



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

FERMANAGH AND OMAGH DISTRICT COUNCIL
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

October 2016

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1.0 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 The Council is required to appraise the sustainability of its proposed policy framework at each stage of Fermanagh and Omagh's draft Local Development Plan. This is done through the publication of a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) which incorporates the key themes of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). In the early stages of plan making, it is necessary to outline any potential impacts that may arise as a result of an emerging plan. The scoping report will assess any local challenges based on the current position and determine likely issues that may arise as part of the plan. The legislative context is set out in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The SA is undertaken in accordance with *A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2005)* which provides guidance on SEA in the UK from the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and devolved administrations. The Scoping Report will be sent to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) for comment as part of a 5 week consultation.

The Purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

- 1.3 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporates Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and appraises the impacts of emerging plans against a number of thematic objectives based on the environmental, economic and social effects of planned development. Throughout this document, where reference is made to SA, it denotes SA incorporating the requirements of the SEA. The specific legislative requirements of the SEA Directive are set out in Appendix 1.
- 1.4 SA is carried out from the outset and in parallel with the local development plan preparation process thus ensuring that plan-led development contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. The main objectives of the SA will be to address the following:
 - Ensure that the Local Development Plan accounts for policies, plans and programmes on an international, national and local scale.
 - Establish a baseline assessment of Fermanagh and Omagh, outlining the environmental, social and economic characteristics and raising any issues that the plan will need to account for.
 - Creating a sustainability framework for Fermanagh and Omagh.
 - Testing the draft development plan document objectives, policies or sites against the SA framework and ensuring that realistic and meaningful alternative options are tested as part of the process.

- 1.5 The purpose of this draft Scoping Report is to set out sufficient information on the Local Development Plan and its environmental, social and economic effects, to enable the Consultation Body to form a view on the proposed scope and level of detail that will be appropriate for the environmental report which will be produced as part of the SA/ SEA process.

Other Assessments

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

- 1.6 The Habitats Directive¹ requires that plans and programmes produced by local authorities consider the potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites. Natura 2000 sites are internationally important wildlife sites which are afforded a high level of protection through the Directive. Collectively known as Natura 2000 sites, the actual sites reflected in the Directive are:
- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
 - Special Protection Areas (SPAs)
 - Ramsar Sites
- 1.7 A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is undertaken alongside the sustainability appraisal process to ensure both processes inform each other. The HRA will be produced by the Shared Environmental Services in conjunction with the Council and will be reported upon separately.

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

- 1.8 Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:
- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
 - between men and women generally;
 - between persons with a disability and persons without; and
 - between persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, without prejudice to the above obligations, public authorities are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or race.

- 1.9 These Section 75 groups are important participants within the planning process and include people who traditionally have been under represented or disadvantaged. These groups will be targeted through the consultation process on the local development plan in order to obtain their views and contribute to the consideration of equality issues under Section 75. Their views on any equality screening documents or draft Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) will be sought within the specified consultation period along with the draft Plan Strategy and draft Local policies Plan.

¹ EU (1992) Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC, Habitats Directive) Article 6 (3)

Rural Proofing

- 1.10 Similar to the themes of EQIA, rural proofing is an additional mechanism which can be used to assess policy options to ensure that rural areas are accounted for in plan preparation and are offered fair solutions given the challenges unique to rural areas. The Rural Needs Bill which was introduced to the NI Assembly on 9th November 2015, will impose a statutory duty on district councils to consider rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans and designing public services.

2.0 The Plan Context

- 2.1 The Local Development Plan is being prepared in a different policy context to that which existed when the existing Fermanagh Area Plan 2007 and Omagh Area Plan 2002 were adopted. A key policy influence is the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) which must be taken into account in the preparation of Local Development Plans. It sets out the strategic direction for councils to bring forward operational policies tailored to local circumstances.
- 2.2 The Fermanagh and Omagh Local Development Plan (LDP) guides future development in the council area between 2015 and 2030 and informs the general public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested bodies of the policy framework and land use proposals. The purpose of the Plan is to implement the strategic objectives of the Regional Development Strategy and guide development decisions within the council area.
- 2.3 The LDP will comprise of two documents – the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan – which together will supersede the existing Fermanagh Area Plan 2007 and Omagh Area Plan 2002.
- 2.4 Prior to the preparation of the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan, the Council will identify the key issues in the plan area and will formulate a series of options for dealing with them. These will be presented in a Preferred Options Paper (POP) which will indicate a Council's preferred options for growth and development in their area and forms the basis for consulting with the public and stakeholders.
- 2.5 The LDP will be drafted taking into account the Regional Development Strategy 2035, the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and the Council's Community Plan including the following topics:
- Linked to a vision and objectives for the district over the plan period, the LDP will develop strategic policies and a growth strategy in Fermanagh and Omagh.
 - Allocate land for housing, economic development, retail and open space.
 - Develop detailed development management policies.

- Identify measures for implementation, monitoring and review.

- 2.6 The Plan Strategy (PS) will set the strategic direction of the plan as well as the aims, objectives, overall growth strategy and associated generic policies applicable to the Plan Area. Consistent with the PS, the Local Policies Plan (LPP) will cover the site specific policies and proposals required to deliver the council’s vision, objectives and strategic policies.
- 2.7 The Council’s Community Plan is an overarching long term plan which uses a partnership approach to influence how and where services are provided. The LDP will be aligned with the Community Plan and will set out a long-term vision/framework to support the social, economic and environmental needs of the area and provide the spatial reflection of the Community Plan.

3.0 The SA Process and Timescale

- 3.1 Schedule 2(1) to (5) of the EAPP (NI) Regulations set out the information requirements to establish the context for undertaking an appraisal of any likely significant effects of implementing the plan. The preparation of a Scoping Report is the initial stage of the SA process. As previously mentioned, the SA process should be fully integrated into the local development plan making process.
- 3.2 There are several stages to the SA process. Table 1 below illustrates these stages and indicates how these relate to the different stages of preparing a Local Development Plan. Guidance for completing this scoping report has been provided by the Department of the Environment (NI) ‘Practice Note 04 – Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment’ and ‘A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive’ produced by the (ODPM) 2005. The SA process is an iterative process and findings at each stage will be taken into account to inform subsequent stages of the plan preparation or appraisal process.

Table 1: Incorporating SA within the Local Development Plan (LDP) Process

LDP Stage 1		
Pre-production – Evidence Gathering		
SA Stages and tasks	Output	Timescale
Stage A(1) : Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1: Identifying other relevant policies, plans and programmes and sustainability objectives • A2:Collecting baseline information • A3:Identifying sustainability issues and 	Scoping Report	May 2016

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> problems A4:Developing the SA framework A5:Consulting on the scope of the SA 		
Preferred Options Paper		
SA stages and tasks	Output	
Stage A(2):Appraisal of reasonable alternatives and assessing effects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A1:Appraisal of reasonable alternatives against sustainability issues/SA framework A2:Developing and refining the alternatives/options A3:Comparing and evaluating the effects of the options A4:Consultation on the Preferred Options Paper and accompanying SA Interim Report 	SA Interim Report accompanying the Preferred Options Paper	October 2016
LDP Stages 2 and 3: Production of Draft Development Plan Document (Plan Strategy or Local Policies Plan)		
SA Stages and tasks	Output	
Stage B: Appraisal of reasonable alternatives and assessing effects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> B1: Testing the draft development plan document objectives, policies or sites against the SA framework B2:Developing and refining the alternatives B3:Predicting the effects of the draft development plan document B4:Evaluating the effects of the draft development plan document B5:Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximizing beneficial effects B6:Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the draft plan document 	SA Report accompanying Draft Plan Strategy or Draft Local Policies Plan	
Stage C:Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> C1:Preparing the SA Report 		
Stage D: Consulting on the Draft Development Plan Document (Plan Strategy or Local Policies Plan) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> D1:Consultation on the Draft Development Plan Document and accompanying SA Report 		1st Quarter 2017/2018 (PS) 4th Quarter 2018/2019 (LPP)
Independent Examination	Output	
SA stages and tasks	Report on any significant changes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D2: Appraising likely significant effects as a result of changes to Draft PS or Draft LPP and repeat Stage B if necessary 		

LDP Stage 4: Adoption and Monitoring	Output	
SA Stages and tasks		
Stage E: Prepare SA Adoption Statement for PS or LPP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E1: Prepare SA Adoption Statement and undertake publicity 	SA Adoption Statement for PS or LPP	1st Quarter 2018/2019(PS) 1st Quarter 2020/2021(LPP)
Stage F: Monitoring implementation of PS and LPP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F1: Finalise aims and methods for monitoring • F2: Responding to adverse effects 	Monitoring Reports for LDP	

3.3 The sustainability appraisal will appraise the impacts of emerging plans against a number of thematic objectives. The outcome of scoping work is presented under a series of ‘topic headings’ which reflect the issues mentioned in Annex 1 of the SEA Directive, namely:

- Air Quality and Climate Change
- Biodiversity (incorporating flora and fauna)
- Population and Health
- Economy and Employment
- Housing
- Landscape and Cultural Heritage
- Material Assets
- Soil
- Transport and Accessibility
- Waste
- Water (incl. Flood Risk)

4.0 Relationship between Fermanagh and Omagh LDP and other plans and programmes

4.1 The EAPP Regulations require “an outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme, and of its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes” (Schedule 2 (1)) and “the environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation “(Schedule 2(5)).

4.2 The review of other policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives relevant to the plan helps identify significant social, environmental or economic objectives that should be taken into account in the SA of the plan. Table 2 summarises the environmental, social and economic objectives arising from relevant policies, plans and programmes (PPPs). For full details of relevant policies, plan and programmes and their objectives, see Appendix 2. It should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list of PPPs but a list that sets out the context of the policies in which the LDP and SA takes into account.

Table 2: Summary of implications of other relevant policies, plans and programmes and their environmental, social and economic objectives

Topic	Summary of implications of other relevant policies, plans, programmes for the Fermanagh and Omagh LDP
Biodiversity	Requirement to consider the potential impacts of plans/programmes on Natura 2000 sites such as Special Areas of Conservation; Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites. Statutory duty to further the conservation of biodiversity. Overarching objective to halt the loss of the natural environment through identified actions and places an emphasis on management of biological systems to deliver the materials and services upon which people depend.
Air Quality and Climate Change	There are Air Quality objectives, targets and policy options to further improve air quality. These are intended to provide important benefits to quality of life, public health and to help protect the environment achieved through tighter control on emissions from key sources. This includes the need to reduce emissions of greenhouses gases that contribute to climate change and to adapt to the impacts of climate change, such as flooding. Planning should: shape new and existing developments in ways that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and positively build community resilience to problems such as flood risk; promote sustainable patterns of development which reduce reliance on private cars; promote the development of green spaces and sustainable drainage systems to reduce flood risk and improve water quality.
Population and human health	A range of cross-cutting objectives include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving access to services such as health and education; • Promote development, including recreation space and blue and green spaces to better the health and well-being of communities; • Create opportunities across urban and rural areas which tackle disadvantage; • Improve connectivity, both physical and digital; • Provide for community infrastructure for rural communities to allow them to avail of economic, social and cultural opportunities.
Economy and Employment	Overarching aim to grow and support a sustainable economy by strengthening the competitiveness of cities and towns. Other more specific aims are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the local jobs market and measures to create and retain jobs to promote prosperity. • Encouraging small businesses by providing skill grants to invest in skill development with a focus on innovation. • Improve linkages between areas of need and areas of opportunity. • Remove barriers to people joining or re-joining the labour market.
Housing	Helping to create the right market conditions for a stable and sustainable housing market that supports economic growth and prosperity. Providing support for individuals and families to access housing, particularly the most vulnerable in society; Setting minimum standards for the quality of new and existing homes and for how rented housing is managed.
Landscape and	Maintain and protect landscape features of importance

Topic	Summary of implications of other relevant policies, plans, programmes for the Fermanagh and Omagh LDP
Cultural Heritage	including archaeological features and built form. Conserve, protect and enhance the natural and built environment where possible. Recognise the landscape as a tourism asset. Protecting environmental resources and built heritage and ensuring development is in keeping with local character.
Material Assets	Balance sustainable mineral extraction with environmental impacts. Minimise the impact on local communities, built and natural heritage, the landscape and the aquatic environment. Need to secure safe and sustainable restoration of sites. Also see Waste.
Soil	Protect and enhance soil
Transport & Accessibility	Aim to provide the infrastructure and services that will ensure that travel and transport are as sustainable as possible in order to contribute towards sustainable economic growth, increased accessibility, reduce usage of private car in order to reduce impact on the environment.
Waste	Emphasis of waste management in NI is on resource management (with landfill diversion as the key driver) to resource efficiency i.e. using resources in the most effective way while minimising the impact of their use on the environment. A renewed focus on waste prevention (including re-use), preparing for re-use and recycling in accordance with the waste hierarchy. Making more efficient use of natural resources and facilitating increased re-use and recycling is expected to have a favourable impact on the NI economy and help to promote and support 'green jobs'.
Water	To monitor and improve Northern Ireland's water environment and aquatic ecosystems and to promote the improvement of water bodies to a good status. To ensure high quality drinking water. To promote a sustainable approach to water supply, sewerage services and flood risk management.

Fermanagh and Omagh Local Development Plan

4.3 The Fermanagh and Omagh Local Development Plan comprising the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan, will include strategic policies, site allocations and designations and development management policies to guide development within the district. The Council's proposed strategic objectives for the Local Development Plan are set out in Position Paper One, Population and Growth, as detailed below:

(a) Accommodating People and Creating Places

- (i) To build Omagh and Enniskillen as economic and transportation hubs and as the main service centres for shops, leisure activities, public administrative and community services including health and education. These are the most populated places and the town centres are the most accessible locations for people to travel to including those without a car.*
- (ii) To protect and consolidate the role of local towns and villages so that they act as local centres for shops and community services meeting the daily needs of their rural hinterlands.*
- (iii) To provide for vital and vibrant rural communities whilst protecting the countryside in which they live by accommodating sustainable growth within the countryside proportionate to the extent of existing rural communities.*
- (iv) To provide for 14,500² new homes by 2030 in a range of housing capable of meeting the needs of families, the elderly and disabled, and single people, at locations accessible to community services, leisure and recreational facilities, for those people with and without a car.*
- (v) To recognise the needs of both growing families and carers of the elderly and disabled by accommodating development which allows people to remain within their own communities and does not lead to significant harm to neighbours or the environment.*
- (vi) To facilitate the development of new community facilities at locations accessible to the communities they serve, through a variety of modes of transportation in accordance with the community plan.*
- (vii) To accommodate cultural differences between Catholic and Protestant communities whilst promoting "shared spaces" to bring people together with equality of opportunity.*

² The 2012 based Revised Housing Growth Indicator (HGI) for Fermanagh and Omagh is 4,500 for the period 2012-2025 as confirmed by DRD/DfI on 29th April 2016, so this figure will be reduced.

(b) Creating jobs and promoting prosperity

- (i) To facilitate the creation of 4,100³ new jobs by 2030 at a variety of locations where they are accessible to all members of the community, including those without a private car.*
- (ii) To promote diversity in the range of jobs recognising the importance of employment in the primary sector (agriculture forestry and mining), secondary sector (industry and manufacturing) and tertiary sector (administration, commerce, retailing, leisure and tourism).*
- (iii) To recognise and accommodate entrepreneurship, innovation for large, medium and small firms by attracting new firms and accommodating expanding businesses.*
- (iv) The need to recognise the importance of self-employment and home working, particularly in rural locations.*
- (v) The need to provide and encourage use of energy both as a means of generating money for the local economy, attracting investment in enterprise and providing sustainable and affordable lighting and heating for the population.*

(c) Enhancing the environment and improving infrastructure

- (i) The need to protect and enhance the natural and built environment to achieve biodiversity, quality design, enhanced leisure and economic opportunity and promote health and well-being.*
- (ii) The need to accommodate investment in power, water and sewerage infrastructure, and waste management particularly in the interests of public health.*
- (iii) The need to improve connectivity between and within settlements and their rural hinterland through accommodating investment in transportation to improve travel times, alleviate congestion and improve safety for both commercial and private vehicles as well as more sustainable modes of transport including buses, walking and cycling.*
- (iv) The need to improve connectivity through telecommunication which both meets the needs of business and private households whilst reducing the need to travel.*

These objectives will be reviewed and potentially revised as part of the Local Development Plan process.

³ This figure was amended to 4,875 in Position Paper Three Employment and Economic Development

5.0 Sustainability Issues

Context

- 5.1 The Fermanagh and Omagh District has a population of 113,161⁴ and covers approximately 3,000 square kilometres making it the largest council in terms of land mass and the smallest in terms of population. A high proportion of the population is scattered across a wide rural area in villages, small settlements and single dwellings, with more than two thirds (79,689 or 70.4%) living outside the two main towns of Enniskillen and Omagh. A significant portion of the area borders four County Councils in the Republic of Ireland – Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim and Monaghan. Therefore, if the Fermanagh and Omagh LDP is likely to have significant cross-border environmental effects, this will also need to be considered.
- 5.2 The council area is one rich in built, natural and landscape heritage and this is recognised in the significant number of international and regionally designated important sites including Ramsar, SACs, SPAs and ASSIs. Part of the Sperrin AONB falls within the area. The area also contains the UNESCO Marble Arch Caves Global Geo-Park.
- 5.3 Road transport links are primarily based on the two Key Transport Corridors, the A4 and A5, which along with other A-class roads such as the A32 and A505, are supported by an extensive network of B and C-class roads. Given the dispersed rural nature of the district, many residents are reliant on car use for commuting and accessing services.
- 5.4 Existing environmental, social and economic data about the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Area has been collected from a wide range of sources, including the Census Data, NISRA statistics and relevant government websites as well as Fermanagh and Omagh Council's Position Papers. Data and indicators which describe relevant aspects of the environment have been organised according to SEA/SA topics against which the Draft Plan will be tested later in the SA process. This will aid the process as it relates to any future assessment and monitoring objectives. Details are set out in **Appendix 3** which shows:
- the latest data for the indicators of relevance to the Draft LDP;
 - comparators, i.e. regional or national level data against which the Draft LDP can be compared;
 - targets for the indicators where they exist;
 - trends where they exist, i.e. are things getting better or worse over time;
 - the source(s) of the data;
 - the robustness and timeliness of each data source.
- 5.5 It should be noted that there are gaps in the data presented in Appendix 3. This is due to data being published at different geographical tiers and different time periods. However this is not a unique issue for Fermanagh and Omagh

⁴ Census 2011, NISRA

District Council Area and is likely to feature elsewhere. Therefore, the data present is a representative baseline for the Council Area.

- 5.6 In addition, forecasting the future direction of the baseline is not an exact science and the results are best presented as a range of possible outcomes and updated as required. However, it should be emphasised that for certain aspects of the environment (e.g. biodiversity and landscape), predicting the future baseline will be difficult. It is envisaged that consultees may be able to assist with providing additional information on potential pressures and future trends.
- 5.7 The following is a summary of the key characteristics of the Fermanagh and Omagh District, and the environmental and sustainability issues for the Fermanagh and Omagh Local Development Plan. In relation to the 'likely future without the plan', it is acknowledged that in the absence of a new LDP, the existing Area Plans will continue to afford protection to built heritage and nature conservation sites etc. designated through these plans.

Sustainability Issues to Consider

Air Quality and Climate Change

- 5.8 Appendix 3: Baseline Data sets out the detailed findings of research undertaken for the purposes of this Scoping Report. In relation to Air Quality and Climate Change these issues can be summarised as follows:
- Need to consider the likely and cumulative impacts of new development against current air quality objectives.
 - Need to locate development to minimise travel demand, particularly by the private car, where it is accessible by other more sustainable modes of transport such as public transport and community transport. It must be recognised that the dispersed rural settlement pattern of the FODC is a limiting factor in the reduction of car ownership/usage.
 - The need to promote better transport choices such as walking and cycling so as to encourage alternative modes of transport which will in turn help to reduce congestion, vehicle emissions and improve the health of the population.
 - The need to consider the compatibility of adjacent landuses.
 - Identifying land or setting out criteria for the location of potentially polluting developments and the availability of alternative sites.
 - Reduce vulnerability of FODC to the effects of climate change on flooding through limiting the development of land in urban areas where there is a danger of flooding. Development should be directed away from any such at risk areas.
 - Seek to minimise the impact of climate change on ecosystems through the conservation of habitats and species, applying the ecosystem services approach and identifying key habitats that need extra protection (such as active bog) that help mitigate
 - Reduce dependency on fossil fuels through the promotion of appropriate renewable energy

- Consider impacts of climate change and mitigatory actions on landscape and cultural heritage for example cranogs.

Likely Future without the Plan

- 5.9 Air Quality is not expected to differ greatly in the countryside, small settlements and local towns. Unplanned development may impact on the air quality within Enniskillen and Omagh where levels of traffic congestion could increase.
- 5.10 Development in locations without ease of access to services, shops and community facilities could result in people travelling further with impacts in terms of air pollution and climate. Without the Plan, there would be less opportunity to promote other more sustainable modes of transport such as public transport, walking and cycling over the use of the car.
- 5.11 In the absence of a plan there would be a risk of the natural floodplains or those lands affected by flooding becoming developed, thereby causing risk to life. There would be a lack of a sustainable drainage systems which would assist in flood prevention.

Biodiversity

- 5.12 Appendix 3: Baseline Data sets out the detailed findings of research undertaken for the purposes of this Scoping Report. In relation to Biodiversity these issues can be summarised as follows:
- Seek to further the conservation, enhancement and restoration of the abundance, quality, diversity and distinctiveness of the region's natural heritage
 - Wide range of sites already designated for their biodiversity value. Those international designations such as SACs, SPAs and Ramsars will need to be assessed through a Habitats Regulations Assessment.
 - Need to identify natural heritage features including ecological networks to allow policies to be advanced for their protection and enhancement.
 - FODC's biodiversity resource is vulnerable to new developments and land management practices which could result in habitat loss and fragmentation
 - Implications of proposed land use zonings, locations for development and settlement limits on natural heritage features.
 - Need to seek to limit the spread of Non-Native Invasive Species.
 - Need to promote, protect and manage green and blue infrastructure within urban areas.
 - Further sustainable development by ensuring that biological and geological diversity are conserved and enhanced as an integral part of social, economic and environmental development;

- Contribute to rural urban regeneration by ensuring developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity in supporting economic diversification and contributing to a high quality environment
- Take actions to reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate adaptation to climate change.

Likely Future without the Plan

- 5.13 Protected sites and designations will be accorded significant protection under current legislation however in the absence of a plan there is significant risk of the degradation of ecological networks in other areas of FODC through inappropriately located development.

Examples of processes which can lead to habitat loss include:

- Nutrient enrichment of water through direct pollution incidents
 - Agricultural intensification
 - Non-native Invasive species
 - Quarrying
 - Extensive peat extraction
 - Inappropriately located development in sensitive areas.
- 5.14 Without a plan to provide guidance in appropriate siting, scale and nature of development and to protect and enhance sites of nature conservation importance, there would be greater potential to destroy these habitats. The Local Development Plan can help define important sites that need to be afforded weight under the plan.

Decline in biodiversity also has the potential to accelerate the impacts of climate change.

Population, Health, Education, Access to Open Space and Crime

- 5.15 Appendix 3: Baseline Data sets out the detailed findings of research undertaken for the purposes of this Scoping Report. In relation to Population, Health, Education, Access to Open Space and Crime these issues can be summarised as follows:

- A significant increase in the older population, placing pressure on health and social services, with an increasing desire for independent living and the delivery of care services in the home
- An increased population living in smaller households
- A need for a housing supply with a variety of size and housing type
- Alternative uses for vacant sites as a result of school closures needs to be addressed
- Air quality and aerobic activity can impact upon respiratory health
- Safeguard existing open space which could include the sympathetic use of old and often underused heritage assets such as churches and castles etcetera.
- Need to promote access to the countryside

- Need to ensure that new open space areas etc. are convenient and accessible for all sections of society
- The LDP will need to ensure that there is a spatial strategy that will increase the physical and mental well-being of residents, delivered in part through promoting increased access to active pursuits.

Likely Future without the Plan

- 5.16 A Local Development Plan makes land use allocations based upon population change and projections. In the absence of a plan there may be insufficient land to provide for homes for an increased population living in smaller households.
- 5.17 Without prescriptive housing policies that will address the demands of an aging population and the tendency to smaller household size, large parts of the population could be living in accommodation that either does not meet the needs of the occupant or the occupant does not have the capacity to provide for the maintenance of the accommodation.
- 5.18 Given the expected increase to the elderly population, there will be additional demands on key services such as healthcare and adult support. Without the LDP to facilitate the development of new community and health facilities, there could be a problem of accessibility to these facilities for both old and young alike.
- 5.19 Whilst there is a good level of educational achievement, there is a need to ensure that there are suitable jobs for people with skills and education to be retained in the area. Without the LDP, there would be insufficient economic and employment land to provide locations for local entrepreneurs and to attract larger business to the district and therefore unemployment levels may increase.
- 5.20 For those without a car, there could also be health implications if people do not have ease of access to shopping and other services. The integration of transportation and land use would also be hindered with difficulties in providing linkages e.g. walkways/cycleways between housing, employment, recreation and other facilities. Lack of access to open space and facilitating new leisure facilities may discourage healthier lifestyles.

Economy and Employment

- 5.21 Appendix 3: Baseline Data sets out the detailed findings of research undertaken for the purposes of this Scoping Report. In relation to Economy and Employment these issues can be summarised as follows:
- Challenge of focusing employment land (up to 90 hectares) in the hubs - Enniskillen and Omagh – and identifying suitable land which is accessible, attractive and devoid of flood risk

- There is a need to promote sites and policies which will attract high wage employers, larger enterprises which are knowledge-based (e.g. IT services, digital media, computing) and diversify the local economy
- Increasing vacant premises has the potential to further undermine the vitality of town centres and the viability of existing businesses. There is a need to formulate suitable policies and a town centre strategy which will promote town centre sites and address the redevelopment of large sites within the town centres which will become vacant during the lifetime of the plan
- The existing reliance on the public sector for employment is not sustainable in the face of ongoing public sector cuts
- Enhancement of the existing tourism economy toward recognising its full potential.

Likely Future without the Plan

- 5.22 The absence of a plan could disadvantage those on lower incomes in terms of ease of access to places of work, shops, commercial and social services. The Plan can help tackle disadvantage and facilitate job creation by providing a range of suitable sites for economic development including opportunities for regeneration and mixed use developments.
- 5.23 Unless suitable land is identified and zoned for economic use, potential investors may take business to other districts. The absence of up to date land use zonings and policies could have the effect of inhibiting development of land for alternative uses.
- 5.24 Without a LDP, it is unlikely that infrastructure required to facilitate development can be delivered which will hinder economic growth. There may be difficulty attracting potential developers of town centre sites in the absence of a town centre strategy and guidance on acceptable alternative uses.

Housing

- 5.25 Appendix 3: Baseline Data sets out the detailed findings of research undertaken for the purposes of this Scoping Report. In relation to Housing these issues can be summarised as follows:
- The number of households created in the countryside is disproportionate to the number created in towns and villages. It is also contrary to the wider objectives of PPS 21 Sustainable Development in the Countryside which acknowledges a need to control the development pressure of single dwellings in the countryside. Growth needs to be balanced to ensure housing is not only focused in settlements with access to a range of services but also sustains rural communities
 - There is a need to maintain access to appropriate housing in order to meet the needs of those who suffer long term illness or disability
 - An increase in private rented sector suggests a need for homes that are readily available avoiding social housing waiting lists. This may go hand in

hand with the rise in the numbers of homeless suggesting that there is difficulty in accessing affordable homes

- Private rented sector more likely to attract short term living arrangements with the result of no long term commitment to the locality or the wider district
- Homelessness can impact on the mental, physical and social well-being of the individual and therefore it has the potential to place a strain on the provision of health and social services, and policing
- There is a need to ensure that sufficient homes are provided for all sections of the community
- There is a need to achieve balanced communities and strengthen community cohesion through residential developments with a mix of tenure, types and sizes to meet different needs and to create environments accessible to all and enhance equality of opportunity.

Likely Future without the Plan

- 5.26 Without the LDP, there could potentially be a lack of housing choice to meet the various needs of people.

Without the LDP, housing growth may not occur at locations where there are services, employment and access to sustainable forms of travel.

Homelessness figure could potentially increase in the absence of policies to bring forward social and affordable housing in a range of accessible locations close to other facilities.

Housing growth may occur which reinforces socio-economic divisions.

Cultural Heritage and Landscape

- 5.27 Appendix 3: Baseline Data sets out the detailed findings of research undertaken for the purposes of this Scoping Report. In relation to Cultural Heritage and Landscape these issues can be summarised as follows:

- There is a need to balance the needs of sustainable development whilst ensuring the quality of different landscapes and heritage is protected
- Protect, conserve and enhance the built and archaeological heritage. With 76 properties within Fermanagh and Omagh on the Buildings at Risk Register, it is evident that a number of properties of architectural or historic merit that need protection
- There is a need to deliver economic and community benefit through conservation which facilitates the productive use of built heritage assets and opportunities for investment, whilst safeguarding their historic or architectural integrity

- There is a need to consider the impact of development on the shores as well as the islands of: upper and lower Lough Erne, upper and lower Lough Macnean and Lough Melvin; and other areas such as Cuilcagh Mountain and Strule River Valley
- There is a need to consider the visual impact of high structures including wind turbines and their cumulative impact in landscapes such as the High Sperrins, ASAs and the AONB.
- There is a need to consider the impact of mineral workings within sensitive landscapes such as the AONB
- There is a need to protect the distinctive Geopark for future generations but also to recognise the benefits of tourism and local job creation
- Need to consider the impacts of the plan on the built and archaeological heritage of the District; on statutorily designated buildings and monuments and above and below ground remains.

Likely Future without the Plan

- 5.28 Any protected buildings/sites would be afforded significant protection under current legislation. Without a Plan sites that would have been within designated ATCs, AVCs, Local Landscape Policy Areas, ASAs, AAPs and registered Historic Park and Gardens, could fall into a state of neglect and would result in a loss of the built fabric, historic past, rich and varied landscapes within Fermanagh and Omagh due to inappropriate forms of development in these sensitive areas.

The cultural heritage of some of our towns and villages is at risk from new development and redevelopment schemes or are experiencing urban decay. Without the Plan, these areas will continue to be under threat and deteriorate further.

Landscapes may also be vulnerable to the processes of drainage, peat cutting and mineral extraction.

- 5.29 The Plan area contains a significant portion of the Sperrin AONB. However, outside this designation there are many local areas of landscape value which do not have protection and are under pressure from development. These include areas in and adjoining many settlements. By designating Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs), Areas of Special Archaeological Interest (ASAs) and Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCIs) in the Plan, the amenity of these local areas can be protected. Without implementation of the Plan, however, such areas may become more vulnerable.

Material Assets

5.30 Appendix 3: Baseline Data sets out the detailed findings of research undertaken for the purposes of this Scoping Report. In relation to Material Assets these issues can be summarised as follows:

- Need to consider the impacts of mineral development and peat extraction on biodiversity, habitats, landscape quality, and heritage assets and archaeology.
- Need to ensure that the processes of mineral development do not cause undue damage to the chemical and ecological status of our waterways
- Need to consider the impact on human health and residential amenity

Likely Future without the Plan

5.31 In the absence of a plan, mineral development may impact on areas of landscape importance or high scenic quality and areas of scientific value or archaeological or historic interest which should be protected (i.e. Areas of Constraint on Mineral Developments).

Without the plan, areas of intact peatland could decrease leading to loss of habitat and biodiversity value and potential damage to archaeological features.

Soil

5.32 Appendix 3: Baseline Data sets out the detailed findings of research undertaken for the purposes of this Scoping Report. In relation to Soil these issues can be summarised as follows:

- Need to consider the impact of development e.g. housing, infrastructure and economic development on areas of agricultural land quality
- Need to consider the impact of commercial extraction on peatland/bogs and the consequent loss or fragmentation of habitats, and impact on archaeological remains.
- Need to consider the impact of built development on wetland, peatland and bogs

Likely Future without the Plan

5.33 In the absence of a plan that can bring forward protection of sites of local nature conservation and maintain compact settlements without intrusion into productive farmland, there is likely to be deterioration of soil quality and loss of important habitats and species of biodiversity.

Transport and Accessibility

5.34 Appendix 3: Baseline Data sets out the detailed findings of research undertaken for the purposes of this Scoping Report. In relation to Transport and Accessibility these issues can be summarised as follows:

- The need to promote the most sustainable locations for development which will reduce the need to travel and are accessible by foot, cycle and public transport.
- The need to promote good sustainable transport choices to allow for better connectivity and reduce time travelling. However it is recognised that with a predominantly rural district the private car will remain the primary form of transport
- The need to promote better transport choices such as walking and cycling so as to encourage alternative mode of transport which will in turn help to reduce congestion, vehicle emissions and improve the health of the population

Likely Future without the Plan

5.35 In the absence of a plan, the Fermanagh and Omagh district could become less attractive to inward investment due to inadequate connections to link the District with that of the rest of the province and further afield.

5.36 Public transport services currently run at limited times, some of which are further restricted to school term times, with other routes running only on specific days. This has the potential to cause further isolation of some rural communities. The Local Development Plan will give increased certainty to where development should be located and thus an indication of the more sustainable locations to operate public transport. There are possible implications for the health and well-being of the community due to a lack of infrastructure provision for walking and cycling.

Waste

5.37 Appendix 3: Baseline Data sets out the detailed findings of research undertaken for the purposes of this Scoping Report. In relation to Waste these issues can be summarised as follows:

- Need to promote the reduction of waste produced at household and municipal level
- Need to promote development of waste management and recycling facilities in appropriate locations
- Need to ensure that detrimental effects on people, the environment, and local amenity associated with waste management facilities are avoided or minimised
- Need to consider alternative processes to landfill such as Mechanical Biological Treatment plants
- Need for appropriate restoration of landfill sites to avoid contamination

Likely Future without the Plan

- 5.38 Rates of recycling are expected to increase incrementally over time. The LDP can positively encourage household recycling and composting by facilitating recycling and waste collection in a choice of accessible locations. The 50% target for 2020 is likely to give rise to the need for further waste management facilities or extension of existing facilities and the LDP could identify appropriate sites for these.

Water

- 5.39 Appendix 3: Baseline Data sets out the detailed findings of research undertaken for the purposes of this Scoping Report. In relation to Water these issues can be summarised as follows:

- Need to sustain an adequate supply of drinking water to serve the needs of the population
- Need to sustain all our waters bodies to a high standard of chemical and ecological status
- Need to consider the impact of potentially polluting developments, particularly where they may affect ground water/waterways
- Need to consider the development of land in urban areas where there is in danger of flooding and therefore posing a threat to the safety of the public. Development should be directed away from any such at risk areas
- Need to consider the implications of flooding associated with climate change
- The need to provide waste water treatment capacity within the settlements in order to allow for future growth and expansion
- Need to consider the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

Likely Future without the Plan

- 5.40 In the absence of the LDP, there is a risk of unbalanced growth occurring across the settlement hierarchy which could result in incremental development in smaller settlements taking place where there is inadequate infrastructure available. For example, the absence of a waste water treatment works could result in a build-up of septic tanks leading to undesirable smells, a deterioration in water quality and possible impact on flora and fauna.
- 5.41 Although the Fermanagh and Omagh districts rivers and waterways are monitored and controlled by the NIEA, there would be an absence of policies to take account of how best to protect and manage them.
- 5.42 There would be a risk of the natural floodplains or those lands affected by flooding being developed thereby causing risk to life. There would be a lack of Sustainable Drainage Systems to assist in flood prevention. Led by changes in the climate, it is likely in the future that there will be more incidences of fluvial flooding. Mitigation and river management will need to be considered in the development of planning policies.

- 5.43 It would be difficult to programme for the provision of adequate wastewater treatment works to service the potential growth of settlements.

6.0 Developing the SA Framework

- 6.1 The EAPP Regulations require that “ the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation” (Schedule 2 (5)).
- 6.2 The SA objectives and appraisal criteria are components of a framework that will be used consistently to appraise the policies arising from the review. Although the SEA Directive does not specifically require the use of objectives or indicators in SEA, they are a recognized way in which environmental effects can be described, analysed and compared. SEA *objectives* state what is intended. The plan’s performance against objectives is normally measured by using *indicators*.
- 6.3 Thus the SA objectives will meet the requirements of the SEA Directive and reflect the local distinctiveness of Fermanagh and Omagh. There are twenty one proposed objectives in Fermanagh and Omagh’s SA framework as shown in Table 3 and in Appendix 4 which address the full cross-section of sustainability issues including social, economic and environmental factors.

Testing the compatibility of SA objectives

- 6.4 The draft SA objectives identified in Table 3 must be tested against one another to identify any potential conflicts and problems with the internal compatibility that may arise between objectives. This also provides an early opportunity for mitigation or alternatives to be considered. As this is a basic exercise, it involves some assumptions being made.
- 6.5 The possible conflicts between objectives have been identified as follows:
- The provision of new housing and the desire to conserve and enhance biodiversity (assuming most new housing will be provided on greenfield sites)
 - Encouraging sustainable economic growth whilst at the same time reducing contributions to climate change and reduce vulnerability to climate change
 - The construction of new housing on potentially greenfield sites and the desire to conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural assets with the possible removal of previously unrecorded archaeological sites.

These conflicts may be addressed through appropriate mitigation methods i.e. making efficient use of urban land.

14.To conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment and cultural assets	0	0	√	X	0	√	√	√	√	0	√	√										
15. To reduce contributions to climate change and reduce vulnerability to climate change	?	√	0	0	0	0	0	√	√	√	√	√	0									
16. To minimise the production of waste and use of non-renewable resources.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	√	√	?	√	√	√	√								
17. To conserve and enhance land quality and soil resources.	0	?	0	0	0	0	0	0	√	0	√	√	√	√	√							
18. To encourage sustainable economic growth.	√	√	√	√	√	0	0	√	0	0	0	0	√	X	0	0						
19. To offer everybody the opportunity for rewarding and satisfying employment	√	√	√	0	√	0	√	√	0	0	0	0	√	0	√	0	√					
20.To reduce disparities in economic performance and promote sustainable regeneration	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	0	0	0	√	√	0	0	0	√	√				
21. To encourage and accommodate both indigenous and inward investment	√	√	√	√	√	0	0	√	0	0	0	0	√	0	√	√	√	0	√			
22.To encourage efficient patterns of movement in support of economic growth	√	√	√	√	0	0	√	√	0	0	0	0	√	√	√	0	√	√	√	√		
X – Incompatible √ - Compatible 0 – No links ? – Uncertain																						

Fermanagh and Omagh Local Development Plan Assessment

- 6.6 It is anticipated that much of the SA work will be undertaken alongside the preparation of the Preferred Options Paper (POP), allowing for the evaluation of preferred options for the LDP alongside 'reasonable alternatives'. Options will be identified and assessed as the development of the POP progresses and will be explained in the Interim Report. It is expected that the LDP will have impacts across all of the topics identified in the SA Guidance (Insert Ref). The SA will therefore consider the topics and objectives highlighted in Table 4.

Table 4: Draft Sustainability Appraisal Objectives - SA Framework

SA Objective	SA/SEA Directive Topic
1. To reduce poverty and social exclusion	Population and Health
2. To improve the health and well-being of the population	Population and Health
3. To improve the education and skills of the population	Population
4. To provide everybody with the opportunity to live in a decent home	Housing
5. To reduce crime and anti-social behaviour	Population
6. To encourage a sense of community; identity and welfare	Population
7. To improve accessibility to key services, especially for those most in need	Transport and Accessibility
8. To reduce the effect of traffic on the environment	Air Population and Human Health
9. To reduce flood risk and the adverse consequences of flooding and to increase resilience to flood risk	Climate Change Flood Risk
10. To improve water quality; conserve water resources and provide for sustainable sources of water supply	Water
11. To improve air quality	Air
12. To conserve and enhance biodiversity	Biodiversity Flora Fauna
13. To maintain and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and townscapes.	Landscape

SA Objective	SA/SEA Directive Topic
14. To conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment and cultural assets	Cultural Heritage including Architectural Heritage Material Assets
15. To reduce contributions to climate change and reduce vulnerability to climate change	Climate
16. To minimise the production of waste and use of non-renewable materials	Material Assets (Waste)
17. To conserve and enhance land quality and soil resources	Soil
18. To encourage sustainable economic growth	Economy and Employment
19. To offer everybody the opportunity to access high quality jobs, reducing disparities between surrounding areas.	Economy and Employment
20. To promote sustainable regeneration	Economy and Employment
21. To encourage and accommodate both indigenous and inward investment	Economy and Employment
22. To encourage efficient patterns of movement in support of economic growth	Transport and Accessibility

- 6.7 In order to clarify the SA objectives and ensure all key sustainability issues are considered, each of the twenty one SA objectives will be accompanied by a series of decision making criteria questions. The decision-making criteria are detailed in Appendix 5 alongside a list of potential SA indicators. The indicators will inform monitoring of the significant sustainability effects of implementing the plan, as well as being used to inform the SA assessment process itself.
- 6.8 Fermanagh and Omagh LDP will comprise a Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan. It will steer policy making within the local area and the assessment of the LDP should be in proportion to the different elements of the LDP. By linking the assessments of these elements, there should be scope to gain a clear overview of the impacts of local level planning policy. For example, whilst the Plan Strategy will contain strategic policies and an overall strategy for land use planning, the Local Policies Plan will provide local policies and site specific proposals and guidance that mitigate any potential adverse impacts arising from actions within the Framework.
- 6.9 The LDP will set out the overall spatial strategy for Fermanagh and Omagh. Many of the aims and objectives of the LDP will be explained with mapping,

accompanied by an explanation of what the overall direction of change should be. It is possible that particular developments allocated in previous plans e.g. housing zonings will again feature as legacy elements.

- 6.10 The SA Interim Report will reflect the structure and content of the LDP although this has yet to be fully defined. Any contextual information included in the LDP is unlikely to generate significant effects in its own right, and so the SA will focus on the elements where LDP is setting out a clear policy direction. Duplication of assessment of other policy areas (e.g. Regional Development Strategy, Strategic Planning Policy Statement) should be avoided, however it will be useful to build on any available assessments of relevant policies and plans.
- 6.11 The SA will focus on likely significant effects and much of the work will consider how the broad elements of the strategy and policies will impact on sensitivities and constraints. In accordance with the EAPP Regulations, both positive and negative environmental effects will be identified.
- 6.12 One of the key benefits of SA is the identification of potential cumulative effects, and exploration of synergies and links between environmental topic areas. These effects will be fully explored within the assessment and will include:
- Spatial cumulative effects (multiple effects on a particular area)
 - Temporal cumulative effects (building of effects over time)
 - Cumulative effects on receptors (combined effects on specific environmental features)
 - Cumulative effects arising from the combination of individual effects of the LDP
- 6.13 Whilst proposals put forward for inclusion in the LDP may require targeted analysis, it will be important for the SA to remain focused on the significant effects arising from the strategy as a whole, as opposed to prejudging work that should be undertaken at the planning application level, for example in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of specific proposals. The SA of proposals within the LDP will therefore focus only on the principle of the development in any given location (the 'what' and 'where'), as opposed to 'how' it will be implemented in terms of siting, design or construction.
- 6.14 It is currently expected that the following methods will be used, although the techniques will be developed further as the structure and content of the POP begins to emerge:

Key Elements	Assessment method / reporting
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LDP: Vision Development Strategy Sectoral objectives Cross-cutting policies Thematic policies	Assessment matrix Matrices will be appended to the Interim Report and significant effects will be summarised in the main body of the report.
Local perspectives / focus areas e.g. Enniskillen and Omagh towns	Assessment matrix tailored to reflect baseline analysis. The Interim Report will include a summary of key local level impacts.
New LDP development proposals, legacy elements, land allocations etc.	Analysis of local constraints mapping (and other relevant information) to identify significant environmental effects. Focused reporting of the effects of each candidate national development.

The following paragraphs consider each of these methods in more detail.

Assessment of development strategy and development frameworks

- 6.15 A matrix will be developed to allow for a systematic assessment of the LDP aspirations (Table 5). For the LDP, the proposed approach in response to each of the ‘main issues’, including the key components, preferred option and the alternatives, will be assessed using the matrix framework.
- 6.16 This will allow each key aspect of the POP to be explored and assessed in relation to a series of questions. It is useful for the SA to assess how negative impacts can be avoided, and to identify opportunities for enhancement arising from the spatial strategy and accompanying policy framework. To illustrate this, an initial assessment matrix has been developed with examples of objectives that range from those identifying the potentially negative impacts, to those which highlight opportunities for positive effects. These objectives will be refined and focused when the fuller baseline has been established, to reflect the key issues of most relevance to the LDP.
- 6.17 In the interests of transparency and accessibility, simple symbols and colours will be used to highlight overall predicted effects, supported by explanatory text that relates the findings to relevant evidence. The level of certainty associated with each judgement, the timing of effects (short, medium and long term) and whether effects would be direct or indirect would be explained where appropriate in this text. Significant effects will be highlighted by using shading. Clear criteria will be set out for establishing significance, focusing on

the environmental problems identified in the fuller baseline analysis. Where significant negative effects are identified, recommendations will be made for mitigation, ranging from choice of the best options for the LDP to guidance for project-level implementation as appropriate.

Table 5: Illustrative assessment matrix (to be refined further)

	Objectives		Comments / Supporting Evidence
Air	To reduce the effect of traffic on the environment		
	To improve air quality		
Biodiversity	To conserve and enhance biodiversity		
Population and Human Health	To reduce poverty and social exclusion		
	To improve the health and wellbeing of the population		
	To reduce crime and anti-social behaviour		
	To encourage a sense of community; identity and welfare		
Climate	To improve the education and skills of the population		
	To reduce contributions to climate change and reduce vulnerability to climate change		
Economy and Employment	To encourage sustainable economic growth		
	To offer everybody the opportunity for rewarding and satisfying employment		
	To reduce disparities in economic performance and promote sustainable regeneration		
	To encourage and accommodate both indigenous and inward investment		
Housing	To provide everybody with the opportunity to live in a decent home		
Cultural Heritage (incl. Archaeological and Architectural Heritage)	To conserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment and cultural assets		
Landscape	To maintain and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and townscapes		
Material Assets (incl. Waste)	To minimise the production of waste and use of non-renewable materials		

	Objectives		Comments / Supporting Evidence
Soil	To conserve and enhance land quality and soil resources		
Transport and Accessibility	To improve accessibility to key services, especially for those most in need		
	To encourage efficient patterns of movement in support of economic growth		
Water	To improve water quality; conserve water resources and provide for sustainable sources of water supply		

Positive Effect	+	Positive effect (significant)	++
Negative Effect	-	Negative Effect (significant)	--
Neutral	0		

Locational assessments

6.18 It is expected that the LDP may have spatial implications for some particular locations where there are ‘key corridors’, ‘hot spots’ or clusters of development proposals in strategic growth areas. The following key steps will be used to evaluate elements of the strategy at this scale:

- To fully understand the potential for the spatial strategy to have cumulative effects for any specific area, it will be important firstly to build a picture of the baseline relating to that area.
- This baseline will be used to define key issues around capacity and environmental resilience in the key regional focus areas.
- This will then be used to assess the further impact of the strategic direction and additional proposals set out in the LDP on key aspects of the baseline, across all relevant receptors.
- The assessment findings will be set out in the Interim and SA Report and illustrated with constraints maps, similar to those in Appendix 6. The focus will be on any significant effects identified in the assessment, and appropriate mitigation proposals.

Specific development assessment

6.19 Finally, the constraints mapping set out in Appendix 7 will be used to explore the effects of each of the specific developments considered within the LDP as it progresses. The mapped analysis will be accompanied by concise explanations of the significant effects arising from each development, and an indication of aspects requiring mitigation where appropriate. Consultees will be invited to share their views on the developments (preferred and other alternatives), taking into account the issues identified in the assessment.

Identifying and assessing alternatives

6.20 In the case of the LDP, the preparation of a POP will allow for clear articulation of the alternatives to form an integral part of the process. The SA will reflect the various options that are considered in the planning process.

- 6.21 It may be possible to combine the spatial and more thematic elements of the LDP to define and assess a range of scenarios. In the interests of transparency, the Interim Report may also include assessments of alternatives that may have been dismissed prior to the finalisation of the POP, but which could nevertheless be viewed as reasonable alternatives. This enables those commenting on the Interim Report and the POP to suggest that other alternatives be re-considered as part of the final spatial strategy.

Minimize or mitigate negative impact

- 6.22 The SA will form an integral part of the development of the LDP. It will provide an objective assessment of the emerging strategy and proposals, and will use this information to help define the most sustainable options. It is important, however, to note that SA is not the only determinant of the policy, and whilst it can provide information and recommendations, there may still be a clear need to progress proposals which could have significant effects on sustainable development. The SA will identify how any such impacts can be managed to avoid or reduce negative effects as far as possible.
- 6.23 Suggested activity to reduce potential negative environmental effects could range from broad recommendations on the overall strategy, to more specific requirements for further work at the project level. Mitigation could also be taken forward in later stages of LDP preparation including the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan.

7.0 Next Steps and Consultation

- 7.1 In accordance with the EAPP Regulations, environmental reports produced by the local planning authority should be subject to a 5 week consultation with the relevant consultation body which has specific environmental responsibilities. Therefore, the Council will consult with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), the Department for Communities – Historic Environment Division and specifically the Northern Ireland Environment Agency on the Scoping Report and will seek comments within a period of 5 weeks. Responses to the Scoping Report shall be returned to the Planning Department, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council by
- 7.2 In addition, a multi-disciplinary Project Management Group (PMG) has been convened comprising the Principal Planning Officer, relevant Council officers and representatives from key statutory/government departments. This PMG will be consulted on and will act as the assessment panel for the SA, including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

7.3 Following consideration of any comments received, the next stage will be the preparation of the SA Interim Report which will be published with the Preferred Options Paper, followed by SA Reports to accompany the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan respectively.