

Title of Report: Item 15 – Re-advertisement of the Fermanagh & Omagh District Council Local Development Plan Draft Plan Strategy - Proposed Changes Consultation	Officer Presenting: Principal Planning Officer
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1 Purpose of Report / Recommendations

- 1.1 The purpose of this Paper is to advise Members of the re-running and re-advertisement of the Fermanagh & Omagh District Council Local Development Plan Draft Plan Strategy - Proposed Changes Consultation. Members considered the previous consultation with a paper to the Planning Committee in September 2020.

2 Background

- 2.1 Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's Draft Plan Strategy - Proposed Changes Consultation was to run for consultation for 8 weeks, commencing on Thursday 16th July 2020 and ending on Friday 11th September 2020.
- 2.2 However, it was realised that the original Schedule of Proposed Changes was incorrect so it cancelled that consultation exercise. Fermanagh & Omagh District Council has now updated the consultation document to reflect all the changes agreed with Councillors and the Council is now re-running its consultation, which runs from 8th October to 3rd December 2020. Specifically, the new documents accurately reflect the agreed position of the Council, particularly in relation to policies MIN04: Unconventional Hydrocarbon Extraction, FLD03: Sustainable Drainage Systems, RE01: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation and HOU17: Affordable Housing in the Countryside.
- 2.3 The proposed changes can be viewed here: <https://www.fermanaghomagh.com/services/planning/local-development-plan-draft-plan-strategy-proposed-changes-consultation-2/>

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 Members will recall that they considered the previous consultation with a paper to the Planning Committee (Item 10) on 2nd / 3rd September 2020. Members agreed to issue a letter to Fermanagh & Omagh District Council, broadly responding to say that we noted the proposed changes and had no further comment to add regarding the Proposed Changes, having considered in particular whether they would have any significant impact on our adjoining District or our own emerging LDP.
- 3.2 With the latest consultation, the 4 areas requiring updating were as follows:
- **MIN04 - Unconventional Hydrocarbon Extraction.** Update: no changes are proposed to the wording of draft Policy MIN04 and the agreed draft policy wording can be found in the Fermanagh & Omagh District Council Draft Plan Strategy document as published in October 2018. As there are no proposed changes to draft Policy MIN04 – Unconventional Hydrocarbon Extraction, it is not included in the Schedule of Proposed Changes;
 - **FLD03 – Sustainable Drainage Systems.** Update: the policy has been amended to increase its application to all types of development given the benefits of this type of drainage solution;
 - **RE01 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation.** Update: has been amended to more closely reflect the regional strategic policy within the SPSS with additional criteria relating to decommissioning and restoration and fall distance from public road and to remove reference to large-scale solar installations. The draft policy as proposed would not permit Solar Farms within the Fermanagh & Omagh part of the Sperrin AONB or their proposed Special Countryside Areas (SCAs) and Areas of High Scenic Value (AoHSV);
 - **HOU17 – Affordable Housing in the Countryside.** Update: the proposed policy has been updated to increase the potential number of affordable dwellings from 6 to 8 dwellings in a group. Deletion of references to Rural Development / Community Association in line with representation from NIHE and legal advice.
- 3.3 This Council's Planning officers have reviewed these latest amendments and are content that they reflect regional strategic policy guidance where applicable and the basis for their required change.
- 3.4 In terms of any impact these amendments may have on those proposed policies / designations contained within our own LDP draft Plan Strategy, Officers note the enhanced overall thrust for landscape protection within the most sensitive landscapes within the Fermanagh and Omagh District. Proposed wording amendments, particularly with AONB or Special Countryside Areas, tighten the need for landscape consideration, reduce the range of activities considered appropriate within such areas and require enhanced supporting landscape submissions along with any applications in such areas.

- 3.5 Whereas both Councils' policies for such sensitive areas was previously considered broadly comparable in tone and intent, in terms of both policy and justification wording, it could now be considered that the Fermanagh & Omagh policies could be perceived as stricter in terms of landscape protection in their most sensitive landscapes and appropriate development (if any) within them. Therefore, whilst there will inevitably be some scope for different policies across the 4 Districts of the Sperrin AONB, we will need to consider the impact this may have on the co-ordination between the adjoining Councils. This could affect the 'soundness' of both LDPs.
- 3.6 It is suggested that the officers, and relevant Members, convene a further (virtual) meeting of the Sperrins Forum during November, to discuss the proposed changes and indeed the latest AONB-related feedback from Consultation bodies and Representations to our respective LDP draft Plan Strategies / POP for CC&GBC.
- 3.7 In due course, LDP Officers will review our relevant policies to ensure there is a respective 'read over' across the AONB. Any changes considered necessary in the natural environment / landscape section or any other part of the dPS, arising from responses made to our LDP dPS representation / counter-representation consultation periods will require to be agreed with Members prior to their future public consultation.

4 Financial, Equality, Legal, HR, Improvement, Rural Needs and other Implications

- 4.1 There are not considered to be any financial, equality, HR, Improvement, Rural Needs or other implications arising out of this paper. To note, the requirement for cross-Council co-ordination is an important consideration for this Council in achieving the "soundness" of our LDP dPS at the Independent Examination.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 Members are requested to note the contents of this Paper, familiarise themselves with the ongoing re-consultation accessible via the link in Para. 2.3, to agree / participate in a meeting of the Sperrins Forum and agree to the draft response to issue to Fermanagh & Omagh District Council LDP team prior to the 3rd December 2020 consultation deadline.

Appendix 13

Draft response letter on Proposed Changes Re-Consultation, to issue to Fermanagh & Omagh District Council LDP Team