

Title of Report:	Department for Infrastructure: Planning Improvement Programme Review of The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015
Committee Report Submitted To:	PLANNING COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	25th October 2023
For Decision or For Information	For Decision
To be discussed In Committee	NO

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Cohesive Leadership
Outcome	Our elected members work collaboratively and make decisions on an evidence led basis and in line with its policies.
Lead Officer	Principal Planning Officer

Budgetary Considerations NOT APPLICABLE	
Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	NO
Legal Opinion Obtained	NO

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals. Not applicable in this case.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

Assessment (DPIA)	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
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1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present the Council's response to the Department for Infrastructure's (DfI's) request for input into their review of The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Following the review of the implementation of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the recommendations made in the Northern Ireland Audit Report and the Public Accounts Committee Report on Planning in Northern Ireland, a Planning Improvement Programme, agreed by both local and central government, encompassing regulatory improvements and legislative changes to the planning system, is being taken forward.
- 2.2 One of the agreed legislative actions is a review of The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 (the "Regs").
- 2.3 DfI wrote to the Council on 1st September 2023 (see Appendix 1) inviting comment on our operational experience of the Regs, along with our recommendations and supporting evidence for any changes.
- 2.4 The review covers five key areas in the plan-making process, as follows:
- Consultation;
 - LDP Timetable;
 - Publicity;
 - Notification; and
 - Submission of documentation.
- 2.5 Completion of the feedback form (see draft at Appendix 2) allows the Council to influence and shape, at this early stage, any proposed revisions to the Regs, to ensure that they are practical and appropriate in the Northern Ireland/local government context.
- 2.6 Following the review DfI intends to consult with the public and wider stakeholders on any proposed changes (early in 2024), at which stage the Council will have further opportunity to comment.
- 2.7 The closing date for submission is 27th October 2023.

3.0 Financial Implications

- 3.1 The proposed changes would assist in streamlining the plan-making process. This will help to reduce the overall costs to local councils – particularly advertising, printing, copying and postal costs.

4.0 Other Implications

- 4.1 In streamlining the plan-making process the proposed changes would assist in preventing onerous work practices and delays in the plan-making process. Changes would also provide clarity and focus for the public on the key stages of the LDP process, and manage expectations.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 **It is recommended** that the Planning Committee note the content of this report and agree to the Head of Planning issuing a response, along the lines of that attached at Appendix 2, on behalf of the Council.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Dfl letter to Council

Appendix 2: Draft Council Response



Department for

Infrastructure

An Roinn

Bonneagair

Department for

Infrastructure

www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Regional Planning Policy and Casework Directorate

Council Chief Executives

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Your reference:

Our reference:

1st September 2023

Dear Chief Executive,

Review of the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

Following the Review of the implementation of the Planning Act (NI) 2011, and the recommendations made in the NI Audit Report and the Public Accounts Committee Report on Planning in Northern Ireland, a planning improvement work programme, agreed by local and central government, encompassing regulatory improvements and legislative changes to the planning system is being taken forward.

One of the agreed legislative actions is a review of the **Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 (S.R 2015 No. 62)** (The Regulations). The review is considering five key areas of the Local Development Plan process including the legislative requirements surrounding consultation, the preparation of Timetables, publicity and notification and submission of documentation.

To assist with this review, the Department invites you to share your operational experiences of the Local Development Plan Regulations, along with your recommendations and supporting evidence for any changes. This feedback will be important in helping us understand local government views and shape any proposed revisions, in order that the Regulations are practical and appropriate.

E-mail: planning@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Website: www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/topics/planning

A feedback form is attached at Annex 1, with some questions under key headings which may help structure your return. I would be grateful if you could complete and return Annex 1 to the Local Government lead **Sandra Adams** at:

 [@midandeantrim.gov.uk](mailto: @midandeantrim.gov.uk) on or before **27th October 2023**.

Following the review, Dfl intends to consult with the public and wider stakeholders on any proposed revisions to the Regulations. It is anticipated that this public consultation exercise will take place early in 2024. The Council will have a further opportunity to provide feedback on any proposed revisions during this public consultation period.

If you have any questions, or you would like to discuss further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



ALISTAIR BEGGS

Chief Planner

Director of Regional Planning Policy and Casework

Questionnaire

The table below presents a series of questions examining potential issues with the current regulations as outlined in the Schedule of The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 (legislation.gov.uk).

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council response is as follows:

Part	Questions	Suggested Changes	Justification and Reasoning
1. The number and role of consultation bodies in 2(1) of the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations 2015			
PART 1 General	<p>Q1. Does the Council have any operational evidence which might suggest that the number of consultation bodies should be reduced under (2(1) of the LDP Regulations 2015? (If this is the case, stipulate the criterion to which it relates and any difficulty posed in the justification and reasoning column followed by any suggested changes that you consider may overcome the issue)</p>	<p>OPTION 1: 2.—(1) In these Regulations— “consultation bodies” means— (a) Northern Ireland government departments, (b) the council for any district which adjoins that of the council carrying out the consultation, (c) a water or sewerage undertaker, (d) the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, (e) the Civil Aviation Authority, (f) any person to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under section 106(3) of the Communications Act 2003(a), (g) any person to whom a licence has been granted under Article 10(1) of the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992(b), (h) any person to whom a licence has been granted under Article 8 of the Gas (Northern Ireland) Order 1996(c);</p> <p>OPTION 2:</p>	<p>See the council’s proposed options including proposed removal of the blue strikethrough text (see column 3 opposite).</p> <p>There are approx 200 electricity code operators, approx 100 electricity licensees and approx 30 gas licensees identified by OFGEM and OFCOM. Extensive work is required to obtain the contact details for the listed operators to ensure that the Council has the most up to date information and does not miss out on consulting any operator.</p> <p>The issuing of approximately 330 notifications/consultations (the vast majority of which do not acknowledge receipt, or write to the Council questioning the consultation, or advise that they have no interest in NI) is a very onerous task and to date these three consultee bodies have made no significant input to the consultation process.</p>

		<p>Amend 2(f),(g), and (h) to reflect the Welsh regulation which will target the consultation process:</p> <p>(f) any person— (i) to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under section 106(3)(a) of the Communications Act 2003, and</p> <p>(ii) who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the area of the LPA (where known).</p> <p>OPTION 3:</p> <p>DfI should draw up a reduced list of Communications, Electricity and Gas operators relevant to Northern Ireland.</p>	
	<p>Q2. Do you consider that the role of Consultation Bodies at 5; 9(1); 10(c); 15(c); 17(e); 21(c); 22(1)(a); 23(c) should change? (If so, please state how and provide evidence as to why this is the case)</p>	<p>5) in the preparation of the timetable, consult the planning appeals commission and such of the consultation bodies as the council considers appropriate</p> <p>9.(1) Before a council complies with regulation 11 (consultation on POP), it must, for the purpose of generating alternative strategies and options,</p>	<p>Propose removal of the blue strikethrough text and insertion of the red text (see column 3 opposite).</p> <p>Re: 5) The Council considers that this wording is acceptable as it permits the Council to consult with those consultation bodies that it considers appropriate.</p> <p>Re: 9.(1) this wording is considered acceptable provided the list of consultation bodies is more focused (by removing communications, electricity and gas operators – as set out in</p>

	<p>engage the consultation bodies as council considers appropriate</p> <p>10(c) <u>POP</u>: send to notify the consultation bodies of the information set out at paragraph (a) – <i>PoP, other evidence & details of consultation period</i>;</p> <p>15(c) <u>Any Dev Plan Doc</u>: send notify the consultation bodies a copy of the documents set out in paragraph (a) – <i>DPD, SA, supporting docs& details of consultation period</i>;</p> <p>17.e) <u>Availability of Reprs</u>: notify the consultation bodies of the fact that representations are available to view for inspection and the places and times at which they can be inspected</p> <p>21.e) Submission for IE: notify the consultation bodies of the fact that the development plan document and the documents mentioned in paragraph (a) are available for inspection and the places and times at which they can be inspected;</p> <p>22.(1)a) <u>Publicity of IE</u>: At least four weeks before the opening of an independent examination caused to be carried out under section 10(4), the council must—</p> <p>(a) notify the those consultation bodies that have submitted representations of the matters referred to in paragraph (2),</p>	<p>response to Q1). Amending to permit councils to consult with those consultation bodies as it considers appropriate will align with consultation on the timetable, which has not proven to be problematic.</p> <p>Re: 10(c),15(c) and 17(e): electronic exchanges with consultees is the preferred approach with council receiving 100% of the responses from consultee bodies to draft Plan Strategy consultation in an electronic format. Amend wording of the regulation to reflect this.</p> <p>Re: 21(c) It appears unnecessary for the regulations to require the notification of consultation bodies of submission of the DPD as it is not a step in the process that consultation bodies can participate in.</p> <p>Re: 22.(1)a) Participation in the IE is limited to those bodies that have submitted a representation, agree to attend in support of the Council or are requested to attend by the PAC. The notification of all consultee bodies is necessary and should be limited to those that have submitted a representation. Those attending alongside the Council or at the request of the PAC can be contacted as required by the respective bodies.</p>
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		23.c) withdrawal of a DPD ; notify the consultation bodies of that fact;	Re: 23.c) The Council considers that this wording is acceptable.
PART 2 Timetable	Q3. The basis for consulting the Consultation Bodies at Regulation 5 differs from the requirements for consultation elsewhere by requiring the Council to consult ‘such of the consultation bodies as the council considers appropriate’. Based on your experience to date what has been the practice of consulting for the purposes of preparing the Timetable?		In the preparation of its timetable the Council consulted those consultee bodies it considered appropriate - the Department for Infrastructure and the Planning Appeals Commission. No problems have arisen from this approach.
2. The provisions for the commencement & duration of consultation periods 11(3); 16(2); 18(2) in the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations 2015			
PART 3 POP	Q4. Based on your experience of consultation to date, suggestions on potential changes (if any) to the period outlined in 11(3) would be welcomed. (Please note that any changes should be suitably justified and supported by evidence)		The 8-12 week period is considered appropriate offering some flexibility for councils to choose the exact consultation period. This council adopted a 12 week consultation period at POP stage.
	Q5. Based on your experience of consultation to date, suggestions on potential changes (if any) to the period outlined in 16(2) would be welcomed. (Please note that any changes should be suitably justified and supported by evidence)	16. (2) Any such representations must be— (a) made within a period of not less than 8 weeks or more than 12 weeks starting on the day date specified by the council complies with regulation 15(d) .	The current wording is considered to be inflexible and restrictive. Propose removal of the blue strikethrough text and insertion of the red text (see column 3 opposite). The consultation period should reflect that of the POP stage (8-12 weeks) to facilitate those councils that wish to offer the longer 12 week period (which is common place in local government).

PART 5 DPD Procedure			<p>The Regs state 'starting on the day the Council complies with the previous Regulation 10. i.e. it must start on that very day e.g. if the Council advertises on 2 consecutive Tuesdays, then the 8 weeks must start on the Wednesday following the second advert. This appears overly cumbersome.</p> <p>The wording should revert to the approach in the previous legislation to permit councils to state, in advance, when the consultation period commences, irrespective of the date of the local advertisement.</p>
	<p>Q6. Based on your experience of consultation to date, suggestions on potential changes (if any) to the period outlined in 18(2) would be welcomed. (Please note that any changes should be suitably justified and supported by evidence)</p>	<p>18.(1) Any person may make representations about a site specific policy representation (in regulations 17, 19 and this regulation referred to as “counter representations”). (2) Counter representations must be— (a) made within a period of not less than 4 or more than 8 weeks starting on the day date specified by the council complies with regulation 17(1)(a), and (b) sent to the address specified in regulation 17(1)(a)(iii).</p>	<p>Propose removal of the blue strikethrough text and insertion of the red text (see column 3 opposite).</p> <p>Although this Council has not yet reached this stage of the plan-making process discussions at the Development Plan Working Group (DPWG) has highlighted that this counter representation stage generally involves parties already participating in the earlier stages of the process, who will be familiar with the issues arising, therefore the consultation period at this stage could be significantly reduced.</p>
	<p>Q7. Based on your experience, do you consider that the consultation periods for each part of the LDP process under 11(3), 16(2), 18(2) should be equal?</p>	<p>11(3) The period referred to in paragraph (2)(a) must be a period of not less than 8 weeks or more than 12 weeks starting on the day on which the council complies with regulation 10(a). 16(2)(a) made within a period of 8 weeks starting on the day the council complies with regulation 15(d).</p>	<p>No. Given that the complexity of issues vary at each stage of the plan-making process, the consultation periods should reflect this.</p>

		18(2)(a) made within a period of 8 weeks starting on the day the council complies with regulation 17(1)(a).	
PART 5 DPD Procedure	Q8. Based on your experience, do you consider that the consultation periods for each part of the LDP process under 11(3), 16(2), 18(2) should vary?		Yes. Given that the complexity of issues vary at each stage of the plan-making process, the consultation periods should reflect this.
	Q9. Based on your experience, do you consider the current wording of 11(3), 16(2), 18(2) of the LDP Regulations creates uncertainty regarding the start and finish date/overall duration of consultation? (If the answer is yes, please demonstrate to which part of the Regulations this relates and how you consider this to be the case)	11.3) The period referred to in paragraph (2)(a) must be a period of not less than 8 weeks or more than 12 weeks starting on the day specified by the council complies with regulation 10(a) . 16.(2) made within a period of 8 weeks of not less than 8 weeks or more than 12 weeks starting on the day specified by the council complies with regulation 15(d) ; 18.2) (2) Counter representations must be— (a) made within a period not less than 4 or more than 8 weeks starting on the day specified by the council complies with regulation 17(1)(a) ; and (b) sent to the address specified in regulation 17(1)(a)(iii).	Propose removal of the blue strikethrough text and insertion of the red text (see column 3 opposite). To offer consistency the start dates should be as specified by the Council and the durations/periods amended to reflect the responses above.
	Q10. If the answer is yes to Q8, do you believe an explanation in the LDP Regulations Explanatory note could be suffice to address any perceived concern? (If so, please provide suggested wording for this appaoach)		No. The additon of detail in the explanatory note may cause additional confusion. The Regulations can be amended to be sufficiently clear and no further explanation is required.

	<p>Q11. Do you believe there is merit in amending the wording of the LDP Regulations to be more specific regarding the start and finish period for consultation? (If this is the case, please specify the part of the regulations to which this applies and suggestions on how this may be done)</p>		<p>The regulations should enable a council to determine/ identify when each of its consultation periods start and finish (see above).</p>
3. Timetable, Publicity and notification requirements of the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations 2015			
PART 2 Timetable	<p>Q12. The LDP Timetable is an important project management tool, based on your experience to date, do you think there is merit in submitting a timetable for each stage of the LDP process as you approach that stage?</p>		<p>Yes. To date, this Council has revised its initial timetable (prepared in 2016) on 3 further occasions, and is working on a fourth revision. The preparation of an LDP is a very long and complex process. A timetable to cover the entire process lacks reliability and accuracy. This renders the current timetable format pointless and confusing. There are too many variables as well as stages that lie totally outside the Council's control. It is also important to manage expectations for each stage of the plan-making process.</p>
	<p>Q13. Based on your experience should there be a change to the requirement for the timetable to be agreed by full resolution of the Council under 7(1)(a) of the LDP Regulations? (Please note that any changes should be suitably justified and supported by evidence)</p>		<p>Yes. This Council's Planning Committee are best placed to consider the timetabling of our plan-making process. Under our Council Constitution our Planning Committee has decision-making powers, which covers agreeing the LDP timetable. However, it is acknowledged that this is not the case for every council. In those circumstances it is considered to be overly burdensome to have to seek such ratification, and this has the</p>

			potential to cause further delay in an already protracted process.
	<p>Q14. Based on your experience should there be a change to the current publicity and availability requirement under 8(1) (a) and (b) of the LDP Regulations? (Please note that any changes should be suitably justified and supported by evidence)</p>	<p>8.—(1) Where a timetable is agreed or deemed to be agreed under regulation 7, the council must—</p> <p>(a) make a copy of the agreed timetable available for inspection during normal office hours at—</p> <p>(i) principal offices, and</p> <p>(ii) such other places within its district as it considers appropriate;</p> <p>(b) give notice by local advertisement of the following—</p> <p>(i) that the timetable is available for inspection,</p> <p>(ii) the place and times at which it can be inspected; and</p> <p>(c) publish the timetable on its website.</p>	<p>Propose removal of the blue strikethrough text (see column 3 opposite).</p> <p>This council is unaware of any members of the public calling at the Planning Department or any other council location to view the published timetable.</p> <p>It is considered that a public notice relating to the LDP timetable is also necessary as the Regulations require that all opportunities for public participation in the LDP process are to be advertised via local advertisement at the relevant stages.</p>
4. Requirements in relation to making available documentation in line with the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations 2015			
PART 3 POP	<p>Q15. Based on your experience should there be a change to the current requirements to make available a Preferred Options Paper and associated documentation under 10(a), (b) and (d) of the LDP Regulations? (If so, please state how and provide evidence as to why this is the case)</p>	<p>OPTION 1</p> <p>10. (a) make the following documents available for inspection during normal office hours at the places referred to in paragraph (b) —</p> <p>(i) a copy of the preferred options paper,</p> <p>(ii) such supporting documents as in the opinion of the council are relevant to that paper,</p> <p>(iii) a document containing a statement indicating the period specified by the council under regulation 11(2) as the period within which representations on the preferred options paper may be made,</p> <p>(iv) notice of the address to which representations are to be sent.</p> <p>(b) the places referred to in paragraph (a) are —</p> <p>(i) the council's principal offices, and</p>	<p>Propose removal of the blue strikethrough text (see column 3 opposite).</p> <p>OPTION 1</p> <p>This council is unaware of any members of the public calling at the Planning Department or any other council location to view the documents.</p> <p>This council has provided a computer at the planning department reception where members of the public may view all plan-related documents via the Council's website.</p>

		<p>(ii) such other places within the council district as the council considers appropriate;</p> <p>(d) give notice by local advertisement of the following—</p> <p>(i) the title of the local development plan,</p> <p>(ii) a statement of the fact that the preferred options paper is available for inspection and the places and times at which it can be inspected,</p> <p>(iii) a brief description of the content and purpose of the preferred options paper, and</p> <p>(iv) details of how further information on the preferred options paper may be obtained;</p> <p>OPTION 2</p> <p>10. (a) make the following documents available for inspection during normal office hours at the places referred to in paragraph (b)—</p> <p>(i) a copy of the preferred options paper,</p> <p>(ii) such supporting documents as in the opinion of the council are relevant to that paper,</p> <p>(iii) a document containing a statement indicating the period specified by the council under regulation 11(2) as the period within which representations on the preferred options paper may be made,</p> <p>(iv) notice of the address to which representations are to be sent.</p> <p>(b) the places referred to in paragraph (a) are—</p> <p>(i) the council's principal offices, and</p> <p>(ii) such other places within the council district as the council considers appropriate;</p> <p>(d) give notice by local advertisement of the following—</p> <p>(i) the title of the local development plan,</p>	<p>The emphasis now is very much on the availability of electronic documents. If a request is made to the Council for an alternate format this can be considered.</p> <p>The Regulations should therefore remove the requirement for councils to make a hard copy available for inspection and at a range of locations within the borough.</p> <p>OPTION 2</p> <p>If hard copies are to be made available the location should be 'as considered appropriate by the Council'. It is necessary to have hard copies of all related documents available at a range of locations. In this Council's experience the most appropriate location is likely to be the offices of the planning department where a computer has been provided and planning staff are also available to offer advice. In this Council the planning department is located at the principal council offices. However, it is acknowledged that this is not the case for all councils.</p>
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		(ii) a statement of the fact that the preferred options paper is available for inspection and the places and times at which it can be inspected, (iii) a brief description of the content and purpose of the preferred options paper, and (iv) details of how further information on the preferred options paper may be obtained;	
PART 5 DPD Procedure	Q16. Based on your experience should there be a change to the current requirements to make available a development plan document under 15(a), (b) and (d) of the LDP Regulations? (If so, please state how and provide evidence as to why this is the case)		Answer as per Q15, above.
	Q17. Based on your experience should there be a change to the current requirements to make available representations under Regulation 17(1) and 19(1) of the LDP Regulations? (Please note that any changes should be suitably justified and supported by evidence)	17.(1) <u>Representations:</u> As soon as reasonably practicable after the expiry of the period referred to in regulation 16(2)(a) the council must— (a) make the following documents available for inspection at the places referred to in paragraph (b)— (i) a copy of the representations, (ii) a document containing a statement indicating the time within which counter representations may be made, and (iii) notice of the address to which counter representations can be sent; (b) the places referred to in paragraph (a) are — (i) the council's principal offices, (ii) such other places within the district of the council as the council considers appropriate; (c) publish the representations on its website; (d) give notice in the Belfast Gazette and by local advertisement of the fact that representations are	Propose removal of the blue strikethrough text (see column 3 opposite). Local advertisement and Belfast Gazette requirements should be restricted to POP, PS (draft and adoption), and LPP (draft and adoption). All other procedural minor stages within those 3 main stages should only be via notifications to consultees and registered interested parties via email. The placing of public notices in the Belfast Gazette and local press is an extremely expensive exercise generating little or no interest from those not already involved in the process. Council routinely notify either by email or letter (as requested) those individuals who have expressed an interest in our LDP process (via our online 'Register of Interest' form) of all consultation opportunities.

	<p>available for inspection and the places and times at which they can be inspected; (e) notify the consultation bodies of the fact that representations are available for inspection and the places and times at which they can be inspected; and (f) notify any person who has made (and not withdrawn) a representation in accordance with regulation 16(2) of those matters.</p> <p>19.(1) <u>Counter representations</u>: As soon as reasonably practicable after the expiry of the period referred to in regulation 18(2)(a) the council must— (a) make a copy of the counter representations available for inspection during normal office hours at— (i) its principal offices, and (ii) such other places within the district of the council as the council considers appropriate; and (b) publish this information on its website.</p>	
<p>Q18. Based on your experience should there be a change to the current requirements to make available submission documents under Regulation 21 of the LDP Regulations? (Please note that any changes should be suitably justified and supported by evidence)</p>	<p>21. As soon as reasonably practicable after a council submits a development plan document to the Department it must— (a) make the following documents available for inspection at the places referred to in paragraph (b) Make the following documents available on its website (i) a copy of the development plan document, (ii) the documents specified in regulation 20(2), and (iii) such other documents as in the opinion of the council are relevant to the preparation of the development plan document;</p>	<p>Propose removal of the blue strikethrough text and insertion of the red text (see column 3 opposite).</p> <p>The submission (to DfI) stage is not an opportunity for consultees or the general public to make comment on the submission therefore the current requirements are overly burdensome - given that the submission already involves preparing large volumes of information. Local advertisement and Belfast Gazette requirements should be restricted to POP, PS</p>

	<p>(b) the places referred to in paragraph (a) are — (i) the council’s principal offices, and (ii) such other places in the district of the council as the council considers appropriate; (c) notify the consultation bodies of the fact that the development plan document and the documents mentioned in paragraph (a) are available for inspection and the places and times at which they can be inspected; (d) notify any person who has made (and not withdrawn) a representation in accordance with regulation 16(2) or 18(2) of those matters; (e) give notice in the Belfast Gazette and by local advertisement of the fact that the development plan document has been submitted to the Department; and (f) publish the notice mentioned in paragraph (e) on its website.</p>	<p>(draft and adoption), and LPP (draft and adoption). All other procedural minor stages within those 3 main stages should only be via notifications to consultees and registered interested parties via email.</p> <p>The placing of public notices in the press is an extremely expensive exercise generating little to no interest from those not already involved in the process.</p> <p>The Council routinely notify either by email or letter (as requested) those individuals who have expressed an interest in our LDP process (via our online ‘Register of Interest’ form) of all consultation opportunities.</p> <p>There is no need for this requirement to be included in the regulations.</p>
<p>Q19. Based on your experience should there be a change to the current requirements to make available the adopted development plan document and associated documentation under Regulation 24(3)(a)-(d) of the LDP Regulations? (Please note that any changes should be suitably justified and supported by evidence)</p>	<p>(3) On the date on which the council adopts the development plan document it must —</p> <p>(a) make available the following documents for inspection during normal office hours at the places referred to in paragraph (b) — (i) the development plan document; (ii) a statement prepared by the council specifying the date on which the development plan document was adopted; (iii) the report under section 8(6)(b) or as the case may be section 9(7)(b); (iv) the recommendations of the planning appeals commission or, as the case may be, the person appointed and the reasons for those recommendations, and (v) the Department’s direction under section 12(1)(a) or (b);</p>	<p>Propose removal of the blue strikethrough text and insertion of the red text (see column 3 opposite).</p> <p>The Regs should remove the requirement for council to have a hard copy available for inspection at a range of locations within the borough.</p> <p>The availability of a hard copy for inspection was not an opportunity taken up at any stage of the LDP process to date. The emphasis now is on the availability of electronic copies. If a request is made to the council for an alternate format this can be considered.</p>

		<p>(b) the places referred to in paragraph (a) are— (i) the council’s principal offices, and (ii) such other places within the district of the council as the council considers appropriate; (c) publish the following documents and statements mentioned in paragraph (a) on its website; (i) the development plan document, (ii) a statement prepared by the council specifying the date on which the development plan document was adopted, (iii) the report under section 8(6)(b) or as the case may be section 9(7)(b), (iv) the recommendations of the planning appeals commission or, as the case may be, the person appointed and the reasons for those recommendations, and (v) the Department’s direction under section 12(1)(a) or (b); (d) give notice in the Belfast Gazette and by local advertisement of— (i) the statement prepared by the council specifying the date on which the development plan document was adopted, (ii) the fact that the development plan document is available for inspection and the places and times at which it can be inspected;</p>	
5. Submission of plan documentation required by the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations 2015			
PART 5 DPD Procedure	Q20. Based on your experience should there be a change to the requirements surrounding the submission of documents for Independent Examination under Regulation 20 of the LDP Regulations? (If so, please state how and provide evidence	20.—(1) Before a council submits a development plan document to the Department under section 10, it must consider representations made under regulation 16 and, as the case may be, regulation 18.	Propose insertion of the red text (see column 3 opposite). The regulations should make it clear that submission is via electronic means and when

	<p>as to why this is the case)</p>	<p>(2) The documents prescribed for the purposes of section 10(3) are—</p> <p>(a) the report under section 8(6)(b) or, as the case may be, section 9(7)(b),</p> <p>(b) the statement of community involvement,</p> <p>(c) evidence that the council has complied with its statement of community involvement,</p> <p>(d) copies of the notices referred to in regulation 10(a)(iv), 15(a)(iv), and 17(1)(a)(iii),</p> <p>(e) the timetable,</p> <p>(f) a statement setting out—</p> <p>(i) a summary of the main issues raised in representations made in accordance with regulation 11(2), and</p> <p>(ii) how those main issues have been taken into account in the preparation of the development plan document;</p> <p>(g) a statement setting out—</p> <p>(i) if representations were made in accordance with regulation 16(2) or 18(2), the number of representations made and a summary of the main issues raised in those representations, or</p> <p>(ii) that no such representations were made;</p> <p>(h) copies of any representations made in accordance with regulation 16(2) or 18(2), and</p> <p>(i) such supporting documents as in the opinion of the council are relevant to the preparation of the development plan document.</p> <p>(3) The council must also send to the Department via electronic communication—</p> <p>(a) where the development plan document is a plan strategy, a copy of that plan strategy, or</p> <p>(b) where the development plan document is a local policies plan—</p> <p>(i) a copy of that local policies plan, and</p> <p>(ii) a copy of the adopted plan strategy</p>	<p>sending documents to the Department this is via electronic means only.</p> <p>The current approach of preparing hard copies for the PAC, the Department and for public inspections is unsustainable.</p>
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Please add any other comments.

General comments

- The availability of hard copies for inspection is an out-dated approach contrary to most council sustainability objectives and is an option largely un-utilised by the general public, therefore this requirement should be omitted. Planning departments now offer facilities enabling members of the public to view the electronic planning register and other documents. Staff are also on hand to assist as necessary. To address any equality concerns councils will consider requests for alternative formats.
- Should the regulations retain the requirement for documents to be made available by the Council for inspection, the locations listed in the Regulations should be restricted to a location considered appropriate by the Council. This will enable councils to provide the documents at the most appropriate facilities, for example: the Local Planning Department as opposed to the “principal offices or other locations”.
- Local advertisement and Belfast Gazette requirements should be restricted to the following publication stages: POP, Plan Strategy (PS) (draft and adoption) and Local Policies Plan (LPP) (draft and adoption). All other procedural minor stages within those 3 main stages should only require notifications to consultees and registered interested parties, and only via email (unless otherwise agreed).

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.