

Setting the Context of this Response

1. **Collapse of Credibility at the Heart of Government and Planning:** This Consultation on the Draft LDP Strategy 2030 comes at a time when confidence in regional Government, in statutory regulation, management and policy enforcement is at rock bottom. The 2018 Public Inquiry on the Renewable Heating Incentive (RHI) [the Report by Rt. Hon. Patrick Coghlin, Dame Una O'Brien & Dr. Keith MacLean is expected in Spring 2019] exposed a litany of mismanagement, maladministration, corruption of initiatives promoting 'green policies', abuse of public monies, favouritism, systematic abuse of FOI/EIR procedures by government and civil service, incompetence and much more. The subsequent and emerging policy scandals enveloping Anaerobic Digesters (Ads) and factory pig and chicken farms have exacerbated the credibility gap. Furthermore, planning debacles including the Mobouy illegal 'Superdump' on the outskirts of Derry City, or the ongoing biggest illegal quarry in Europe extracting sand from Lough Neagh, do anything but suggest that the good people of Fermanagh & Omagh should follow the direction of Strategic Planning Division/Dfi. The recent Appeal Court Judgement in Belfast, in the Case of Donnelly versus the Department for Infrastructure reinforced the view of the Judicial Review Court that 60 hectares, not 81 hectares at Cavanacaw benefited from Planning Permission as claimed in both courts by the Department and by Galantas mining. Once again stark questions about the Department's professional competence remain.

2. **Lack of an Independent Effective Environmental Authority:** There is no independent regional environmental authority in Northern Ireland and the subservience of environmental protection duties to supporting development within DAERA/NIEA has been repeatedly identified as a major issue including by former Ministers with responsibility for the environment. Whereas small scale business or farming operations are frequently forced to comply with environmental regulations and standards, it appears that bigger industrial companies are not held to the same standards, despite the fact that the big companies risk having a much greater negative impact on the environment.

3. This Fermanagh & Omagh Plan 2030 Consultation on the Draft Plan Strategy October 2018 has to be the most difficult of consultations for the public to engage in. For any member of the public brave enough to contemplate making a submission, the obstacles are excessive: the coded language, the rigid timetable, the warnings that if you don't write your submission in a specific way it will be disregarded, and the reference to other documents some of which in themselves are inaccessible. Is the intention to put off all except the professional lobbyists who have a financial interest? For those of us whose input at an earlier stage of the process has been all but ignored, it is especially difficult to retain hope that our submission will be afforded due weight. We had been enthusiastic to convey the potential of a unique rural tourism package with a difference in the Sperrins AONB and to convey the incompatibility with an industry using many tons of cyanide in the Owenkillew Valley and discharging mercury, lead, arsenic, zinc, copper, suspended solids, flocculants, etc. into the Owenkillew/Owenreagh Special Areas of Conservation. Despite referring to the need to afford environmental protection to areas such as the Sperrins AONB the Draft Plan