

Title of Report:	Local Development Plan: Revised Timetable
Committee Report Submitted To:	Planning Committee
Date of Meeting:	27th March 2024
For Decision or For Information	For Decision

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: N/A	
Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Screening Requirements	N/A		
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 Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

FOR DECISION

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Council has a statutory duty to prepare a Local Development Plan (LDP) and to prepare and keep under review a timetable for the preparation and adoption of that Plan.
- 1.2 Departmental guidance sets out that the timetable should include indicative dates for each stage of Plan preparation and the publication of the Preferred Options Paper (POP) and the development plan documents (the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan) as well as the carrying out of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
- 1.3 Prepared within the context of the Council's Strategy and its Community Plan the initial timetable was published on 29th November 2016. It has been revised on several occasions, as follows:
 - Revision 1 - December 2017
 - Revision 2 - November 2019; and
 - Revision 3 - May 2021.
- 1.4 Each revision was approved by Council prior to notifying the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) and seeking agreement with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), as required.

2.0 Revised Timetable

- 2.1 It is important to reiterate that the current Plan-making process is new to Northern Ireland. No council has yet undertaken a full cycle of Plan preparation (including the POP, Plan Strategy & Local Policies Plan), therefore it is not yet possible to benchmark this entire process. The dates set out at Appendix 1 are best estimates, based on the most up to date evidence of the timeframes of those councils that have gone through the stages to date.
- 2.2 Although it was anticipated that the new planning regime would take some time to settle down, it is fair to say that it has been a much steeper learning curve than was originally anticipated, and that is true for all 11 NI Council's, Elected Members, DfI, PAC, the public, and many other key stakeholders involved in the process.
- 2.3 Central government guidance on specific topic areas is being revised and updated as councils progress through each stage of the Plan-making process. Given the evolving nature of this process it is also anticipated that further up-to-date guidance will be published during the Plan-making stage. The Council

has a statutory duty to take account of such guidance, and a failure to do so could result in the Department not progressing the LDP to the IE stage, or the LDP being found ‘unsound’ through the IE process.

- 2.4 This, in turn, has the potential to impact on the timetable and may result in additional stages of LDP preparation and/or increased workloads or costs.

Plan End Date

- 2.5 In preparing its LDP the Council must provide a 15-year plan framework to support the economic and social needs of the Borough in line with regional strategies and policies, while providing for the delivery of sustainable development.
- 2.6 To plan for this the LDP is given what is known as a “notional” end date. However, the Plan will not suddenly end on this date, unless a replacement plan is adopted.
- 2.7 Work on the LDP commenced in 2015 following the transfer of planning powers to the Council. Based on that commencement date, the original LDP end date was 2030. However, given the delay to the publication of the draft Plan Strategy the LDP timetable has been revised. It is important that the LDP notional end date also changes to reflect this delay. Given this, and previous timetable revisions, a new end date of 2038 will be adopted.

Draft Plan Strategy Publication

- 2.8 The chronology of the draft Plan Strategy publication is as follows:

Date	Event
24th August 2022	dPS publication presented and agreed at Planning Committee Meeting
1st November 2022	dPS publication presented at Full Council Meeting - deferred for further consideration and discussion with Members
November/December 2022	Party Group Meetings. This resulted in some further evidence gathering and consequential updates to the Council’s evidence base were also carried out.

August/September 2023	Further Party Group Meetings, subsequent to Local Government Elections. This resulted in some further evidence gathering and consequential updates to the Council's evidence base were also carried out.
7th December 2023	All-Member Workshop Agreed that an LDP Working Group should be set up.
24th January 2024	Paper presented to Planning Committee. Resolved to set up a LDP Working Group
19 th March 2024	LDP Working Group Meeting. Agreed to prepare paper for CP&R Committee to procure independent research to inform the LDP

- 2.9 The previous timetable (Revision 3, May 2021) set out an indicative date of spring/summer 2022 for publication of the draft Plan Strategy. However, the events set out in the above chronology have had implications on the LDP preparation. A revised timetable is therefore required. Revised indicative dates are now set out in the revised timetable attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.10 The revised indicative timeframe for the publication of the Draft Plan Strategy is Autumn/Winter 2026.
- 2.11 There are several additional factors that could potentially impact upon the Plan preparation. These are set out at Section 5 of the revised timetable and include steps and safeguards to manage the plan-making process and to highlight any potential impacts to Members.

Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) – Independent Examinations

- 3.0 The Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) has indicated that, due to resourcing issues, they will not be able to carry out any further independent examinations until at least 2025/2026. This has a high likelihood of impacting on the Council's Plan-making process. However, it lies outside of the Council's control.

4.0 Review

- 4.1 The timetable will be kept under review. Under the Planning Act 2011, the Council may carry out a revision, which must be agreed with both the PAC and DfI and publicised in the local newspaper and made available to view on the Council's website.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that Members agree to the Draft Revised LDP Timetable attached at Appendix 1.

Appendix 1: Draft Revised LDP Timetable



**Causeway
Coast & Glens
Borough Council**

March 2024

Local Development Plan 2038 Timetable

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This document is available in a range of formats upon request to the Development Plan Team.

Revised March 2024

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this timetable is to set out key stages and indicative timescales for the production of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Local Development Plan (LDP).
- 1.2 The timetable has been prepared within the legislative context of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, which require a council to prepare and keep under review a timetable for the preparation and adoption of its LDP. It has also been prepared within the context of the Council's Strategy and Community Plan.
- 1.3 The timetable was approved by resolution of the Council prior to consulting the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) and obtaining the agreement of the Department for Infrastructure (Dfi).
- 1.4 The LDP will inform the public, statutory authorities, developers, landowners and other interested parties of the planning policy framework and land use proposals that will guide development decisions in this Borough up to the end of the Plan period.
- 1.5 Taking account of regional policy, the LDP will set out a vision for how the Borough should look in the future, by setting out what type and scale of development should be encouraged and where it should be located. It will ensure that lands are appropriately zoned, and that enhancement of our infrastructure is facilitated to develop the area for the benefit of current and future generations.

2.0 The Local Development Plan Process

- 2.1 The LDP will be produced in two stages, comprising two documents, as follows:
 - **The Plan Strategy** – will define the Council's strategic planning framework, covering a wide range of topics and outline our vision for the Borough. It will state the LDP's overarching principles and strategic objectives, the Council's overall growth strategy, and the strategic planning policies applicable to this Borough. This will ensure strategic direction early in the LDP process, providing a level of certainty on which to base planning decisions as well as the necessary framework for the preparation of the next LDP document, the Local Policies Plan.
 - **The Local Policies Plan** – will be prepared within the context of the adopted Plan Strategy. In contrast, this document will contain the more detailed site-specific policies, designations and proposals associated with settlement development limits, land use zonings and local environmental designations required to deliver the Council's vision as set out in the Plan Strategy.

2.2 Both documents will be subject to public consultation and independent examination and when adopted in their entirety, they will form the new Plan that replaces the Northern Area Plan (NAP) 2016.

3.0 The Timetable

3.1 The timetable (see Appendix 1) provides indicative timeframes for the key stages of Plan preparation and associated publication documents. These are set out briefly, below:

- **Statement of Community Involvement in Planning (SCI)** - this document sets out how the Council intends to engage with the local community, key stakeholders and government departments during the preparation of its LDP.
- **Preferred Options Paper (POP)** - through the initial evidence gathering phase of Plan preparation, the Council identified a number of key issues affecting the Borough. The POP was brought forward to define a range of options for addressing these key issues and included the Council's preferred option. The POP was subject to public consultation and stakeholder engagement in accordance with the provisions set out in our SCI and the outcome informed the emerging draft Plan Strategy.
- **Draft Plan Strategy** - this public consultation document sets out the Council's strategic intentions regarding the future development of the Borough, up to 2038.
- **Submission of Draft Plan Strategy for Independent Examination** - an examination is held to determine the 'soundness' of the draft Plan Strategy, taking account of representations and counter-representations received within the consultation period. The examiner will issue, to Dfl, an Advisory Report of the findings arising from the IE.
- **Binding Report on Draft Plan Strategy** - following consideration of the Advisory Report, Dfl will issue a Binding Report to the Council.
- **Adoption of Plan Strategy** - the draft Plan Strategy will be formally adopted by the Council.
- **Draft Local Policies Plan** - this public consultation document contains the Council's detailed land use policies and proposals regarding the future development of the Borough.
- **Submission of Draft Local Policies Plan for Independent Examination** - held to determine the 'soundness' of the draft Local Policies Plan, taking into account representations and counter-representations received within the consultation

period. The examiner will issue, to DfI, an Advisory Report of the findings arising from the IE.

- **Binding Report on Draft Local Policies Plan** - following consideration of the Advisory Report, DfI will issue a Binding Report to the Council.
- **Adoption of Local Policies Plan** - the Local Policies Plan will be formally adopted by the Council.
- **Monitoring & Review of LDP** - the LDP will be annually monitored, and formally reviewed at least every 5 years.

4.0 Accompanying Assessments

4.1 The Council will carry out a number of assessments alongside the preparation of its LDP.

- **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** - runs in tandem with the LDP preparation to ensure that consideration is given to social, environmental and economic factors throughout the entire Plan-making process. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Plan will be incorporated into the SA. SA Reports will be published at key stages as set out in Appendix 1.
- **Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)** - will consider the potential impact of the Plan policies and proposals on designated nature conservation sites.
- **Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)** - will determine if the Plan is likely to have differential impacts on specific sections of the community.
- **Rural Impact Assessment (RNIA)** - will determine if the Plan is likely to have differential impacts on those living in rural areas.

5.0 Delivery of the LDP

5.1 Meeting the revised timetable is dependent upon Elected Member involvement, adequate resourcing (including relevant government departments, key consultees and the Planning Appeals Commission) and risk management. The steps below will help to ensure, as much as possible, that the timetable is met:

- A Steering Group has been established in line with our “Statement of Community Involvement in Planning” (SCI). It ensures oversight and strategic input on behalf of the whole community, as well as from the Council’s planning professionals.
- Our Elected Members will attend workshops to discuss topic-based reports setting out the draft policy approach, taking into account key consultee/stakeholder comments.

- A LDP Working Group has been established to discuss and agree key policy issues.
- A Project Management Team has also been established in line with our SCI. The team facilitates key consultee co-operation in our Plan-making process.
- Members will be presented with 6-monthly LDP Work Programmes (through the Planning Committee) outlining the high-level work areas to be covered and any related corresponding indicative dates (where known). This will continue throughout the Plan-making process.

5.2 There are also a number of factors lying outside the Council's control, which could potentially impact on delivery of the LDP.

5.3 Table 1 sets out the Council's LDP Risk Management Log:

Table 1: Risk Management Log

	Issue	Risk Level	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Action
1	Elected Member Involvement	High	Likely	Significant delay (6-12 months)	Ensure on-going Member engagement.
2	IT Failure/Data disclosure	High	Likely	Significant delay (6-12 months)	Ensure adequate storage capacity and systems in place to regularly backup data. Ensure robust security measures in place for LDP data.
3	Consultancy or Specialist input	High	Likely	Significant delay (6-12 months)	Scoping of work to identify specialist or technical input (skills and expertise) required. Develop staff skills and competencies. Use of external consultants to support the Development Plan Team.
4	Competing Work Priorities	High	Likely	Significant delay (6-12 months)	Corporate commitment to adequately resource the LDP.

					Recognition that the LDP is a high priority.
5	Volume of work LDP programme too ambitious	Medium	Likely	Short term delay (< 6 months)	Robust scoping of work required. Sound project planning with realistic and flexible timescales. Careful monitoring of progress.
6	Staffing Issues	High	Likely	Significant delay (6-12 months)	Ensure sufficient staff resources with necessary knowledge and experience are available for LDP preparation.
7	Financial resources	High	Likely	Significant delay (6-12 months)	Ensure the Timetable informs the Council's short and medium term financial plan.
8	Public Consultation Process. The number and nature of representations and resultant workload are not predictable and lie outside the Council's control.	Medium	Likely	Significant delay (6-12 months)	Based on the province-wide experience to date the Timetable takes into account the likely time required to progress this stage of Plan preparation.
9	Consultee and stakeholder involvement There are multiple LDP's in progress at any one time across NI. The resourcing of consultees and stakeholders is not within the Council's control.	High	Likely	Significant delay (6-12 months)	The Timetable provides advanced notice of the key indicative dates associated with its Plan-making programme. The Council will liaise regularly with relevant stakeholders to minimise prospect of slippage.
10	Delays associated with the IE process.	Very High	Highly likely	Major delay (>12 months) Possible major delay to date for IE	The Council's timetable provides advance notice of key indicative dates associated with the

	<p>This stage involves: Council's submission to Dfl; Dfl consideration of submission; Dfl call the IE; PAC consideration of submission: PAC hold IE Hearing; PAC issue Advisory Report to Dfl; and Dfl issue Binding Report to Council.</p> <p>This stage lies outside of the Council's control. and experience to date shows that the timeline associated with this stage of Plan preparation has not been uniform across councils.</p> <p>PAC resources to hold IE lies outside the control of Council.</p>			<p>The PAC has indicated that, due to resourcing issues, they will not be in a position to carry out any further independent examinations until at least 2025/2026.</p>	<p>Plan-making programme.</p> <p>Ensure robust evidence base to support decisions.</p> <p>On-going liaison with PAC & Dfl.</p> <p>Carry out soundness and compliance checks.</p>
11	<p>Tests of Soundness</p> <p>Risk of the Plan being found 'unsound'.</p>	Very high	Likely	<p>Major delay (> 12 months) Possible failure to prepare LDP</p>	<p>Ensure robust evidence base to support decisions.</p> <p>On-going liaison with PAC & Dfl.</p> <p>Carry out soundness and compliance checks.</p>
12	<p>Legal Challenge</p> <p>Risk of legal challenge to the Plan-making process.</p>	Very high	Likely	<p>Major delay (> 12 months) Possible failure to prepare LDP</p>	<p>Ensure robust evidence base to support decisions.</p> <p>On-going liaison with PAC & Dfl.</p>

					<p>Meaningful consultation and on-going legal audit.</p> <p>Carry out soundness and compliance checks.</p>
13	<p>Changes to regional legislation, policy and guidance</p> <p>This lies outside the Council's control.</p>	Very High	Highly likely	<p>Major delay (>12 months)</p> <p>Possible major delay as this includes a review of some of the policies contained within the SPPS, as well as the outworking of the Climate Change Act.</p>	<p>Carefully monitor changes to regional legislation, policy and guidance.</p> <p>Early and on-going engagement with central government and other key stakeholders, including PAC.</p>
14	<p>Other:</p> <p>Major disruption to working practices and workplace arrangements as a consequence of an emergency/crisis.</p> <p>Disruption to work practices and/or loss of data etc due to damage/loss of workplace/storage due to fire, flood, storm, or other means of destruction.</p> <p>Wider issues such as these lie outside the Council's control.</p>	High	Unlikely	Significant delay (6-12 months)	<p>We must work within prevailing government and public health guidelines.</p> <p>Ensure adequate resources and arrangements in place to facilitate alternative staff working arrangements.</p> <p>Ensure safe and secure workplace and storage facilities with preventative measures and maintenance against potential damage or security risk.</p> <p>Ensure data back-up with remote access.</p>

5.4 Annual Reporting on the LDP Steering Group and Project Management Team is undertaken to assess the progress in meeting the LDP Timetable. In the event that

progress is not in line with the timetable, the Council has the power to publish a revised timetable.

6.0 Progress

6.1 The Council published its original SCI and LDP Timetable in 2016. The LDP Preferred Options Paper (POP) was published in 2018. The suite of topic-based discussion papers that accompanied the POP has been updated through the draft Plan Strategy Topic Review Reports and this evidence gathering stage had concluded.

6.2 Progress on the draft Plan Strategy publication is as follows:

Date	Event
24th August 2022	dPS publication presented and agreed at Planning Committee Meeting.
1st November 2022	dPS publication presented at Full Council Meeting - deferred for further consideration and discussion with Members.
November/December 2022	Party Group Meetings. This resulted in some further evidence gathering and consequential updates to the Council's evidence base were also carried out.
August/September 2023	Further Party Group Meetings, after Local Government Elections. This resulted in some further evidence gathering and consequential updates to the Council's evidence base were also carried out.
7th December 2023	All-Member Workshop. Agreed that an LDP Working Group should be set up.
24th January 2024	Paper presented to Planning Committee. Resolved to set up a LDP Working Group.
19th March 2024	LDP Working Group Meeting. Agreed to prepare paper for CP&R Committee to procure independent research to inform the LDP.

6.3 The previous timetable (Revision 3, May 2021) set out an indicative date of spring/summer 2022 for publication of the draft Plan Strategy. A revised timetable is therefore required prior to publication of the draft Plan Strategy.

6.4 Revised indicative dates are now set out at Appendix 1.

Appendix 1: Revised LDP Timetable

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council Local Development Plan (LDP) Revised Timetable		
Key LDP Stage	Accompanying Documents*	Indicative dates**
STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI) & LDP TIMETABLE		
Publish Draft SCI Non-statutory Public Consultation: 8 weeks	n/a	Complete
Publish SCI & LDP Timetable	n/a	Complete
PREFERRED OPTIONS PAPER (POP)		
Stakeholder & Member Engagement. Evidence gathering.	Invite comments from Consultation Body (NIEA) on Draft SA/SEA Scoping Report.	Complete
Publish Preferred Options Paper Statutory Public Consultation: 12 weeks	Publish POP, SA/SEA Scoping & Interim Reports, HRA and EQIA Screenings.	Complete
PLAN STRATEGY (PS)		
Analyse POP Representations. Consultee & Stakeholder Engagement. Member Engagement. Evidence Base update.	Update SA/SEA Report; Draft HRA, EqIA & RNIA. Invite comment from Consultation Body (NIEA) on SA/SEA.	Complete
Publish Draft Plan Strategy Following Publication: Statutory Public Consultation: 8 weeks for Representations & 8 weeks for Counter-representations. Analyse representations received. Consult on any focussed changes to draft Plan Strategy***	Publish SA/SEA Report; Draft HRA, EqIA & RNIA. Publish any accompanying papers e.g Landscape Study, Retail and Commercial Leisure Capacity Study.	Publication date Autumn/Winter 2026
Submission of Draft Plan Strategy for IE Following Submission: Council's submission to Dfl; Dfl consideration of submission; Dfl call an IE; PAC consideration of submission: PAC hold IE Hearing; PAC issue Advisory Report to Dfl; and Dfl issue Binding Report to Council	SA/SEA, Draft HRA, EqIA & RNIA.	Submission date Autumn/Winter 2027
Council considers Binding Report/Direction from Dfl – incorporate required changes to PS	May require further consultation.	Spring/Summer 2029

Adopt Plan Strategy	Publish Adoption Statements/Reports, HRA, EqIA, RNIA and any other relevant assessments.	Adoption date Autumn 2029
LOCAL POLICIES PLAN (LPP)		
Consultee, Stakeholder & Member Engagement. Evidence gathering.	Update SA/SEA Report; Draft HRA, EqIA & RNIA. Invite comment from Consultation Body (NIEA) on SA/SEA.	Summer/Autumn 2030
Publish Draft Local Policies Plan Following Publication: Statutory Public Consultation:- 8 weeks for Representations & 8 weeks for Counter-representations. Analyse representations received. Consult on any focussed changes to draft Plan Strategy***	Publish SA/SEA Report; Draft HRA, EqIA & RNIA. Publish any accompanying papers.	Publication date Winter 2030
Submission of Draft Local Policies Plan for IE Following Submission: Council's submission to DfI; DfI consideration of submission; DfI call an IE; PAC consideration of submission: PAC hold IE Hearing; PAC issue Advisory Report to DfI; and DfI issue Binding Report to Council	SA/SEA, Draft HRA, EqIA & RNIA.	Submission date Winter 2031
Council considers Binding Report/Direction from DfI – incorporate required changes to LPP	May require further consultation.	Winter 2032
Adopt Local Policies Plan	Publish Adoption Statements/Reports, HRA, EqIA, RNIA and any other relevant assessments.	Adoption date Spring 2033
MONITOR/REVIEW OF LDP		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Monitor • 5 and 10 Year Reviews 	Monitor SA/SEA & any other necessary assessments.	On-going

* Definitions			
DfI	Department for Infrastructure	RNIA	Rural Needs Impact Assessment
EqIA	Equality Impact Assessment	SA/SEA	Sustainability Appraisal including Strategic Environmental Assessment
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment	SCI	Statement of Community Involvement in Planning
IE	Independent Examination	PAC	Planning Appeals Commission

****Indicative dates:** These will be reviewed regularly and reported on annually. Please note that these dates are indicative only and may be affected by internal/external factors.

***** Focussed Changes:** Following analysis of representations received the Council may consider it appropriate to carry out additional public consultation on some or all of the proposed changes to the document.

'Soundness' Whilst the term 'sound' is not defined in the Planning Act (NI) 2011, it may be considered in this context within its ordinary meaning of 'showing good judgement' and 'able to be trusted' and within the context of fulfilling the expectations of legislation.

