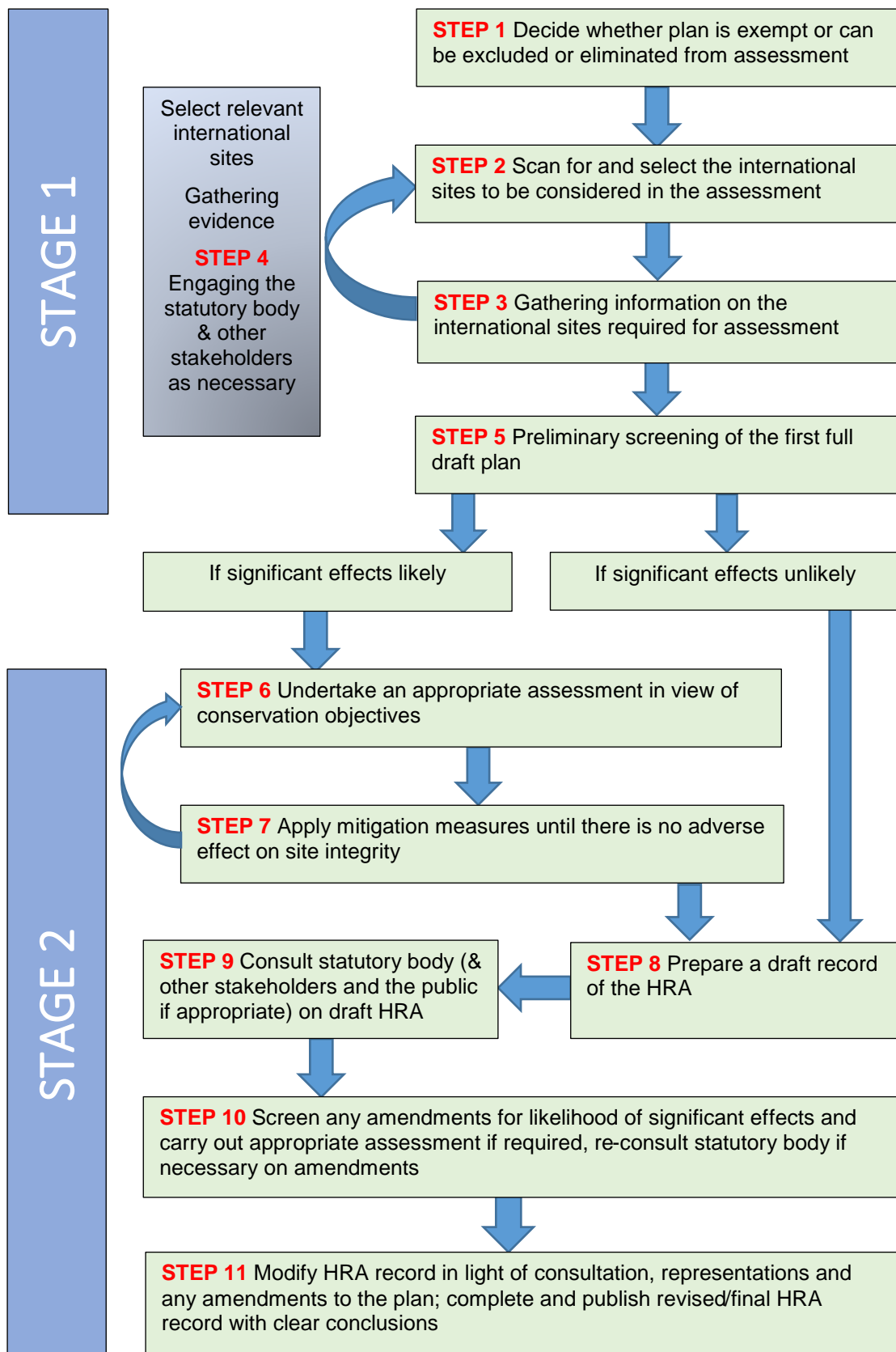
- Is the whole of the plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of an international site for nature conservation purposes?
- Is the plan a strategic development plan, local development plan, supplementary guidance?
- Is the plan a general statement of policy showing only the general political will or intention of the plan making body, and no effect on any particular international site can reasonably be predicted?
- Does the plan contain a programme, or policies, or proposals which could affect one or more particular international sites?

Step 1 is recorded at the end of Section 1 of this report. If it is found that the plan is not subject to HRA then the outcome is recorded and it is not necessary to progress beyond this step. In practice an LDP is a plan in the context of the Directives and subject to HRA.

Step 2: Scanning and selecting international sites potentially affected

This step follows the scan-collate-consider-select procedure set out in the HRA Handbook Figure F.4.3 and is carried out in parallel with Step 3. Step 2a is the scanning stage; Step 3 collates information; Step 2b involves considering the information and selecting the relevant sites that may be affected.

Figure A.1.1 Steps in the Habitats Regulations Assessment Process



Step 2a: 'Long-list' of sites with potential connection to plan area

International sites that are within the plan area, within a zone of influence beyond the plan area or connected to the plan area through ecology or infrastructure are identified. This is detailed in the HRA Handbook F.4 and presented in Section 2. Information is collected about this 'long-list' of sites in Step 3 and presented in Appendix 3.

Step 2b: 'Short-list' of sites that should be considered in the HRA

Taking account of in the information gathered in Step 3 and the 'long-list' of sites identified at Step 2a a further scan is carried out to determine the effects that could potentially affect international sites as a result of the plan. This is carried out using the Scanning and Site Selection List in Figure F.4.4. of the HRA Handbook. As this takes account of the site selection features, pathways to sites and conservation objectives this is likely to find that some of the sites on the long-list can be eliminated from further assessment as there is no conceivable effect or their conservation objective could not be undermined. This step could potentially identify some sites that were overlooked at Step 2a.

This step is recorded in Appendix 3, Table A.3.1. Any sites that are eliminated as a result of this step are listed in Table A.3.2. The outcome is summarised in Section 2, Table 2.

Step 3: Gathering information about the international sites

This step is carried out in parallel with and informs Step 2. Information for each site on the long-list identified at Step 2a is compiled to include selection features, conservation objectives, conservation status, potential threats to site integrity from planning related development and location relative to the plan area and any plan designations. This is detailed in the HRA Handbook F.4 and presented in Appendix 3.

Step 4: Discretionary discussions on the method and scope of the appraisal

The Statutory Nature Conservation Body, represented by the Department of Agriculture, the Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), may be consulted informally to ensure that the information at Step 3 is up to date and reflects known issues for the international sites. This provides the opportunity to invite comment on the scope of the HRA and potential in combination considerations.

Step 5: Screening the draft/proposed plan for likely significant effects

This step is detailed in the HRA Handbook F.6 Part A and F.7 advises how the outcome should be recorded. The screening of the whole plan is presented in Appendix 5 and the outcome summarised in Section 4 of the HRA. The HRA Handbook also presents principles, with reference to case law and government guidance, which inform screening and the interpretation of terms used; some relevant extracts are:

'As a result of European case law in Waddenzee, irrespective of the normal English meaning of 'likely', in this statutory context a 'likely significant effect' is a possible significant effect; one whose occurrence cannot be excluded on the basis of objective information. In this context it is permissible to ask whether a plan or project 'may have a significant effect'...(principle 3)'

'A significant effect is any effect that would undermine the conservation objectives for a European site... (principle 4)'

'An effect which would not be significant can properly be described as : as 'insignificant effect'; or a 'de Minimis effect; or a 'trivial effect'; or as having 'no appreciable effect'; but it is important to bear in mind that, in this context, all the terms are synonymous and are being used to describe effects which would not undermine the conservation objectives'....(principle 8)'

'Objective', in this context, means clear verifiable fact rather than subjective opinion. It will not normally be sufficient for an applicant merely to assert that the plan or project will not have an adverse effect on a site, nor will it be appropriate for a competent authority to rely on reassurances based on supposition or speculation. On the other hand, there should be credible

evidence to show that there is a real rather than a hypothetical risk of effects that could undermine the site's conservation objectives. Any serious possibility of a risk that the conservation objectives might be undermined should trigger an 'appropriate assessment' (principle 11).'

Draft Plan Strategies are set in the context of a vision and objectives which indicate the outcomes intended to be achieved through the plan. How these should be considered is set out in Sections F.6.2.2 and F.6.2.3 of the HRA Handbook as follows:

'...it is possible that the goals and objectives are the drivers for the possibility of a significant effect on a European site, but in most cases, it will be subsequent, more detailed policies or proposals that would have such implications, rather than the general goals or objectives. In most cases the general goals and objectives will be screened out, either because they will have no effect at all, or because they are general statements which are too vague to have a significant effect on a particular site. Even if they are the driver of the potential effect, it is likely that the plan will contain a more specific policy or proposal that would be the better target for assessment.'

The 'screening categories' in Part F of the HRA Handbook are used to provide a consistent and transparent approach to the screening process. The following categories are used to assess whether an overall plan and its individual proposals require HRA. They are explained in detail in the section of the HRA Handbook referenced.

- A. General statement of policy/general aspiration (screened out). F.6.3.1
- B. Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals (screened out). F.6.3.2
- C. Proposal referred to but not proposed by the plan (screened out). F.6.3.3
- D. General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold policies (screened out). F.6.3.4
- E. Policies or proposals which steer change in such a way as to protect international sites from adverse effects (screened out). F.6.3.5
- F. Policy that cannot lead to development or other change (screened out). F.6.3.6
- G. Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a site (screened out). F.6.3.7
- H. Policy or proposal the (actual or theoretical) effects of which cannot undermine the conservation objectives (either alone or in combination with other aspects of this or other plans or projects) (screened out). F.6.3.8
- I. Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone (screened in) F.6.3.9
- J. Policy or proposal with an effect on a site but unlikely to be significant alone, so need to check for likely significant effects in combination F.6.3.10
- K. Policy or proposal unlikely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination (screened out after the in combination test). F.6.3.11
- L. Policy or proposal which might be likely to have a significant effect in combination (screened in after the in combination test). F.6.3.11
- M. Bespoke area, site or case-specific policies or proposals intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on an international site (screened in) F.6.3.12

In some cases more than one category may apply. Where it is the case that part of a policy is in one category e.g. B. 'policy listing general criteria', whereas another part is in another category e.g. H. 'cannot undermine the conservation objectives' then both categories are listed e.g. B/H. Where part of a policy is screened in then this part will be further assessed.

Consideration must be given to any cumulative effects of proposals during plan preparation as detailed in HRA Handbook F.6.3.11. These include potential cumulative effects within the plan and in combination effects with other relevant plans and projects. For those proposals falling under

categories A to H there is no likely significant effect alone and cannot be any effect in combination. Those under category I are deemed to have a likely significant effect alone and will be progressed to appropriate assessment therefore in combination assessment is not required at Stage 1. Those policies or proposals falling under category J do need to be assessed further to determine whether they fall into K or L when considered in combination.

If there are likely significant effects, either alone or in combination, then the sites and features which may be affected and potential impacts are summarised in preparation for Stage 2.

Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment and the Integrity Test

Step 6: The appropriate assessment

The summary from Step 5 is the starting point for the appropriate assessment. Step 6 assesses whether any likely significant effect could lead to an adverse effect on site integrity for each site. This is set out in the HRA Handbook F.6. PART B and in F.9.

Where it is found that there could be an adverse effect for any site then measures are identified to remove any potential for adverse effects as described above. Measures considered at appropriate assessment must be subject to 'a full and precise analysis of the measures capable of avoiding or reducing any significant effects'. These measures may include case-specific policy restrictions or caveats, adding mitigation in a further plan that will deliver the current plan, removing proposals that could have an adverse effect on site integrity, specific mitigation plans or a large scale mitigation strategy which includes measures to mitigate adverse effects of the current plan.

In considering in combination assessment at appropriate assessment principle 4 of C.8.1 in Section C.8 'The in combination assessment' of the HRA Handbook reads as follows:

'In deciding the required scope of an appropriate assessment one must always keep firmly in mind that the underlying purpose of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive is to ensure (subject to the operation of Article 6(4)) that a plan or project is authorised only to the extent that it will not, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, adversely affect the integrity of the European site; the key purpose.

European Commission guidance and case law establishes that the underlying intention of the in-combination provision is to take account of cumulative effects. An appropriate assessment need not be extended further than is necessary to fulfil the key purpose.'

Principle 6 of Section C.8.1 of the HRA Handbook states that, following an appropriate assessment:

'...if on assessment alone it is ascertained that the subject plan or project will in fact have no effect at all on the European site, an adverse effect in combination is ruled out and no further assessment is required. The plan or project may be authorised.'

Step 7: Amending the plan until there would be no adverse effects on site integrity

Any mitigation identified in Step 6 is incorporated in the plan. This is further detailed in the HRA Handbook F.11 and presented in Section 5. In the case of a draft HRA the mitigation will be incorporated before the draft plan is finalised and adopted.

Step 8: Preparing a draft of the HRA Record

This is a draft report which records the HRA and supporting evidence and comprises this report with clear conclusions as set out in Section 6.

Step 9: Consultation

If the HRA is concluded at Stage 1 the HRA Report with a Statement of Finding of No Likely Significant Effects is published. Consultation is not required on this Stage 1 Test of Likely Significance in these circumstances however it is recommended that the record is published as a supporting document for the plan. If the draft plan is subject to consultation a draft Stage 1 HRA Report may be included in the

consultation with a note that it will be updated to take account of any changes in the proposals or international sites before the plan is finalised.

If the HRA progresses to Stage 2 then DAERA must be consulted on a draft Stage 2 HRA Report (also known as an appropriate assessment). Other stakeholders such as managers of international sites should be consulted where appropriate. Public consultation is not required on the draft Stage 2 HRA Report however it may be included as a supporting document for any public consultation on the draft plan and comment on it invited. It should be stated that the HRA will be updated to take account of any changes in the proposals or international sites before the plan is finalised.

Step 10: Proposed modifications

Modifications to a plan may come about as a result of consultation, independent examination or the outcome of the HRA and the approach to their consideration is set out in F.12 of the HRA Handbook. Representations by DAERA and other consultees are recorded with a note on if and how they have been addressed in the HRA. Further mitigation identified through Step 9, or a result of a revised HRA in light of modifications to the plan, is incorporated in the plan. Steps 6 - 8 are updated to reflect any additional mitigation and adverse effects reviewed.

Step 11: Modifying and completing the appraisal record

If it is found that there are no adverse effects on site integrity then the HRA may be concluded and a Stage 2 HRA Appropriate Assessment Report published to include a Record of No Adverse Effect on the Integrity of any international site under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended).

Appendix 3: Site information

An overview of the information to be presented for each site is firstly provided. This is followed by a record of Step 2b: 'Short-list' of sites that should be considered in the HRA. Information for each site identified in the 'long-list' identified in Section 2, Step 2a follows. This details selection features, conservation objectives, conservation status, potential threats to site integrity from planning related development and location relative to the plan area and any plan designations. This has informed the current draft HRA and will also provide baseline information for the HRA to be carried out for the LPP. The site information is grouped as follows.

Aughnadarragh Lough SAC	Aughnadarragh Lough SAC
Belfast Lough & Associated SPAs and Ramsar Sites	Belfast Lough Open Water SPA
	Belfast Lough Ramsar Site
	Belfast Lough SPA
	East Coast (Northern Ireland) Marine pSPA
	Outer Ards Ramsar Site
	Outer Ards SPA
Eastern Mournes SAC	Eastern Mournes SAC
Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA and Ramsar Site	Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Ramsar Site
	Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA
Montiaghs Moss SAC	Montiaghs Moss SAC
Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay SAC	Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay SAC
Strangford Lough SAC	Strangford Lough SAC
Strangford Lough SPA and Ramsar site	Strangford Lough SPA
	Strangford Lough Ramsar

Introduction to Site Information

Conservation Objectives

EU Member States have responsibility under the Habitats and Birds Directives to ensure that all habitats and species of Community Interest are maintained or restored to Favourable Conservation Status (FCS). Natura 2000 sites have a role to play in achieving this overall objective as the most important core sites for these species and habitats. Each site must therefore be managed in a way that ensures it contributes as effectively as possible to helping the species and habitats for which it has been designated reach a favourable conservation status.

In accordance with Article 6.1 of the Habitats Directive, Member States are required to implement, on each site, the necessary conservation measures which correspond to the ecological requirements of the protected habitat types and species of Community Interest present. DAERA has commissioned management plans for many international sites. Those that are available will be taken into account when this HRA is finalised.

Member States must also prevent any damaging activities that could significantly disturb those species and habitats (Article 6.2) and protect the site from new plans and projects that are potentially damaging or likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site (Article 6.3, 6.4).

To ensure that each Natura 2000 site contributes fully to reaching this overall target of FCS, it is important to set clear conservation objectives for each individual site. These define the desired state for each of the species and habitat types for which the site was designated. Conservation objectives are not published for Ramsar sites therefore the conservation objectives for the associated SAC/SPA were referred to.

Conservation Objectives have a role in:

- Conservation planning and management by guiding management to maintain habitats and species in, or restore them to, favourable condition;
- Assessing plans and projects, as required under article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive in light of the site's conservation objectives; and
- Monitoring and reporting by providing the basis for assessing the condition of a feature, the factors that affect it and the actions required.

Favourable Condition is defined as '*the target condition for an interest feature in terms of the abundance, distribution and/or quality of that feature within the site*'. The most recent condition assessment for site selection features was referred to where available in preparing this report.

Sources of information Northern Ireland sites

The appropriate assessments draw on or refer to source documents as detailed below. Digital maps for all sites can be viewed on the DAERA Natural Environment Map Viewer¹⁴ or downloaded from its digital datasets web page¹⁵. Maps are also provided in Appendix 4 to illustrate the relationship between the plan area and international sites. Additional, site specific, sources of information are listed for each site.

Special Areas of Conservation

An overview of each SAC can be found on the JNCC website at its section on UK Protected Sites¹⁶. Under 'General Site Character' there is a link to the Natura 2000 standard data form for that SAC. Further detail is provided on this website about the Annex I habitats and Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of the site. It also explains why the site is important and provides a link to information about that habitat in the UK context. Further information for each SAC can be found online through the DAERA Protected Areas page¹⁷. On each site page the link to guidance and literature allows the Reasons for designation, Conservation Objectives and site map to be accessed.

Special Protection Areas

A link to the Natura 2000 standard data form for each SPA can be found on the JNCC website at its section on UK protected sites. Further information for each site can be found through the DAERA Protected Areas page. On each site page the link to guidance and literature allows the SPA citation document and Conservation Objectives to be accessed.

Ramsar sites

A link to the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS) for each Ramsar site can be found on the JNCC UK Protected Sites page. Further information for each site can be found through the DAERA Protected Areas page. On the DAERA site page the link to guidance and literature allows the Ramsar site citation document and map to be accessed.

Condition Assessment

DAERA has compiled and made available a spreadsheet, 'Condition of Features in ASSIs and N2Ks'. This details the most recent condition assessment for features, usually with an explanation of the reason why a feature is in unfavourable condition. This spreadsheet was referred to in compiling site information. DAERA also provided unpublished condition assessment reports for some individual sites and some site selection features such as marsh fritillary butterfly.

¹⁴ DAERA (2018) 'Natural Environment Map Viewer' Available at: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/natural-environment-map-viewer>

¹⁵ DAERA (2018) 'Download Digital Datasets' Available at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/download-digital-datasets> (accessed 23/01/2019).

¹⁶ <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1458>

¹⁷ <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/protected-areas>

Step 2b: 'Short-list' of sites that should be considered in the HRA

Taking account of the 'long-list' of sites identified in Section 2, the discussion of potential impacts of development in Section 3 and the site information in this Appendix, a further scan was carried out to determine the effects that could potentially affect international sites as a result of the plan. This was carried out using the Scanning and Site Selection List in Figure F.4.4. of the HRA Handbook as described in Appendix 2.

Table A.3.1 Scanning and site selection list for sites that could potentially be affected by the plan

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Types of plan	Sites to scan for and check	Names of sites selected
1. All plans (terrestrial, coastal and marine)	Sites within the geographic area covered by or intended to be relevant to the plan	Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Ramsar Site Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay SAC
2. Plans that could affect the aquatic environment	Sites upstream or downstream of the plan area in the case of river or estuary sites	Belfast Lough Open Water SPA Belfast Lough Ramsar Site Belfast Lough SPA East Coast Marine pSPA Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Ramsar Site Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay SAC Strangford Lough SPA Strangford Lough SAC Strangford Lough Ramsar Site
	Open water, peatland, fen, marsh and other wetland sites with relevant hydrological links to land within the plan area, irrespective of distance from the plan area	Belfast Lough Open Water SPA Belfast Lough Ramsar Site Belfast Lough SPA East Coast Marine pSPA Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Ramsar Site Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay SAC Strangford Lough SPA Strangford Lough SAC Strangford Lough Ramsar Site
3. Plans that could affect the marine environment	Sites that could be affected by changes in water quality, currents, or flows; or effects on the inter-tidal or sub-tidal areas or the sea bed, or marine species	Belfast Lough Open Water SPA Belfast Lough Ramsar Site Belfast Lough SPA East Coast (NI) Marine pSPA Outer Ards SPA Outer Ards Ramsar Site Strangford Lough SPA Strangford Lough SAC Strangford Lough Ramsar Site
4. Plans that could affect the coast	Sites in the same coastal 'cell,' or part of the same coastal ecosystem, or where there are interrelationships with or between different physical coastal processes	None

Types of plan	Sites to scan for and check	Names of sites selected
5. Plans that could affect mobile species	Sites whose qualifying features include mobile species which may be affected by the plan irrespective of the location of the plan's proposals or whether the species would be in or out of the site when they might be affected	Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Ramsar Site Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA Montiagh's Moss SAC Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay SAC
6. Plans that could increase recreational pressure on international sites potentially vulnerable or sensitive to such pressure	Such international sites in the plan area	Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Ramsar Site Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay SAC
	Such international sites within an agreed zone of influence or other reasonable and evidence-based travel distance of the plan area boundaries that may be affected by local recreational or other visitor pressure from within the plan area	None
	Such international sites within an agreed zone of influence or other evidence-based longer travel distance of the plan area, which are major (regional or national) visitor attractions such as international sites which are National Nature Reserves where public visiting is promoted, sites in National Parks, coastal sites and sites in other major tourist or visitor destinations	None
7. Plans that would increase the amount of development	Sites in the plan area or beyond that are used for, or could be affected by, water abstraction irrespective of distance from the plan area	None
	Sites used for, or could be affected by, discharge of effluent from waste water treatment works or other waste management streams serving the plan area, irrespective of distance from the plan area	Belfast Lough Open Water SPA Belfast Lough Ramsar Site Belfast Lough SPA East Coast (NI) Marine pSPA Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Ramsar Site Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay SAC Strangford Lough SPA Strangford Lough SAC Strangford Lough Ramsar Site
	Sites that could be affected by the provision of new or extended transport or other infrastructure	None

Types of plan	Sites to scan for and check	Names of sites selected
7. cont., Plans that would increase the amount of development	Sites that could be affected by increased deposition of air pollutants arising from the proposals, including emissions from significant increases in traffic	Aughnadarragh Lough SAC Belfast Lough Ramsar Site Belfast Lough SPA East Coast (NI) Marine pSPA Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Ramsar Site Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA Montiaghs Moss SAC Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay SAC Strangford Lough SPA Strangford Lough SAC Strangford Lough Ramsar Site
8. Plans for linear developments or infrastructure	Sites within a specified distance from the center line of the proposed route (or alternative routes), the distance may be varied for differing types of site/qualifying features and in the absence of established good practice standards, distance(s) to be agreed by the statutory nature conservation body	None
9. Plans that introduce new activities or new uses into the marine, coastal or terrestrial environment	Sites considered to have qualifying features potentially vulnerable or sensitive to the effects of the new activities proposed by the plan	None (No such 'new' uses introduced by the draft Plan Strategy)
10. Plans that could change the nature, area, extent, intensity, density, timing, or scale of existing activities or uses	Sites considered to have qualifying features potentially vulnerable or sensitive to the effects of the changes to existing activities proposed by the plan	None (recreational uses covered at 6 above)
11. Plans that could change the quantity, quality, timing, treatment or mitigation of emissions or discharges to air, water or soil	Sites considered to have qualifying features potentially vulnerable or sensitive to the changes in emissions or discharges that could arise as a result of the plan	Aughnadarragh Lough SAC Belfast Lough Ramsar Site Belfast Lough SPA East Coast (NI) Marine pSPA Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Ramsar Site Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA Montiaghs Moss SAC Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay SAC Strangford Lough SPA Strangford Lough SAC Strangford Lough Ramsar Site
12. Plans that could change the quantity, volume, timing, rate, or other characteristics of biological resources harvested, extracted, or consumed	Sites whose qualifying features include the biological resources which the plan may affect, or whose qualifying features depend on the biological resources which the plan may affect, for example as prey species or supporting habitat or which may be disturbed by the harvesting, extraction, or consumption	Not applicable to land use plans

Types of plan	Sites to scan for and check	Names of sites selected
13. Plans that could change the quantity, volume, timing, rate, or other characteristics of physical resources extracted or consumed	Sites whose qualifying features rely on the non- biological resources which the plan may affect, for example, as habitat or a physical environment on which habitat may develop or which may be disturbed by the extraction or consumption	None
14. Plans which could introduce or increase, or alter the timing, nature, or location of disturbance to species	Sites whose qualifying features are considered to be potentially sensitive to disturbance, for example as a result of noise, activity or movement, or the presence of disturbing features that could be brought about by the plan	None (recreational uses covered at 6 above)
15. Plans which could introduce or increase or change the timing, nature or location of light or noise pollution	Sites whose qualifying features are considered to be potentially sensitive to the effects of changes in light or noise that could be brought about by the plan	None
16. Plans which could introduce or increase a potential cause of mortality of species	Sites whose qualifying features are considered to be potentially sensitive to the source of new or increased mortality that could be brought about by the plan	None (recreational uses covered at 6 above)

Sites considered but eliminated

As Step 2b takes account of the site selection features, pathways to sites and conservation objectives it found that one of the sites on the long-list can be eliminated from further assessment as the site conservation objectives could not be undermined.

Table A.3.2 Sites Eliminated from Further Assessment

Site	Elimination Reason
Eastern Mourne SAC	There is a theoretical pathway however it is not conceivable that the plan would generate additional development impacts to an extent that it could undermine the conservation objectives for this site.

Appendix 4: Maps

Map 1: SPAs in relation to Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Map 2: SACs in relation to Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

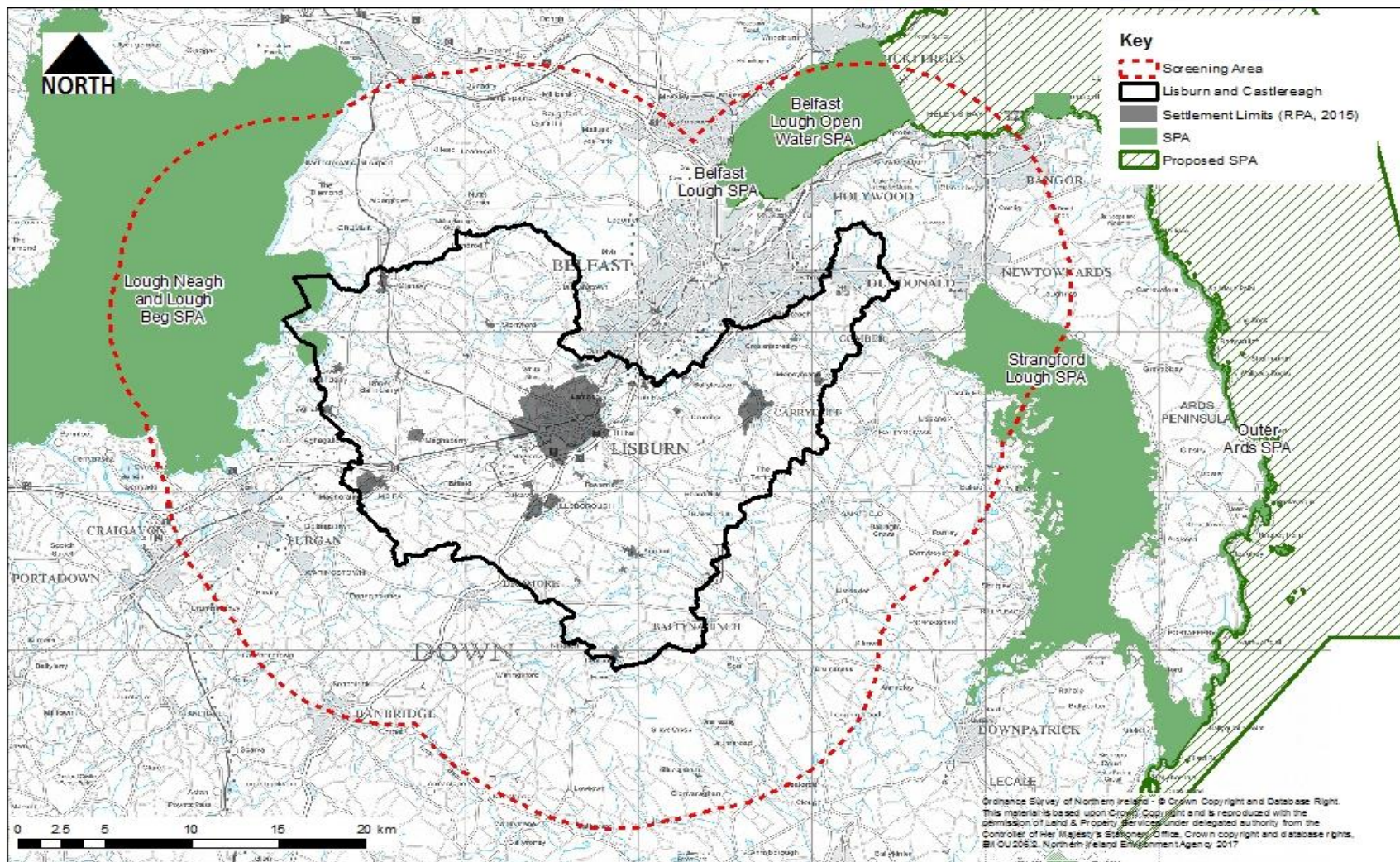
Map 3: Ramsar Sites in relation to Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Map 4: Marine SACs in relation to Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

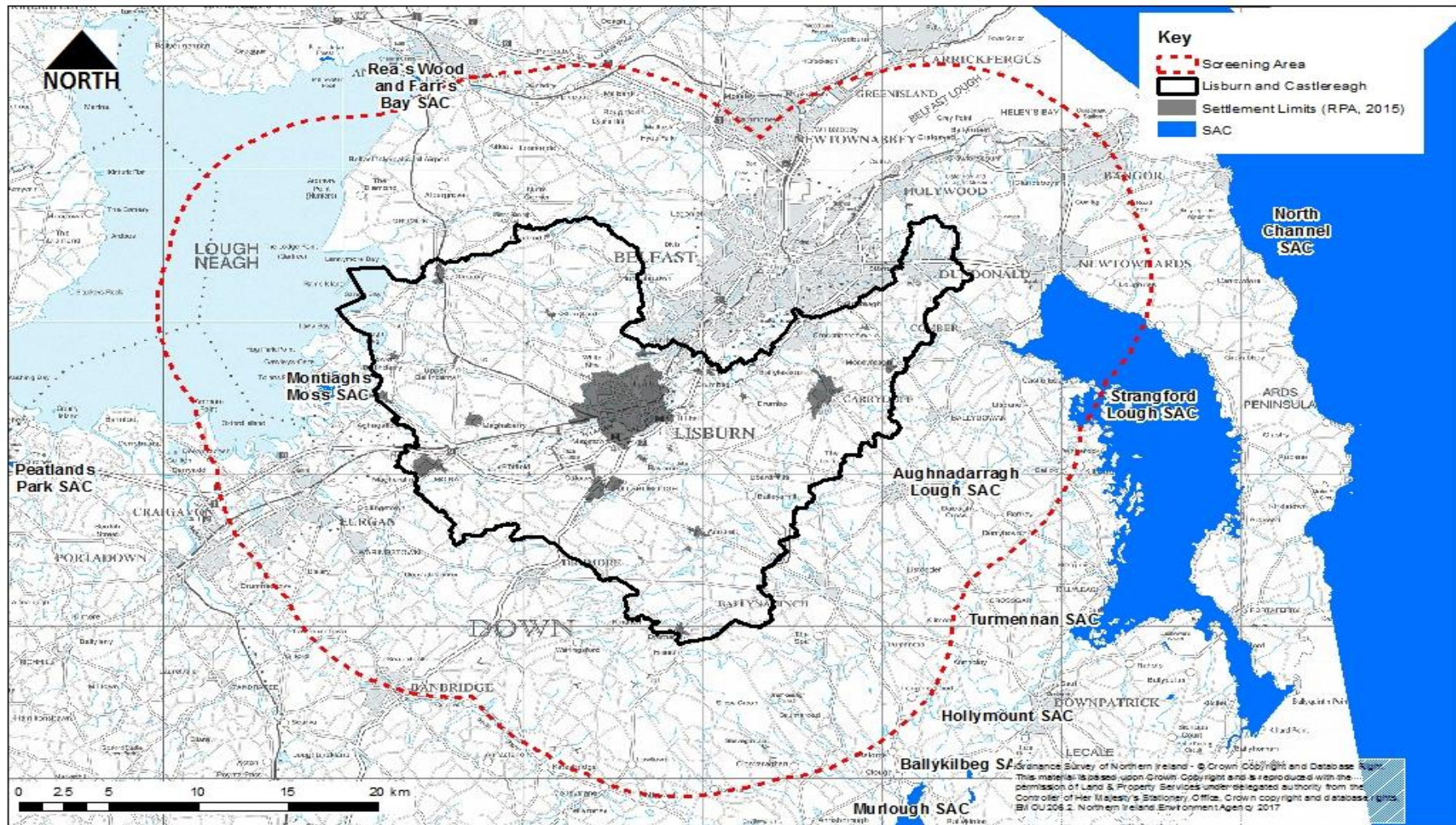
Map 5: Major Catchments within the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area

Map 6: River Sub-basins within the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area

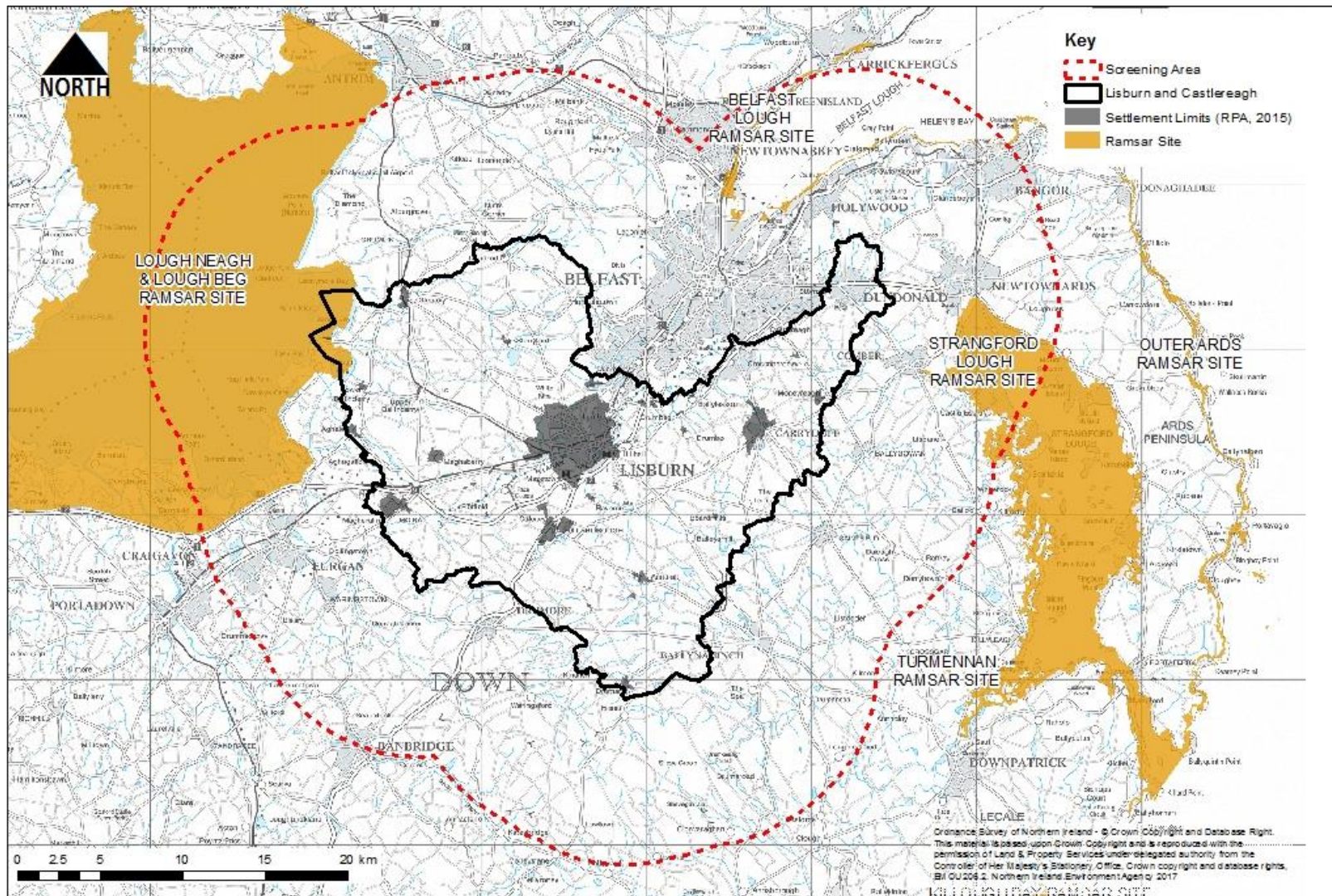
Map 1: SPAs in relation to Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council



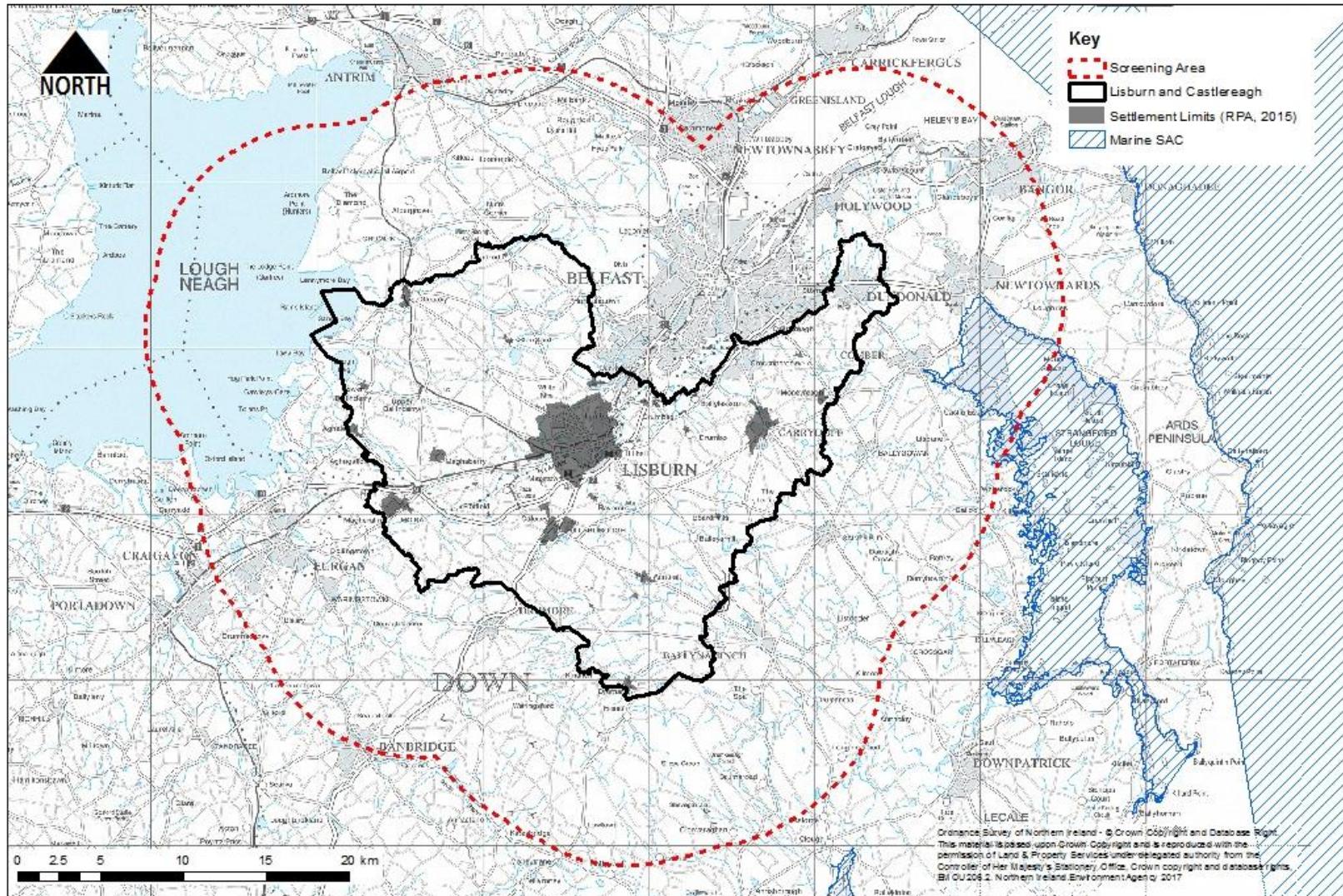
Map 2: SACs in relation to Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council



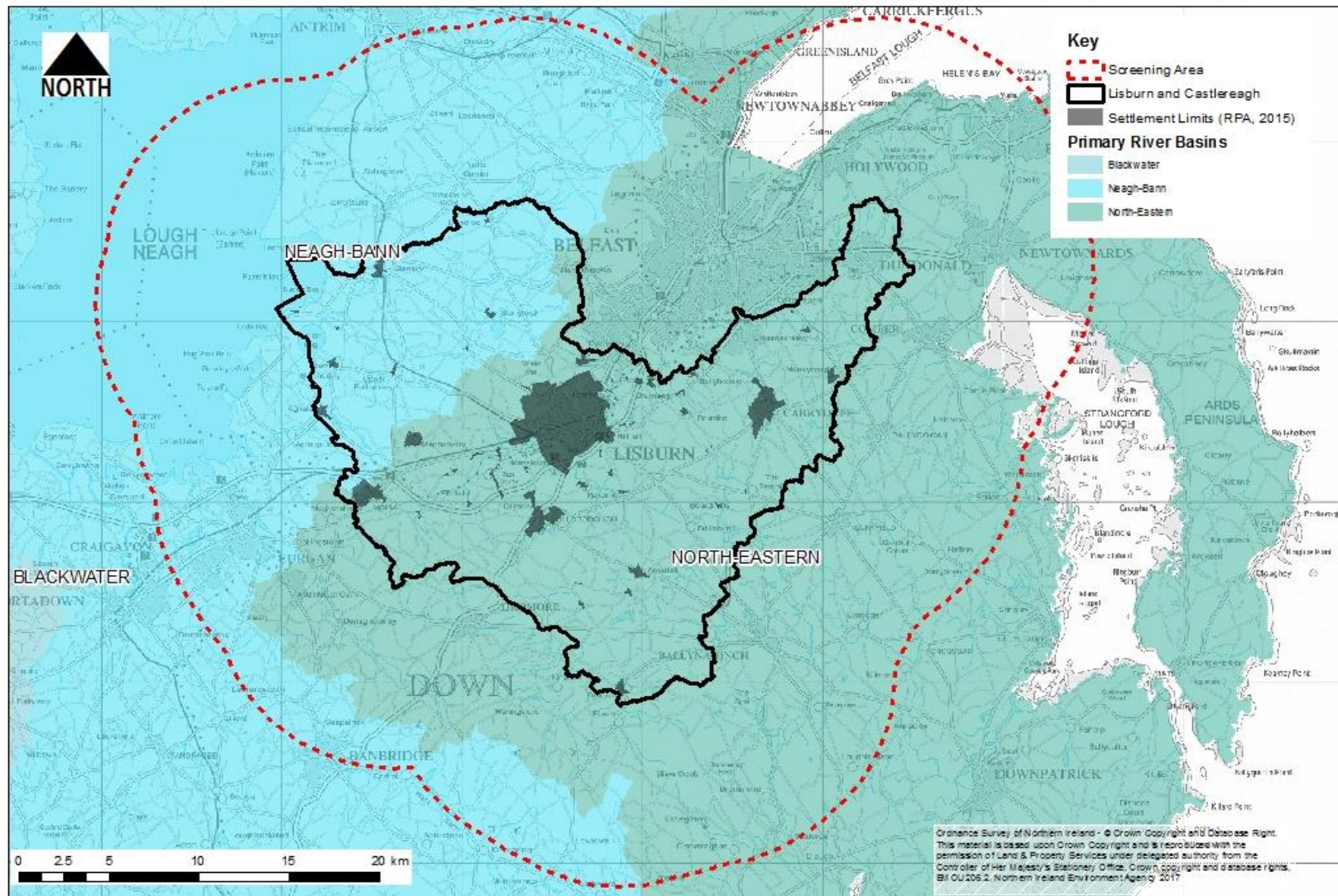
Map 3: Ramsar Sites in relation to Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council



Map 4: Marine SACs in relation to Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council



Map 5: Major Catchments within the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area



Appendix 5: Review of draft Plan Strategy Proposals and Policies

The following categories are used to assess whether an overall plan and its individual proposals require HRA as described in Appendix 2. These are taken from Part F of the HRA Handbook where they are explained in detail in the sections referenced.

- A. General statement of policy/general aspiration (screened out). F.6.3.1
- B. Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability/sustainability of proposals (screened out). F.6.3.2
- C. Proposal referred to but not proposed by the plan (screened out). F.6.3.3
- D. General plan-wide environmental protection/site safeguarding/threshold policies (screened out). F.6.3.4
- E. Policies or proposals which steer change in such a way as to protect international sites from adverse effects (screened out). F.6.3.5
- F. Policy that cannot lead to development or other change (screened out). F.6.3.6
- G. Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a site (screened out). F.6.3.7
- H. Policy or proposal the (actual or theoretical) effects of which cannot undermine the conservation objectives (either alone or in combination with other aspects of this or other plans or projects) (screened out). F.6.3.8
- I. Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone (screened in) F.6.3.9
- J. Policy or proposal with an effect on a site but unlikely to be significant alone, so need to check for likely significant effects in combination F.6.3.10
- K. Policy or proposal unlikely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination (screened out after the in combination test). F.6.3.11
- L. Policy or proposal which might be likely to have a significant effect in combination (screened in after the in combination test). F.6.3.11
- M. Bespoke area, site or case-specific policies or proposals intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on an international site (screened in) F.6.3.12

In some cases more than one category may apply. Where it is the case that part of a policy is in one category e.g. B. policy listing general criteria, whereas another part is in another category e.g. H. cannot undermine the conservation objectives then both categories are listed e.g. B/H. Where part of a policy is screened in then this part will be further assessed.

Local Development Plan 2032 Draft Plan Strategy - Part 1			
Plan Proposal/Policy	Criteria	Screening	Screening Comment
Chapter 1 Introduction	NA	NA	Administrative text
Chapter 2 Policy and Spatial Context	NA	NA	Regional and local context
Chapter 3 Vision and Plan Objectives	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
A: A Quality Place - Enabling Sustainable Communities and Delivery of New Homes			
1. Support the existing settlement hierarchy, recognising Lisburn and Castlereagh as a growth area consistent with the RDS and reflective of its strategic location	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
2. Encourage the creation of accessible and connected places to sustain communities with good access to jobs, housing, public transport, education, community and recreation facilities	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
3. Provide for strategic growth at West Lisburn/Blaris including the delivery of new homes	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
4. Support towns, villages and small settlements in the Council area as vibrant and attractive centres providing homes and services appropriate to their role in the settlement hierarchy whilst protecting their identity from excessive development	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
5. Provide appropriate opportunities for housing in settlements with a range of types and tenures, including affordable housing	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
6. Encourage good design and positive place-making in all development appropriate to its locality and context	A	Out	General statement of objectives.

7. Support the provision of adequate infrastructure (including water, sewage and transport) for sustainable residential development	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
8. Support vibrant rural communities with appropriate opportunities for dwellings and sustainable development in the countryside.	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
B: A Thriving Place - Driving Sustainable Economic Growth			
1. Support a thriving and diverse economy with a sufficient supply of land and in locations for a range of employment uses facilitating the creation of new jobs and to encourage existing and new businesses to invest with confidence	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
2. Accommodate population growth to ensure a continuous supply of labour and allow the resident population the opportunity to avail of high quality employment opportunities in sustainable locations close to where they live	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
3. Promote Mixed Use development at strategic locations at West Lisburn and Purdysburn with appropriate employment uses to facilitate opportunities for economic growth and inward investment	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
4. Promote access to higher and further education to meet employment needs	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
5. Support Lisburn City, the towns and villages as employment and service centres for their surrounding hinterland	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
6. Support the provision of infrastructure both physical and digital to facilitate employment growth, economic regeneration, inward investment and physical renewal	A	Out	General statement of objectives.

7. Manage mineral resources in a sustainable manner, protecting and safeguarding vulnerable landscapes	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
C: A Vibrant Place - Growing our City, Town Centres, Retailing and Other Uses			
1. Promote the regeneration of our city and town centres as quality places to live, work, shop and visit	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
2. Promote Lisburn City Centre as a vibrant destination offering a mix of residential, shopping, employment, high grade office development, leisure and community uses; and better transportation linking people and places	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
3. Support our towns and villages, encouraging appropriate retailing, offices, mixed use and housing opportunities	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
4. Support the role of the District and Local Centres in accordance with the Retail Hierarchy (Figure 5, page 97)	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
5. Promote regeneration and reuse of existing buildings and previously developed land for mixed use development, whilst maintaining environmental quality and protecting residential amenity	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
6. Promote a vibrant and thriving night-time economy in our city and town centres to support economic growth, furthering opportunity for enhancing their vitality and viability	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
D: An Attractive Place - Promoting Sustainable Tourism, Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation			
1. Support and develop tourism infrastructure as a key growth area	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
2. Facilitate tourism development whilst protecting heritage assets, encouraging development in appropriate locations, including a wide range of tourist accommodation	A	Out	General statement of objectives.

3. Safeguard key tourism/recreation assets from inappropriate development	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
4. Support the recreation and leisure offer to grow in a sustainable manner	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
5. Protect and enhance open space recognising its value in promoting health and well-being and resolving flood issues through the introduction of sustainable urban drainage infrastructure	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
6. Support and encourage accessibility to open space including the Lagan Valley Regional Park and Lagan Navigation as key assets within the Council area	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
E: A Green Place - Protecting and Enhancing the Historic and Natural Environment			
1. Protect our historic and natural environment recognising their contribution to sustainable communities, economic growth, sustainable transport and health and well-being	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
2. Protect, conserve and enhance our historic environment, optimising the use of brownfield sites and promoting heritage-led regeneration	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
3. Recognise the value of our Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape/Village Character as important heritage assets	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
4. Shape our places, the quality of new buildings and our town and village centres by promoting good design and maximise benefits to communities	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
5. Protect our natural heritage assets and promote their sensitive reuse to help create a sense of place	A	Out	General statement of objectives.

6. Ensure new development does not cause harm to biodiversity and other natural resources such as air, water and soil	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
7. Protect and enhance our designated natural heritage assets including the Lagan Valley Regional Park and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and other high quality landscapes such as Areas of High Scenic Value (AoHSV) and secure, through appropriate designations, to ensure they remain unspoilt for future generations	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
F: A Connected Place - Supporting Sustainable Transport and Other Infrastructure			
1. Support the growth of the Council area, exploiting its strategic location on Key Transport Corridors and the rail network	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
2. Designate and protect the location of strategic infrastructure, promote strategic transport schemes and linkages, maximising accessibility by sustainable modes across the Council area, ensuring infrastructure development is flood resilient	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
3. Promote opportunities for sustainable travel through development of Active Travel Networks to support walking, cycling and public transport, reducing the need to travel by private car	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
4. Develop and promote strategic greenways to provide opportunities for walking, cycling, biodiversity, health and well-being	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
5. Recognise the contribution green and blue infrastructure offers to human health and sustainable urban drainage	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
6. Mitigate and adapt to climate change by minimising greenhouse gas emissions	A	Out	General statement of objectives.

7. Support renewable energy infrastructure whilst affording protection to the environment	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
8. Facilitate the delivery of telecommunications and utilities infrastructure throughout the Plan period	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
9. Support effective waste management through reuse, recycling and reduction of waste to landfill, minimising environmental impacts	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
10. Prevent inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding or that increase flood risk elsewhere, whilst managing flood risk and providing mitigation where necessary.	A	Out	General statement of objectives.
Chapter 4 Strategic Policies and Spatial Strategy			
SP01 Sustainable Development	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP02 Improving Health and Well-being	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP03 Creating and Enhancing Shared Space and Quality Places	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP04 Supporting Sustainable Economic Growth	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP05 Good Design and Positive Place-Making	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP06 Protecting and Enhancing the Environment	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP07 Section 76 Planning Agreements	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP08 Housing in Settlements	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP09 Housing in the Countryside	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP10 Education, Health, Community and Culture	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP11 Economic Development	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP12 Economic Development in the Countryside	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP13 Mineral Development	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP14 Town Centres, Retailing and Other Uses	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP15 Evening/Night-time Economy	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP16 Tourism	A	Out	General statement of policy.

SP17 Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP18 Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment and Archaeological Remains	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP19 Protecting and Enhancing Natural Heritage	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP20 Transportation Infrastructure	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP21 Renewable Energy	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP22 Telecommunications and Other Utilities	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP23 Waste Management	A	Out	General statement of policy.
SP24 Flooding	A	Out	General statement of policy.
STRATEGIC MIXED USE POLICIES			
SMU01 West Lisburn/Blaris	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
SMU02 Purdysburn/Knockbracken	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
Chapter 5 Monitoring and Implementation	NA	NA	Administrative text about how plan will be monitored.
Local Development Plan 2032 Draft Plan Strategy - Part 2 Operational Policies			
A QUALITY PLACE			
1. HOUSING IN SETTLEMENTS			
HOU1 New Residential Development	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
HOU2 Protection of Land Zoned for Housing	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
HOU3 Site Context and Characteristics of New Residential Development	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
HOU4 Design in New Residential Development	B	Out	This is a policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals. It cannot affect any international sites.
HOU5 Public Open Space in New Residential Development	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
HOU6 Design Concept Statements, Concept Masterplans and Comprehensive Planning	B	Out	This is a policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals. It cannot affect any international sites.
HOU7 Residential Extensions and Alterations	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
HOU8 Protecting Local Character, Environmental Quality and Residential Amenity in Established Residential Areas	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.

HOU9 The Conversion or Change of Use of Existing Buildings to Flats or Apartments	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
HOU10 Affordable Housing in Settlements	B	Out	This is a policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals. It cannot affect any international sites.
HOU11 Specialist Accommodation	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
HOU12 Accommodation for the Travelling Community	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
2. COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN SETTLEMENTS			
CF01 Necessary Community Facilities in Settlements	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
CF02 Protection of a Local Community Facility	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
3. DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE			
COU1 Development in the Countryside	A	Out	General statement which introduces the Development in the Countryside operational policies and identifies Policies which any proposal in the countryside will have to meet.
COU2 New Dwellings in Existing Clusters	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
COU3 Replacement Dwellings	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
COU4 The Conversion and Reuse of Buildings for Residential Use	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
COU5 Affordable Housing	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
COU6 Personal and Domestic Circumstances	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
COU7 Dwellings for Non-Agricultural Business Enterprises	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
COU8 Infill/Ribbon Development	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
COU9 Temporary Caravan	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
COU10 Dwellings on Farms	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
COU11 Farm Diversification	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
COU12 Agricultural and Forestry Development	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
COU13 Necessary Community Facilities in the Countryside	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.

COU14 The Conversion and Reuse of Buildings for Non-Residential Use	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
COU15 Integration and Design of Buildings in the Countryside	B	Out	This is a policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals. It cannot affect any international sites.
COU16 Rural Character and other Criteria	B	Out	This is a policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals. It cannot affect any international sites.
A THRIVING PLACE			
4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
ED1 Economic Development in Cities and Towns	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
ED2 Economic Development in Villages and Small Settlements	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
ED3 Expansion of an Established Economic Development Use in the Countryside	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
ED4 Redevelopment of an Established Economic Development Use in the Countryside	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
ED5 Major Economic Development in the Countryside	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
ED6 Small Rural Projects	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
ED7 Retention of Zoned Land and Economic Development	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
ED8 Development Incompatible with Economic Development Uses	F	Out	The policy is a strategic high level policy to avoid incompatible development. In itself (i.e. in the absence of other policies) the policy cannot lead to any development or change.
ED9 General Criteria for Economic Development	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
5. MINERALS DEVELOPMENT			
MD1 Environmental Protection	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
MD2 Visual Impact	B	Out	This is a policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals. It cannot affect any international sites.
MD3 Areas of Mineral Constraint	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.

MD4 Valuable Minerals	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
MD5 Unconventional Hydrocarbon Extraction	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
MD6 Mineral Safeguarding Areas	B	Out	This is a policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals. It cannot affect any international sites.
MD7 Safety and Amenity	B	Out	This is a policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals. It cannot affect any international sites.
MD8 Traffic Implications	B	Out	This is a policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals. It cannot affect any international sites.
MD9 Restoration Proposals	B	Out	This is a policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals. It cannot affect any international sites.
A VIBRANT PLACE			
6. TOWN CENTRES, RETAILING AND OTHER USES			
TC1 Town Centre, Retailing and Other Uses	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
TC2 Lisburn City Centre Primary Retail Core and Retail Frontage	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
TC3 Town Centres	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
TC4 District and Local Centres	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
TC5 Villages and Small Settlements	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
TC6 Petrol Filling Stations and Roadside Service Facilities	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
AN ATTRACTIVE PLACE			
7. TOURISM			
TOU1 Tourism Development in Settlements	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
TOU2 Proposals for Tourism Amenity in the Countryside	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
TOU3 Proposals for Tourist Accommodation in the Countryside	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
TOU4 Self-Catering Tourist Accommodation in the Countryside	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.

TOU5 Holiday Parks in the Countryside	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
TOU6 Proposals for Major Tourism Development in the Countryside	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
TOU7 General Criteria for Tourism Development	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
TOU8 Safeguarding of Tourism Assets	D/F	Out	This policy is a general plan-wide safeguarding policy and one that cannot lead to development or other change.
8. OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND OUTDOOR RECREATION			
OS1 Protection of Open Space	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
OS2 Intensive Sports Facilities	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
OS3 Noise-Generating Sports and Outdoor Recreational Activities	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
OS4 Facilities ancillary to Water Sports	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
OS5 Floodlighting of Sports and Outdoor Recreational Facilities	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
OS6 Outdoor Recreation in the Countryside	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
A GREEN PLACE			
9. HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND ARCHAEOLOGY			
HE1 The Preservation of Archaeological Remains of Regional Importance and their Settings	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
HE2 The Preservation of Archaeological Remains of Local Importance and their Settings	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
HE3 Archaeological Assessment and Evaluation	D	Out	This policy is a general plan-wide environmental / site safeguarding policy.
HE4 Archaeological Mitigation	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
HE5 Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes of Special Historic Interest	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
HE6 Change of Use and/or Extensions or Alterations to a Listed Building	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
HE7 Control of Advertisements on a Listed Building	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.

HE8 Demolition or Partial Demolition of a Listed Building	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
HE9 Development affecting the Setting of a Listed Building	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
HE10 New Development in a Conservation Area or Area of Townscape Character/Area of Village Character	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
HE11 The Control of Advertisements in a Conservation Area or Area of Townscape Character/Area of Village Character	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
HE12 Demolition or Partial Demolition in a Conservation Area or Area of Townscape Character/Area of Village Character	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
HE13 The Conversion and Reuse of Non-Listed Buildings	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
HE14 Enabling Development	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
10. NATURAL HERITAGE			
NH1 European and Ramsar Sites – International	M	In	This policy is intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on international sites. NH1 applies to all development under the LDP.
NH2 Species Protected by Law	D	Out	This policy is a general plan-wide environmental / site safeguarding policy. Affords additional protection to some site selection features.
NH3 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance - National	D	Out	This policy is a general plan-wide environmental / site safeguarding policy.
NH4 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance - Local	D	Out	This policy is a general plan-wide environmental / site safeguarding policy.
NH5 Habitats, Species or Features of Natural Heritage Importance	D	Out	This policy is a general plan-wide environmental / site safeguarding policy. May afford protection to supporting habitat for site selection features.
NH6 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty	D	Out	This policy is a general plan-wide environmental / site safeguarding policy.
A CONNECTED PLACE			
11. ACCESS AND TRANSPORT			
TRA1 Creating an Accessible Environment	A	Out	This is a general statement of policy which cannot have any effect on an international site.
TRA2 Access to Public Roads	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.

TRA3 Access to Protected Routes	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
TRA4 Protection for New Transport Schemes	A	Out	This is a general statement of policy which cannot have any effect on an international site.
TRA5 Strategic Greenways and Disused Transport Routes	A	Out	This is a general statement of policy which cannot have any effect on an international site.
TRA6 Transport Assessment	A	Out	This is a general statement of policy which cannot have any effect on an international site.
TRA7 Car Parking and Servicing Arrangements in New Developments	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
TRA8 Active Travel Networks and Infrastructure Provision	A	Out	This is a general statement of policy promoting provision of active travel opportunities which cannot have any effect on an international site.
TRA9 Park and Ride/Park and Share Car Parks	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
TRA10 Provision of Public and Private Car Parks	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
TRA11 Temporary Car Parks	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
12. RENEWABLE ENERGY			
RE1 Renewable Energy Development	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
RE2 Integrated Renewable Energy	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
13. TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
TEL1 Telecommunications Development	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
14. UTILITIES			
UT1 Utilities	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
15. WASTE MANAGEMENT			
WM1 Waste Management Facilities	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
WM2 Treatment of Waste Water	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
WM3 Waste Disposal	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
WM4 Land Improvement	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
WM5 Development in the Vicinity of Waste Management Facilities or Waste Water Treatment Works	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.

16. FLOODING			
FLD1 Development in Fluvial (River) Flood Plains	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
FLD2 Protection of Flood Defence and Drainage Infrastructure	A	Out	This is a general statement of policy which cannot have any effect on an international site.
FLD3 Development and Surface Water (Pluvial) Flood Risk Outside Flood Plains	A	Out	This is a general statement of policy which cannot have any effect on an international site.
FLD4 Artificial Modification of Watercourses	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
FLD5 Development in Proximity to Reservoirs	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
17. ADVERTISEMENTS			
AD1 Amenity and Public Safety	I	In	This policy may have a likely significant effect on international sites.
Appendices			
Appendix A: Extract from Development Plan Practice Note 6 Soundness April 2015	NA	Out	Guidance
Appendix B: Technical Supplement accompanying the Plan Strategy	NA	Out	Guidance
Appendix C: Statutory Link with Community Plan	NA	Out	Guidance
Appendix D: Evaluation of Settlement Characteristics	NA	Out	Guidance
Appendix E: Monitoring Framework	NA	Out	Guidance

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