



Fermanagh & Omagh  
District Council  
Comhairle Ceantair  
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

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**FERMANAGH AND OMAGH DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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Position Paper Eight

**Public Utilities**

July 2015

## **Public Utilities**

**Purpose:** To provide the Council with an overview of matters relating to public utilities and implications for land use in the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Area.

**Content:** The paper provides:

- (i) The regional policy context for public utilities and key service providers in the Fermanagh and Omagh Area**
- (ii) An overview of the provision of public utilities in the Fermanagh and Omagh Area**
- (iii) An outline of the main proposals for public utilities**

**Recommendation:** That the Council notes the findings and considers how this position paper shall be used to inform subsequent policies and proposals in the Local Development Plan.

### **1.0 Introduction**

**1.1** This is one of a series of papers being presented to the Planning Committee as part of the preparatory studies aimed at gathering the evidence base for the new local development plan.

**1.2** The purpose of this paper is to inform members on the provision and spare capacity of public utilities up to 2030 in order to assist judgements on the allocation of housing growth and other development in the Local Development Plan. It sets out the regional context for public utilities and an examination of existing physical infrastructure of the new Council area. It examines initial responses from a number of government bodies and statutory bodies, including the council, who have a responsibility for the various public utilities in relation to future supply. This paper allows members to commence consideration of how public utilities can be addressed in the Plan within the context of the RDS and the draft Strategic Planning Policy Statement (dSPPS).

**1.3** The provision of public utilities within the plan area is primarily the responsibility of a number of government Departments and statutory bodies as well as the District Councils. The main utilities covered in this paper are:

- Telecommunications
- Energy Supply
- Waste Management
- Flood Risk, Drainage, Water Supply and Sewerage

## **2.0 Regional Policy Context**

- 2.1** The Regional Policy context is provided by the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035 and regional planning policy statements. This section highlights the RDS policy objectives in relation to telecommunications, energy supply, waste management and water, sewerage and flood risk. The relevant policies of the draft Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) are set out under the relevant utility headings (sections 3.0, 4.0, 5.0 and 6.0).

### **Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035**

- 2.2** The RDS sets out clear policy aims and objectives regarding public utilities when allocating housing growth and emphasises the importance of the relationship between the location of housing, jobs, facilities and services and infrastructure.

#### **Telecommunications**

- 2.3** Policy RG3 of the RDS 2035 recognises the need for an efficient telecommunications infrastructure to give Northern Ireland a competitive advantage. Northern Ireland's core communication network is of high quality which is necessary for sustainable economic growth and investment. Therefore it is important to continually improve international and internal connectivity.
- 2.4** The RDS 2035 envisages that next generation broadband services will be available to provide support for 85% of businesses.
- 2.5** Spatial Framework Guidance (SFG) 14 of the RDS 2035 also recognises that rural areas can be disadvantaged by their remote location in terms of access to essential services. Further innovation and advancements upon the existing rural telecommunication infrastructure will work to lessen this disadvantage.
- 2.6** The key policy aims of the RDS 2035 regarding telecommunications are:
- Invest in infrastructure to facilitate higher broadband speeds, whilst also considering the impact such infrastructure may have on the environment;
  - Improve telecommunications services in rural areas to minimise the urban/rural divide;
  - Increase the use of broadband;
  - Capitalise on direct international connectivity to support foreign direct investment and to provide a competitive edge.

#### **Energy Supply including renewable energy**

- 2.7** Policy RG5 of the RDS 2035 seeks to deliver a sustainable, reliable and secure energy supply to all sectors across the region. The development of new generation or distribution infrastructure will seek to avoid adverse environmental effects, particularly on or near protected sites.
- 2.8** The key policy aims of the RDS 2035 regarding renewable energy are:

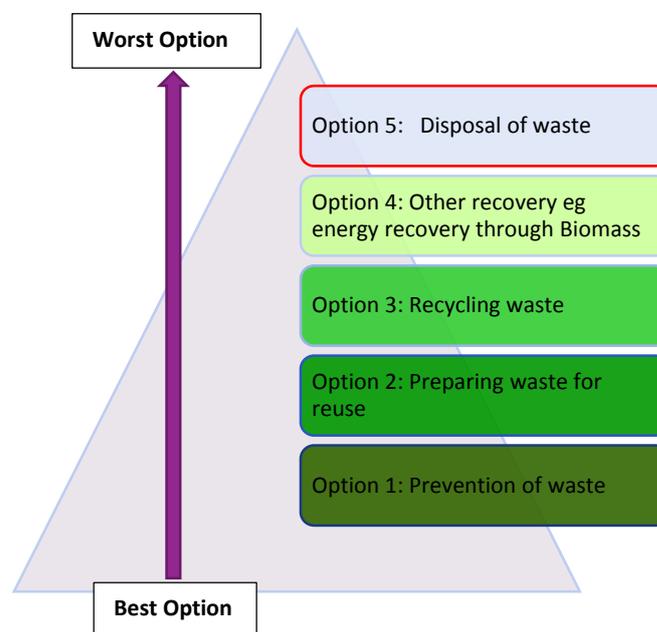
- Increase the contribution of renewable energy sources, both onshore and offshore, to the overall energy mix.
- Strengthen the grid in order to support the increasing number of renewable electricity installations.
- Encourage new gas infrastructure including provision of natural gas to further enhance the provision of energy supply.
- Work with neighbours to provide competitive regional electricity and gas markets in the EU's internal markets.
- Develop smart grid initiatives to improve the responsiveness of the electricity grid to trends in customer demands.

### Waste Management

**2.9** Policy RG10 of the RDS 2035 is directed by the Waste Framework Directive (WFD) (2008/98/EC) which provides the overarching legislative framework. Article 4 of this Directive sets out a waste “hierarchy” as a priority order for waste management. The primary purpose of the waste hierarchy is to minimise adverse environmental effects of waste and to increase resource efficiency in waste management and policy.

**2.10** The “waste hierarchy” seeks to minimise the amount of waste brought to landfill through reducing, reusing and recycling waste. Waste disposal should only happen as a fifth and final option (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Waste Hierarchy**



**2.11** To manage waste sustainably RG10 promotes the use of the “proximity principle” which emphasises the need to treat or dispose of waste as close as possible to the point of generation in an effort to minimise the negative effects of waste transportation.

## **Water, sewerage and flood risk**

- 2.12** Policy RG12 of the RDS 2035 promotes a more sustainable approach to the provision of water and sewerage services and flood risk management. Increased population, changes in household formation and climate change continue to put pressure on our water resources and drainage systems which may lead to discrepancies in water demand and availability as well as potential impacting on water quality. Planning for the provision of water and sewage infrastructure and treatment facilities is both a practical and environmental necessity for regional development.
- 2.13** The Housing Evaluation Framework (HEF) (Appendix 1), a tool used to assist judgements on the allocation of housing growth, includes a “resource test” which states that studies should be carried out to assess and detail physical infrastructure such as water, waste and sewage, including spare capacity. This is to ensure that the infrastructure is adequate to support the provision of future housing.
- 2.14** The key policy aims of the RDS 2035 regarding water and sewerage are:
- The integration of water and land use planning. Land use planning should be informed by current water and sewerage infrastructure and the capacity of that infrastructure to absorb future development. This will involve the planning authority working in conjunction with NI Water.
  - Manage future water demand by reducing waste. To help manage future water demand in new developments, initiatives such as grey water recycling and rainwater harvesting should be promoted.
  - Encourage sustainable surface water management. This will involve the encouragement of initiatives such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in significant development proposals. SuDS endeavour to use natural systems with low environmental impact (such as trans- evaporation) to dispose of dirty water and surface water in order to reduce the amount of water being released back into water courses.
- 2.15** In relation to development and flood risk, Policy RG8 of the RDS 2035 emphasises the need for mitigating the risk of flooding by avoiding those areas known to be at risk. This position is reflected in the HEF with the Environmental Capacity test including assessment of potential flood risk areas to guide the allocation of land for housing growth.
- 2.16** Furthermore, Policy RG1 of the RDS 2035 states that when allocating land for economic growth and employment, areas which are at risk of flooding should be avoided, where possible.
- 2.17** The RDS is complemented by the DOE’s Planning Policy Statements which set out the Department’s planning policies for particular areas of planning. These documents are to be replaced by the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS). The draft SPPS does not introduce any significant changes to any of the PPS which relate to the provision of public utilities, but helps to shorten and simplify the guidance for Councils. The position in terms of each of the PPSs and the draft SPPS are summarised within the relevant subject area below.

- 2.18** It should be noted that telecommunications and wind energy were also discussed as part of Paper 3 Employment and Economic Development (Appendix 2).

## **Utility Provision in Fermanagh and Omagh**

### **3.0 Telecommunications**

- 3.1** Whilst the development of high quality telecommunications infrastructure is essential for continued economic growth it is necessary to minimise the impact on the environment. This approach is reflected in both PPS 10 Telecommunications, which sets out the Department's position for telecommunication proposals, and the draft SPPS. Both documents state that where new infrastructure is required then it should be sited in a location which minimises its impact in terms of visual, environmental and amenity issues. Site/mast sharing is promoted where practically possible. However the draft SPPS recognises that in some instances this will not be possible or feasible. Other policy objectives within the draft SPPS are to minimise undue interference that may be caused to terrestrial television broadcasting services by new development, and to encourage the appropriate provision of telecommunication systems within the design of other forms of development.
- 3.2** The draft SPPS states that the LDP should bring forward policies which set out the detailed criteria for consideration of new telecommunications development in its area including siting, design and impact upon visual amenity. The council may consult with telecommunications operators over the plan period to ascertain the extent of network coverage in plan area and over plan period. The council may allocate certain sites for the provision of tall masts to encourage site sharing.
- 3.3** **Broadband** - There have been numerous improvements to the broadband network which have taken place in recent years and the Fermanagh and Omagh District has benefited from these as detailed in Appendices 2 and 3.
- 3.4** The Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) undertook a study to examine the telecommunications infrastructure and services in the area covered by its member councils and to seek to improve the telecommunication provision. It found that whilst the fixed line broadband coverage in Northern Ireland is the best in the UK, it has lower mobile broadband coverage than any other region in the UK.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, Mobile Data Coverage in Fermanagh and Omagh, like the majority of the west of Northern Ireland, is poor by comparison to the rest of the UK.
- 3.5** **Mobile Data Coverage** - Table 1 below sets out the availability of 2G data coverage in the Fermanagh and Omagh District as broken down by the historic LGD areas. 2G is the most common type of mobile broadband connection but

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<sup>1</sup> Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) Telecommunications Action Plan

4G broadband connectivity is more recent and is the fastest mobile connection available.

**Table 1:** Mobile Data coverage in Fermanagh and Omagh District

Area	Premises with 2G coverage from all operators (%)	Geographical area with 2G coverage area with 2G coverage from all Operators (%)
Fermanagh	61.2%	44/7%
Omagh	57.9%	50.8%

Source: Providers Coverage checker map

- 3.6** The roll out of 4G coverage in Fermanagh and Omagh has commenced by the three main providers EE, O2 and Vodafone. Detail of the areas with 4G coverage are set out in Appendix 4. Although there has been good progress to date, the development of 4G coverage for the other areas within the district is ongoing.
- 3.7** One current project is Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) which, on behalf of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), seeks to deliver superfast broadband and better mobile connectivity across the UK.
- 3.8** The complementary scheme, Better Rural Broadband is a further initiative also being funded by DCMS and it has identified Fermanagh as one of the five pilot areas, the others being Antrim, Aberdeenshire, Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders. The government initiative will introduce customers to satellite technology, enabling households to have better rural broadband.

The pilot will enable BDUK to assess:-

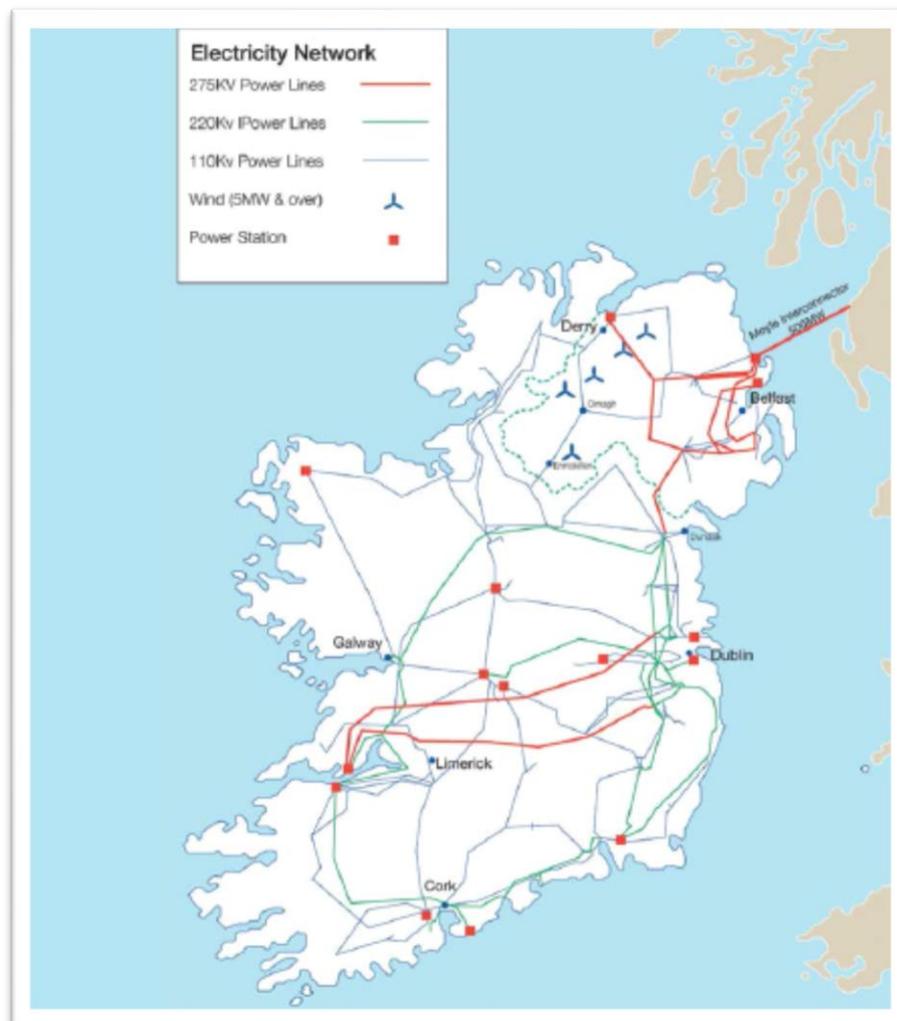
- The effectiveness and benefits of superfast broadband delivered by satellite.
- The cost and operational implications of natural and/or regional roll-out.
- The propensity for take-up of superfast services in the final 5%.
- The behaviours of consumers and business which have, to date, been excluded from the superfast broadband experience.
- Whether any regional variations exist.

## **4.0 Energy Supply**

- 4.1** The draft SPPS reinforces the aims of the RDS 2035 in that it seeks to increase the contribution of renewable energy to our overall energy supply. The policy objective is to encourage the development of facilities capable of generating renewable energy whilst addressing environmental, visual and amenity issues and protecting our natural and built heritage. The integration of renewable energy technology into the design, siting and layout of new development and the promotion of greater application of the principles of Passive Solar Design are also to be facilitated. In relation to electricity lines, current operational policy within the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland indicates a preference for underground lines to minimise the visual intrusion of overhead lines.

- 4.2 In preparing Local Development Plans (LDP's), councils should formulate policies and proposals which support a range of renewable energy infrastructure whilst still taking into account the above mentioned policy objectives.
- 4.3 Energy in the district is primarily produced by the use of fossil fuels from the three fossil fuel generating plants in Northern Ireland. These plants supply electricity to a wholesale electricity market for the island of Ireland known as the Single Electricity Market (SEM). The SEM is served by the North South Interconnector. In addition the Moyle interconnector links Northern Ireland to the electricity grid in Britain which brings additional competition to the electricity generation market<sup>2</sup>.

**Figure 2: The Electricity Network – Framework for Co-operation: Spatial Strategies of Northern Ireland & the Republic of Ireland.**



<sup>2</sup> [http://www.drdni.gov.uk/framework\\_for\\_co-operation\\_-\\_web\\_version.pdf](http://www.drdni.gov.uk/framework_for_co-operation_-_web_version.pdf)

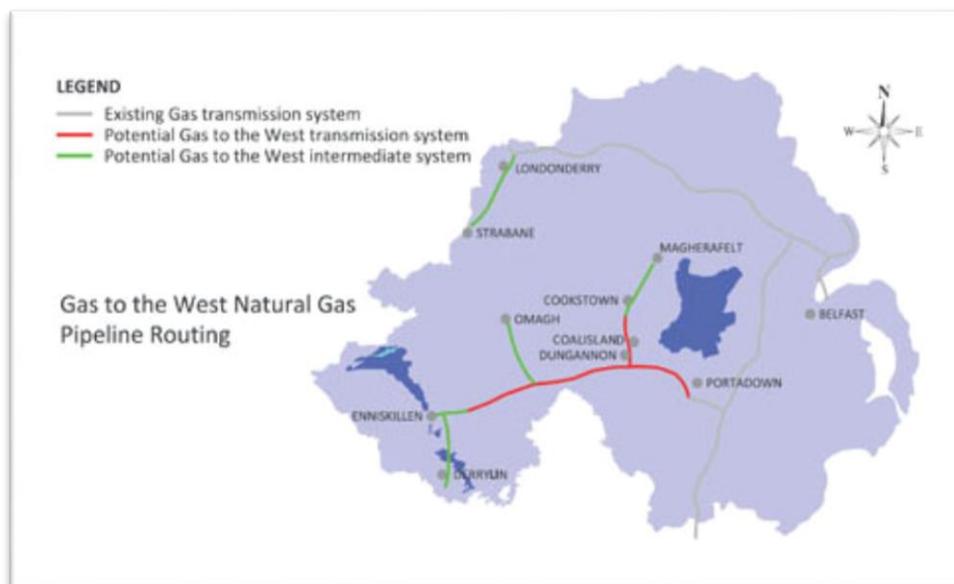
- 4.4** To underpin economic growth in Fermanagh and Omagh District it is necessary to have a modern and sustainable economic infrastructure including robust electricity connections. Whilst electricity supply in the Fermanagh and Omagh District and NI as a whole is not an issue, the upsurge in the number of renewable energy developments - particularly wind turbines - in Fermanagh and Omagh seeking to connect to the electricity grid has highlighted that grid reinforcement is required to facilitate the growth of renewable energy generation. Fermanagh and Omagh's geographical location presents opportunities to create physical links to the electricity network for the Republic of Ireland.
- 4.5 Overhead power lines / electricity supply** - The draft SPSS is clear that overhead power lines should avoid areas of landscape sensitivity including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB's).
- 4.6 Renewable Energy** – The Regional Planning Policy in relation to Renewable Energy and the European Commission's Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC) establishes overall policy for the production and promotion of energy from renewable sources in the EU and specifies national renewable energy targets for each country. These targets are set out in Paper 3: Employment and Economic Development (Appendix 2).
- 4.7** Paper 3 focused on Wind Energy however the other main sources of renewable energy are the sun (solar), moving water (hydropower), heat extracted from the air, ground and water (including geothermal energy) and biomass (wood, biodegradable waste and energy crops). The key issues regarding each of these energy sources are summarised in Appendix 5. Whereas Paper 3 found that the prevalence of wind energy approvals in certain areas of Fermanagh and Omagh may be resulting in a cumulative impact that is detrimental to the environmental quality, landscape and amenity of the area, it is also important to examine the need for policies within the LDP which enables alternative and appropriate forms of renewable energy in a manner that does not impact negatively on the environmental assets, landscape quality or amenity of an area.
- 4.8** Of the remaining renewable energy sources, biomass energy production particularly through anaerobic digestion (AD) has raised concerns including those of visual intrusion, noise from plant and traffic operations and effects on health, local ecology and conservation. Given the importance of renewable energy development, the LDP should provide planning policy which not only supports energy supply but also ensures that potential impacts are minimised.
- 4.9 Natural Gas** - Natural gas was introduced to Northern Ireland in 1996 and there are now about 170,000 households and 12,000 businesses with a gas supply (including power generators). At present Fermanagh/Omagh does not have a natural gas supply. However the current Gas to the West infrastructure project will supply natural gas to the towns of Strabane, Omagh, Enniskillen, Derrylin, Dungannon, Coalisland, Cookstown and Magherafelt (Figure 3).

**4.10** Over the next three years, pipes will be laid to connect these towns to the existing gas network in Northern Ireland, which involves:

- Constructing approximately 500km of gas mains and services;
- Creating around 80 jobs during the construction phase;
- Sustaining a number of jobs after the network is complete;
- Benefiting the environment by increased uptake of natural gas, the cleanest fossil fuel;
- Connecting up to 40,000 domestic and business customers;
- Bringing local people a reliable and constant fuel supply which is versatile, convenient and controllable;
- Saving customers' money with natural gas appliances and heating.

**4.11** Construction is due to commence on the Portadown to Derrylin pipeline late 2016 followed by final reinstatement of the cross country pipeline in 2018.

**Figure 3: Existing and Proposed Gas Pipe Lines**



Source: DETI – Gas to the West section

## **5.0 Waste Management**

**5.1** The policy framework for the delivery of Waste Framework Directive is set out in the 2013 Revised Waste Management Strategy, containing actions and targets to meet the EU Directive and related Programme for Government targets. It sets targets of achieving a recycling rate of 50% of household waste by 2020 (EU Directive target) and a recycling rate of 45% of household waste by 2015 (PfG Target). Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste has a recycling rate of 60% by 2020. The document also sets out a number of proposals in relation to reducing the amount of food waste sent to landfill in

Northern Ireland. By encouraging more people 'to reduce, re-use and recycle' and 'let's recycle more', steady progress is being made in limiting the amount of waste sent to landfill.

- 5.2** Current planning policy for waste management is set out in PPS 11 Planning and Waste Management. It promotes the development, in appropriate locations, of waste management facilities to meet need as identified in the Waste Management Plan. Consideration of the impact of existing or proposed waste management facilities should also be given when zoning land for development and ensuring incompatibility of adjacent land uses is avoided. The COMAH Directive (EU Directive 96/82/EC) requires development plans to ensure that appropriate distances are maintained between hazardous substances and residential areas of public use/open space.
- 5.3** The draft SPPS supports wider government policy and in line with the RDS, promotes the 5 step Waste Hierarchy. It sets three policy objectives for waste management:
- Promote development of waste management and recycling facilities in appropriate locations;
  - Ensure that detrimental effects on people, the environment, and local amenity associated with waste management facilities (e.g. pollution) are avoided or minimised; and
  - Secure appropriate restoration of proposed waste management sites for agreed after-use.
- 5.4** The LDP should assess the likely extent of future waste management facilities for Fermanagh and Omagh Council Area, and identify specific sites to be brought forward as waste management facilities with appropriate key site requirements. Operational policy for assessing applications for waste facilities should also be provided within the LDP. Weight should be given to the potential impact of waste management facilities, both existing and approved, on neighbouring properties and uses. LDPs should take into account the 'Waste Hierarchy' in considering delivery resource efficiency.
- 5.5** Under the provisions of the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 it is the responsibility of the district councils to prepare a Waste Management Plan (WMP). The Southern Waste Management Partnership (SWaMP 2008), of which the former Fermanagh and Omagh Councils were members, prepared a WMP in 2006 which was subsequently reviewed in March 2014. The WMP sets out the arrangements for waste management within the SWaMP Region over the period up to 2020.
- 5.6** Application of the Waste Hierarchy to minimise waste production and policies to educate the public, industry and young people in particular, in effective resource use and reuse, recycling and composting is facilitated through the provision of 'bring facilities', bottle banks and civic amenity sites which are the responsibility of the Council.
- 5.7** The main recycling and waste facilities for Fermanagh and Omagh council are located at Drummeemore, Enniskillen and at the Gortrush Industrial Estate in Omagh. The Drummeemore site includes a Recycling site for public use, and a

Landfill site which accepts municipal waste from around the Fermanagh area. The site at Gortrush Estate in Omagh operates as a transfer site, for municipal waste, to the landfill site at Tullyvar which was jointly owned by the former Omagh and Dungannon and South Tyrone councils which were part of the SWaMP group. The sites operate under a Waste Management Licence and are inspected and enforced by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

**5.8** The Fermanagh and Omagh District also operates 13 centres for recycling and disposing of household waste in the District as set out in Table 2 below. Statistics relating to the historical councils indicate that the level of Municipal Waste for Fermanagh was 27,342 tonnes, whilst Municipal Waste for Omagh amounted to 23,841 tonnes in 2013/14. Of this, Fermanagh and Omagh District Councils recycled 38.7% and 43.2% respectively. The bulk of municipal waste for both Council areas ended up as landfill with nearly 60% in Fermanagh and 54% in Omagh.

**5.9** Household Waste generated nearly as much waste to manage with household waste for Fermanagh Council amassing 24,486 tonnes and Omagh Council 22,080 tonnes. In 2013/14 the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area achieved a household recycling (including composting) rate of 39.5% (Appendix 6 and 7). Similar to the Municipal Waste, 62% and 54% of the household waste for Fermanagh and Omagh District Councils was sent to landfill in 2013/2014. The extension of the brown bin collection to villages in the Fermanagh area should contribute to decreasing the amount of waste which is transferred to landfill. There is also an intention to roll out a 'food waste' collection service to rural areas with piloting to commence in the near future.

**Table 2: Recycling and Household Waste facilities**

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Location</b>
Belleek	Main Street
Garrison	Belcoo Road
Irvinestown	Brownhill Meadows
Kesh	Crevenish Road
Kinawley	Derrylin Road
Lisbellaw	Station Road
Lisnaskea	Fairgreen Car Park
Newtownbutler	Crom Road
Rosslea	Dernawilt Road
Tempo	Brookborough Road
Carrickmore	Ballintrain Road
Dromore	Fairgreen, Camderry Road
Fintona	Lisdergan Road

**5.10** In consultation with the Council, the following issues and proposals regarding future waste management are currently being considered or planned for implementation:

- Tullyvar landfill site is due to close in 2017;

- Drummee landfill site has potential to extend capacity to 2025 however this would be dependent upon operational costs;
- Options are being considered for alternative processes to landfill including the potential for the provision of a Mechanical Biological Treatment plant (MBT) at Tullyvar through a joint arrangement with the Mid Ulster and Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon councils;
- Possible future enlargement of the existing waste transfer station at Drummee;
- As part of a review being undertaken of existing recycling centres in the Fermanagh part of the district, a business case will be undertaken to determine options for the creation of new, 'split-level', modern facilities which allow for 'roll up/roll off';
- Additional 'bring' facilities may also be created.

**5.11** The Council will prepare their own WMP this year to replace the two existing WMP's. The Local Development Plan will be prepared having regard to this new Waste Management Plan. Proposals regarding waste management can continue to be dealt with by way of the development management process. The LDP process will allow the Council to safeguard land for waste management to cater for the municipal waste needs of the district over the plan period.

**5.12** It should also be noted that the recycling and use of waste for energy production is a growth area in the private sector.

## **6.0 Flood Risk, Drainage, Water Supply and Sewerage**

### **Flood Risk**

**6.1** The EU "Floods Directive" (2007/060/EC) came into force on the 26th November 2007 and aims to establish a framework that will contribute to reducing the impact of flooding on communities and the environment. Compliance with this Directive is the responsibility of the Rivers Agency (Department of Agriculture and Rural Development) and they have begun implementing the directive by establishing flood risk and hazard maps which were published in 2013.

**6.2** The EU Floods Directive<sup>3</sup> confirms that development can exacerbate flood risk and states that the planning authority has a crucial role to play in managing development so as to reduce the risks and impacts of flooding. The Directive highlights the fundamental importance of preventing or restricting new development in flood prone areas.

**6.3** Under the Floods Directive we manage flood risks by:

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<sup>3</sup> The European Directive on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risk, Directive 2007/60/EC

**Prevention:** avoiding construction of houses and industries in flood-prone areas; by adapting future developments to the risk of flooding; and by promoting appropriate land-use, agricultural and forestry practices.

**Protection:** taking measures, both structural and non-structural, to reduce the likelihood and impact of floods.

**Preparedness:** informing the public about flood risk and what to do in the event of a flood.

- 6.4** The draft SPPS states that in preparing LDP's that the planning authority should engage with relevant statutory agencies and other bodies with responsibility for various aspects of flood risk. Typically, this will involve considerable engagement with Rivers Agency and the use of the most up to date information on flood risk which will usually be contained in the Strategic Flood Maps which are provided by Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD).
- 6.5** The draft SPPS also states that LDP's should take account not only of current flood risk but also the likelihood of flood risk in the future and should not allocate land for development which may be prone to flooding.
- 6.6** PPS 15 Planning and Flood Risk operates a presumption against development within designated flood plains, unless the development is of regional importance or it falls into a pre-defined list of categories such as:
- A replacement building
  - An essential operational development such as utilities infrastructure
  - Sport and recreational uses
  - Minerals development
  - Seasonal development which will not increase flood risk
- 6.7** With specific reference to flooding in each river basin, DARD are currently planning to publish specific Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) for the three River Basin areas in Northern Ireland. These plans are currently at consultation stage and are expected to be published in December 2015 and the council should ensure that the new LDP is compatible with these FRMP's
- 6.8** Rivers Agency Planning Advisory Unit also advises on the flooding potential for individual sites which are the subject of specific planning applications and where flooding is likely to occur. Rivers Agency will operate a presumption against development in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 15 (PPS 15). Rivers Agency has advised that any flooding policy prepared as part of the LDP should be closely aligned with the current planning policy i.e. PPS 15.
- 6.9** If not controlled in the correct way, development can increase flood risk by:
- a) using up land which is required for flood relief pondage;

b) allowing new development to take place on land which is in danger of flooding and therefore posing a threat to the safety of that new development;

c) increasing the volume of water which is entering a particular watercourse in the form of sewage or industrial effluent runoff.

**6.10** When preparing local policies as part of stage 2 of the Development Plan process, the council should ensure that land which has been identified as being at risk of flooding is not zoned for certain types of development such as housing or industry. Such zoning would eradicate the natural function of such land as a flood relief pondage area. The LDP should also take account of the “Climate Change” Flood map (Appendix 8) as well as the information contained in the Strategic and Hazard Flood Maps.

**6.11** There are two proposals in the Council area to carry out improvement schemes on flood defences. It should however be noted that subject to viability, flood alleviation schemes can take several years from identification of the requirement through to completion of works. The two proposals are:

1. Beragh Flood Alleviation Scheme – due for completion by the end of summer 2015.
2. Hunter Crescent, Omagh Flood Alleviation Scheme – no date for commencement as yet. The Opportunity Omagh project is affected by this scheme.

In addition, a pre-feasibility study has been commenced for flood alleviation measures in Fintona as a response to flooding.

**6.12** Omagh town centre is defended by Rivers Agency maintained flood defences. These defences were designed and constructed by Rivers Agency following the 1987 flood. Rivers Agency recently completed an extensive programme of river modelling and mapping for areas of significant flood risk that included Omagh. This modelling programme has indicated that the flood defences in Omagh while providing a degree of protection from flooding, are no longer considered to provide the minimum level of protection required under PPS 15. The causes of this are complex and technical but include improved methods of flow estimation and significant advancements in both IT hardware and river modelling software.

### **Drainage**

**6.13** The Department for Regional Development (DRD) has launched a consultation paper entitled “Sustainable Water” on the best way forward for managing the water supply in Northern Ireland. The paper has 5 parts and was launched for public consultation in June of 2014. The final paper is expected to be released in summer of 2015.

**6.14** Part 3 of the document entitled “Flood Risk Management and Drainage” is relevant to the preparation of development plans and planning policy. The

document makes a range of recommendations through its policies, which may be considered when preparing the Local Development Plan.

**6.15** It calls for the construction of “resilient development” which can withstand extreme rainfall events with minimal or no flood damage. The document also stresses that the planning authority should prevent development in areas of high flood risk and ensure that future development does not increase flood risk. The document proposes achieving these aims through the following measures;

- When zoning land for development, large surface water schemes such as lakes, wetlands and wet woodlands could be created to meet the future drainage needs of proposed development in the area. A local example is the Craigavon Balancing Lakes, created in the 1970’s to take rainwater from built up areas of Craigavon and which also provide a recreational facility.
- Planning policy could require, at design stage, that drainage proposals are considered so that the final design can be such that surface water run-off is minimised. It is likely that a range of SuDS will need to be employed to ensure this. Examples of such are green roofs, permeable paving, soak a ways, ponds and wetlands.
- Planning Policy should require that SuDS are the preferred option for all new development.
- Planning Policy should incorporate the requirement for “design for exceedance” proposals in all new development. This means that new development must show how the proposed drainage system will cope in the event of water run off flows exceeding normal or expected levels.

**6.16** Taking account of this information, the council may, when preparing a Local Development Plan and local planning policies, try to ensure that the following objectives are realised;

- Ensure the LDP is compatible with and complements the Flood Risk Management Plans which will be published by DARD at the end of 2015
- Avoid zoning land for habitable development which has been identified as being at risk of flooding, either on the Strategic / Hazard / Climate Change Flood Maps.
- Formulate planning policy which makes drainage a key element of design and which promotes the use of SuDS.

### **Sewerage Facilities – Waste Water Treatment Works**

**6.17** The provision of sewage treatment facilities in the Plan Area is also the responsibility of NI Water.

**6.18** The RDS 2035 proposes that the Fermanagh and Omagh District will need approx. 12,900 new houses by 2025<sup>4</sup> so it is important to bear in mind the

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<sup>4</sup> RDS 2035 – Housing Growth Indicator, p101

impact that this housing need will have on the existing sewage network capacity. Most houses are connected to the existing sewage network. However, single houses in the countryside rely on septic tanks and it should be noted that Policy CTY 16 of PPS 21 states that planning permission will only be granted for developments relying on non-mains sewerage where the applicant can demonstrate that this will not create or add to a pollution problem.

**6.19** When preparing the LDP, the potential capacity of the existing sewage infrastructure in an area will have a bearing on the amount and location of new development and whether or not land is zoned for new development. An indication as to the available capacities (headroom) of existing waste water treatment works (WWTW) within the Fermanagh and Omagh District was supplied by NI Water in June 2015. The tables in Appendix 9 show the works by size banded by two categories of small works - those less than 50 Population Equivalent (PE) and 50- 250 (PE) - and those serving larger communities above 250 PE. NI Water maintains all works through a capital maintenance programme and further seeks to address quality and development issues through an enhancement programme which is delivered on a prioritised basis across Northern Ireland within allocated funding. This information will need to be kept under review to ensure an accurate picture of the extent of any constraint placed on development.

**6.20** The NI Water data identifies the following settlements as having no remaining headroom and have not been identified for upgrade within the Business Plan period 2015-2021:-

Loughmacrory

Garrison

Ederney

Belleek

Edenderry

Church Hill

No deficiencies have been identified at this time in the other settlements however a proposed upgrade is required at Clabby.

**6.21** Proximity to existing WWTW will also be a factor in considering the location of new development land as part of the LDP. When selecting land for development, it is generally desirable to avoid land which is near existing treatment works as these can cause nuisance. Guidelines are in place between DOE Planning and NI Water regarding what can be considered acceptable distances between development and WWTW's. For example, a WWTW with a design equivalent population of 5,000 should not be within 300m of inhabited development.

**6.22** Taking account of this information, the council may, when preparing a Local Development Plan and local planning policies, try to ensure that the following objectives are realised;

- Ensure that development land is zoned in areas where the “headroom capacity” of existing Waste Water Treatment Works is such that development can be supported by sewerage infrastructure.
- Avoid zoning land for habitable development in or close to existing WWTW’s.

## Water Supply

- 6.23** The responsibility for the provision of water supply within the district is the responsibility of NI Water. The Fermanagh and Omagh District is supplied with water from six water treatment works (Table 3). The service reservoirs associated with each of these water treatment works are annotated on the maps in Appendix 10.

**Table 3: Existing Water Treatment Works in Fermanagh and Omagh**

<b>Water Treatment Works</b>
Lough Braden
Glenhordial
Loughmacrory
Killyhevlin
Belleek
Derg

- 6.24** These existing installations are expected to be sufficient to supply the Fermanagh and Omagh District throughout the Plan period. The lack of water supply is not considered to be a likely constraint upon development.
- 6.25** The incoming Reservoirs Bill (Northern Ireland) will attempt to ensure that the existing 130-150 reservoirs in Northern Ireland are managed in a more efficient and safety conscious manner. It will impose management and maintenance requirements on owners and managers of reservoirs with a volume in excess of 10,000 cubic metres. To facilitate the management of such reservoirs, Rivers Agency is preparing reservoir inundation maps. Where development is proposed in close proximity to a reservoir, the developer will be required to submit a detailed flood risk assessment to show how the development will not be at risk of flooding from the nearby reservoir. Consequently, when preparing an LDP, the council should not allocate land for development close to existing reservoirs. To do so would be to require the developer to carry out a flood risk assessment, thus complicating the planning application process.

## 7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1** This paper has provided an overview of utility provision within Fermanagh and Omagh and has examined the existing provision and spare capacity of public utilities over the plan period until 2030. Utility provision in the Local Development Plan must take account of the regional planning framework set

out by the Regional Development Strategy 2035 and the draft SPPS to assist judgements on the allocation of housing growth and to ensure that sufficient land is allocated to meet the anticipated needs of the community. The provision of public utilities within the plan area is primarily the responsibility of a number of government Departments and statutory bodies as well as the District Councils, however the private sector is playing an increasingly important role. In terms of the role of the LDP it is therefore important to recognise that external providers have their own long term strategies and investment plans subject to budget constraint.

- 7.2** The LDP will not designate or zone specific sites for public utilities. However in accordance with regional and operational planning policy it will seek to locate new developments which maximise the efficient use of existing utility infrastructure whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum.
- 7.3** Where proposals to develop new or replace existing public utilities are known, these should be identified in the Plan. Where provision of an existing public utility is limited and there are no known plans to upgrade during the plan period, development may be constrained as a result of this. Further information from NI Water is required in relation to any future upgrades.
- 7.4** Thus, in developing any strategy, the following key elements can be identified in relation to each of the utility themes discussed:

#### **Telecommunications**

- Bring forward policies which promote the development of a high quality, high speed telecommunications infrastructure, particularly within rural areas, whilst at the same time protecting sensitive landscapes.

#### **Recycling and Waste Management**

- Facilitate the implementation of the Waste Management Plan when formulating Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan.

#### **Energy Supply and Renewables**

- Adopt a policy position that recognises the value of wind energy development but provides policy which gives greater weight to environmentally sensitive areas and greater protection to neighbouring amenity. Any such policy changes would be brought through the introduction of Countryside Policy Areas.
- In relation to biomass development, ensure planning policy provides continued support for such development while ensuring potential impacts are minimised.

#### **Flood Risk, Drainage, Water Supply and Sewerage**

- Ensure that development land is zoned in areas where the “headroom capacity” of existing Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTWs) is such that development can be supported by sewerage infrastructure.

- Avoid zoning land for habitable development in or close to existing WWTW's.
- Local development plans should be compatible with and complement the Flood Risk Management Plans which will be published by DARD at the end of 2015.
- Avoid zoning land for habitable development which has been identified as being at risk of flooding, either on the Strategic / Hazard / Climate Change Flood Maps.
- Formulate planning policy which makes drainage a key element of design and which promotes the use of SuDS.