

Title of Report: Housing in the Settlement Hierarchy – Options for LDP Preferred Options Paper (POP)	Officer Presenting: Principal Planning Officer
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1 Purpose of Report/Recommendations

- 1.1 The purpose of this Paper is to present a summary of the salient issues, discussed at the LDP Workshop that dealt with this LDP Topic. The Paper also seeks agreement from Members as to how best to progress these Topics towards the Preferred Options Paper (POP) stage of the LDP in early 2017.

2 Background

- 2.1 As previously explained, the various technical aspects of Planning which comprise the LDP are each being considered systematically, each marked by the series of councillor Workshops and meetings of this Planning Committee. In accordance with the Workplan, this Committee meeting is a further stage in that Plan-making process. The meeting summarises the Discussion Paper from the earlier Workshop, combines feedback from the wider body of Councillors and points towards the identification of Options. The Committee is asked to make preliminary decisions on the proposed Options, regarding these aspects, that the LDP is considering, as we proceed towards further evidence gathering, consultee and stakeholder input and then further Committee meetings (plus full Council approval) to finally decide on the LDP Preferred Options, to be published during 2017.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The Workshop and Discussion Paper at Appendix 1 (with some updated statistics, etc.) has reviewed the regional policies which guide the amount and type of housing to be allocated and delivered in the LDP. In particular, the Council must take account of the settlement hierarchy and Housing Growth Indicators (HGIs, which the Council's Planning Committee, officials and statistician continue to take issue with) in the Regional Development Strategy (RDS 2035) and the process of allocating housing land set out in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for NI (SPPS) and PPS 12: Housing in Settlements (and PPS 21: Countryside), as well as the good design guidance stipulated in PPS 7 'Quality Residential Environments'. The existing

Derry Area Plan 2011 and Strabane Area Plan 2001 set out the current settlement limits and significant amounts of extant unzoned and zoned land (500 hectares remaining) suitable for housing. The Paper also looks towards the higher level aspirations for providing an adequate supply of good quality housing for the District's population, as set out in the emerging Community Plan for the District.

- 3.2 The Paper considers the population projections for the District up to 2030 and hence the need for additional households and new houses over this LDP period. This is then compared against recent building rates, the RDS HGIs and the existing land supply. This is supplemented with statistics from the NIHE on the type and tenure of housing in the District, especially the current estimates of need for social and affordable housing.
- 3.3 In terms of preparing the Local Development Plan, the key instruments will be a) the land allocations and b) the policies. Accordingly, the Paper begins to consider how much housing land we will actually provide to meet the District's needs up to 2030 and then how that land should be strategically allocated across the settlement hierarchy – of Derry city, Strabane town, the local towns, the villages, small settlements and also the open countryside. The accompanying policies in the LDP will then determine the amount and type of housing that can ultimately be delivered (subject to separate policy-review papers).
- 3.4 The Member's feedback at the Workshop included:
- It was recognised that given the existing commitments, and need levels, the Council's scope seems to be limited.
 - Need to standardise and define our hierarchy of settlements across the District.
 - How do the HGI figure add up against the social housing figures?
 - What Brownfield sites remain and how do these sites tie in with roads and traffic? Mapping Exercise to be done and TNI to be consulted e.g. Limavady Road and Northland Road (as well other congested areas such as Bunrana and Culmore Roads). Many brownfield sites are more suitable for uses other than housing.
 - We also need greenfield sites – to realistically accommodate the bulk of our housing.
 - There should be no more cramming of social housing.
 - Need balanced and mixed communities, especially concern at some larger housing sites
 - Urban cramming is an issue generally and can impact on residential character.
 - Design is important in terms of community infrastructure e.g. schools, shops.
 - Both urban and rural areas have difficulties. Distinguish between 'outer rural' and 'inner rural' areas. NIHE Latent Demand studies needed for rural settlements.
 - Rural areas need to be sustainable and vibrant. 'Sustainability' includes 'providing a choice' for rural dwellers. Concern about rural de-population.
 - Policy is constrained in the rural areas. It has discouraged rural applications – even if the refusal rate is low. It needs relaxed, issues such as clustering and permission on farms.
 - More sites for travellers needed. Statistics may not be a reliable picture.

4 Financial, Equality, Legal, HR, Improvement and Other Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial, equality, legal, HR, Improvement or other implications arising from this report, beyond those already outlined.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 Members are requested to accept the contents of this Paper as part of the Council's 'evidence base' and SA 'environmental baseline'.
- 5.2 Members are also asked to agree that Planning officials proceed to develop options in line with this Paper and in consultation with key consultees and stakeholders, including NIHE and the various Housing Associations. The updated Housing Monitor will also assist in ensuring that these options can then be firmed up as part of the subsequent LDP Preferred Options stage.

Background Papers

Appendix 1 – 'Housing in the Settlement Hierarchy' Discussion Paper, 12th September 2016 (as updated)