



Subject:	Belfast Local Development Plan - Timetable Revision
Date:	14 November 2017
Reporting Officer:	Keith Sutherland, Development Plans and Policy Manager
Contact Officer:	Mark Whittaker, Senior Planning Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To update the Members on progress with the new Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP) and to review the timetable for the adoption of the LDP.
1.2	The City Council published its agreed timetable for the preparation and adoption of the new LDP in June 2016 following consultation with the Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) and the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC). A summary of this initial timetable is attached at Appendix 1. The Council has completed the Preferred Options Paper (POP) stage and work is currently ongoing in preparing the Draft Plan Strategy.
1.3	In response to the early engagement, additional detailed studies to support the required evidence base for the new LDP were approved and are nearing completion. The requirement to carry out these additional complex pieces of work has impacted on the work programme and there has been some slippage in the originally approved timetable. In addition, we are advised by the Planning Appeals Commission that the Independent Examination of the LDP, at both formal stages, could take approximately one year and this has further implications for the current approved LDP timetable.
1.4	It has been agreed with Dfi that the LDP timetable will be kept under review and this report proposes to formally revise and update the timetable to reflect progress and projected timeframes. As part of the review the consultation timeframes outlined in the approved Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) have been reassessed in relation to the re-consultation aspects of the LDP process. This report also seeks approval to make minor revisions to the SCI for submission to the Dfi for approval in advance of formal amendment

	to the published document.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>It is recommended that the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notes the updates set out in the report; • agrees the revisions to the LDP timetable as set out in 3.7 and Appendix 2; and • agrees the amendments to the SCI consultation periods as set out in paragraphs 3.10 to 3.11.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The approved LDP Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and Timetable were published in June 2016 and these set out the consultation arrangements and timeframes associated with the key stages in the LDP process. The test of soundness for the LDP includes consideration of adherence to the SCI and agreed timetable.
3.2	The currently approved timetable (Appendix 1) covers the full plan-making cycle. It was agreed with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) in accordance with planning legislation on the basis that it would be kept under review. There are regulatory provisions to allow the Council to revise both the timetable and the SCI in response to changes in the anticipated timeline for LDP preparation.
3.3	Delays were encountered in the preparation and publication of the Preferred Options Paper (POP), which was published several months later than the approved timetable. The preparatory work for the Draft Plan Strategy has required the commissioning of additional detailed studies, not anticipated at the outset of the process, to support the evidence base. These include an Urban Capacity Study, Housing Market Needs Assessment, Retail and Leisure Study and Open Spaces Strategy.
3.4	The detailed studies are essential in seeking to ensure that the Draft Plan Strategy meets the soundness tests and are now nearing completion. This evidence will also inform the later Local Policies Plan and, therefore, time spent now should help frontload the later stage of the plan development.
3.5	In addition to some slippage on the LDP timetable to date, we have also been advised by the Planning Appeals Commission that the Independent Examination of the LDP, at both the Draft Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan stages, could take approximately one year, which is an increase from the 9 months originally estimated by DfI. As the Independent Examination stages are outside the control of the Council, it is considered expedient to reflect the additional time allowances in the revised timetable.
3.6	The above matters have implications for the approved LDP timetable and it is considered necessary to revise the timetable at this time, in advance of submitting the Draft Plan Strategy for Independent Examination.
3.7	The current timetable states that the Draft Plan Strategy will be available for public consultation in the “second half of 2017”. Intensive preparatory work is ongoing, including engagement with key stakeholders, and it is now anticipated that formal consultation will start in March/April 2018. This will require members to consider and approve the formal draft Plan Strategy documents in the first quarter of 2018. In addition as much of the upcoming LDP process lies outside the Council’s control, it should be recognised that there remains a significant degree of uncertainty for this future timetable necessitating ongoing review, in consultation with DfI, at each stage of the process.
3.8	The revised timetable is attached at Appendix 2 of this report. It is recommended that the Committee endorses the revised timetable for submission to DfI for formal agreement. The

	<p>timetable will be kept under review during the LDP process and any further changes will be brought to the Committee for consideration.</p> <p>3.9 The delay in publishing the Draft Plan Strategy and the potential longer period for Independent Examination will require a formal modification of the timetable and there is the parallel opportunity to introduce interrelated changes to the SCI. As part of the timetable review and ongoing discussions, the periods for consultation within the SCI were also reassessed. The SCI provides for a series of 12-week consultation periods where public representation and counter-representation to the draft LDP documents are possible.</p> <p>3.10 These Council timescales are beyond the statutory 8-week periods set out in the LDP Regulations. Following the reassessment, it is considered that there is potential to reduce the overall timeframe for the LDP process by aligning some of the consultation periods with the statutory requirements. It is, therefore, suggested that a statutory 8-week period is applied to each of the more narrowly focussed counter-representation stages.</p> <p>3.11 This revision to the SCI would leave the opportunity to engage in the primary consultation unaltered at 12-weeks, in the interests of encouraging public participation. During this initial consultation the draft plan documents will be published 4 weeks in advance of the statutory 8-week period to allow for additional engagement. Should this be agreed by members, the SCI (and any relevant text in the timetable) will be amended accordingly and submitted to the DfI for agreement, prior to its publication.</p> <p><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u> There are no resource implications associated with this report.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> None noted.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u> There are no relevant equality or good relations implications attached to this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	<p>Appendix 1 – Agreed LDP Summary Timetable</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Proposed Revised LDP Summary Timetable</p>

Belfast City Local Development Plan (LDP) 2035 - Timetable		Key Stages	Notes on Proposed Process	Indicative Timescales
Preliminary Work	Publication of Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final SCI to be submitted to Department for approval 	April 2016	
	Publication of Timetable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult Statutory Stakeholders Final SCI to be submitted to Department for approval 	May 2016	
	Preparation of evidence base to underpin production of Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission specific, specialist studies required (e.g. Population and Housing Growth) Internal Council consultation to develop evidence base and identify key issues Identification of key issues in relation to specific themes for consultation with relevant statutory consultees and key stakeholders Consult consultation body (NIEA) with Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating SEA) Scoping Report 	May – June 2016	
	Informal consultation with Elected Members, statutory stakeholders and community representatives			
	Publication of Preferred Options Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 week public consultation Publish Topic Papers and supporting evidence alongside POP, including appraisal of alternative options Publication of Sustainability Appraisal (inc. SEA) Interim Report Initial EqIA and HRA Screening 	July – September 2016	
Plan Strategy	Consideration of responses to POP consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of Public Consultation Report Informal consultation with key stakeholders 	Early 2017	
	Publication of Draft Plan Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 week public consultation, followed by 8 week consultation on representations Publication of Sustainability Appraisal (inc. SEA) and Public Consultation Report Publication of EqIA and HRA where required 	Second half 2017	
	Soundness Based Independent Examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advisory report to Central Government Central Government Issues binding report to Council 	Spring 2018	
	Adoption of Plan Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes made to finalise Plan Strategy Publication of final Sustainability Appraisal (inc. SEA) and Public Consultation Report Publication of final EqIA and HRA where required 	Early 2019*	
Local Policies Plan	Informal consultation with Elected Members and statutory stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal consultation with relevant statutory consultees and key stakeholders Consult consultation body (NIEA) with Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating SEA) Scoping Report 	Spring 2018 – Early 2019	
	Publication of Draft Local Policies Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 week public consultation, followed by 8 week consultation on representations Publication of final Sustainability Appraisal (inc. SEA) and Public Consultation Report Publication of final EqIA and HRA where required 	Spring - Autumn 2019	
	Soundness Based Independent Examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advisory report to Central Government Central Government Issues binding report to Council 	Early 2020	
	Adoption of Local Policies Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advisory report to Central Government Central Government Issues binding report to Council 	Late 2020*	
Monitor and Review	Monitoring and Review of LDP, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Monitoring Reports 5 and 10 year review (leading to commencement of a replacement Local Development Plan) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advisory report to Central Government Central Government Issues binding report to Council 	On going	

Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA))

* May require a longer period depending on changes required following Independent Examination

Appendix 2 – Proposed Revised LDP Summary Timetable

