

ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY DRAFT COMMUNITY PLAN

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) SCREENING REPORT

This SEA screening report template was developed by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and has been adapted by the Community Planning Manager for Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council for use on the emerging priority issues identified by our own community planning processes.

The contents of this report relate to the requirements contained within Schedule 1 of the Environment Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulation (Northern Ireland) 2004 and will assist in determining the need for an SEA for the Draft Community Plan for Antrim and Newtownabbey.

Part 1

Consultation Body: Department of the Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)
Klondyke Building, Cromac Avenue,
Gasworks Business Park,
Lower Ormeau Road,
Belfast, BT7 2JA

Legislative Requirement: The Development, implementation and monitoring of the Community Plan is a legislative function prescribed in the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

Part 2

Screening is required as outlined in the 'EU Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment – (commonly known as the 'SEA Directive' and translated into a Northern Ireland law in 'The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulation (Northern Ireland) 2004'.

Determination

An SEA is not required because the Community Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects. The Community Plan is high level and strategic in nature and any specific activities arising as a result of the outcomes contained within the plan will be subject to screening in their own right either via the Local Development Planning process or the screening of another strategy.

The Community Plan will consist of a series of four outcomes and related indicators/measures which will be delivered via the strategies and work programmes of the community planning partners.

Introduction

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Community Plan falls within the scope of Article 2 of the EU Directive 2001/42/EC as it is a plan that is (a) subject to adoption by the Council and (b) is directed by the legislative and regulatory provisions of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The EU Directive 2001/42/EC has been transposed into Northern Ireland law within the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulation (Northern Ireland) 2014 and provides in Part I that a determination needs to be made as to whether certain plans or programmes are required to undertake an SEA process. Making a determination is the first stage of the SEA process and is referred to as 'screening'.

Screening is required under the above named regulations to determine whether the policies or objectives of any plan or programme would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The aim of this report is to determine if the Community Plan requires an SEA to be undertaken. The objectives are:

- To set out and consider the characteristics of the Community Plan.
- To set out and consider the characteristics of the environmental effects of the Community Plan and the areas likely to be affected.
- To inform and advise the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and Antrim and Newtownabbey District Council of the determination made.

Article 2 and 3 of the SEA Directive sets out the criteria which determines the requirement for a SEA process to be processed. Article 3 provides for a determination on a case by case basis as to whether plans are likely to have a significant environmental effect taking into account the criteria of Annex II of the Directive (transposed into Northern Ireland law this refers to Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulation (Northern Ireland) 2004).

Application of the Screening criteria was applied with guidance from 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Responsible Authority	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
Contact Address / Person	Head of Community Planning Mrs Louise Moore Community Planning & Regeneration Dept. Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Mossley Mill Newtownabbey Co Antrim BT36 5QA 028 9034 0030 louise.moore@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk
Approval Signature	
Date of Submission	
Title of Plan	Antrim and Newtownabbey Community Plan
Purpose of Plan	The Community Plan will be the strategic long-term plan for the council area which will inform and guide delivery of services by all partners. The Local Development Plan for the area provides the spatial strategy for the Community Plan.
What Prompted the Plan (i.e. legislation, regulatory or administrative provision)	The Council has a legislative duty, under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 to ' <i>initiate, maintain, facilitate and participate in community planning</i> '. Community planning partners must participate and assist the Council in discharge of its duties in relation to community planning.
Subject	Community Planning
Period Covered by Plan	10-15 years with a review of performance against outcomes published every 2 years and a review of the plan every 4 years.
Area Covered by the Plan	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area (map attached at appendix 1).
Summary of nature / content of Community Plan	The Community Plan and associated supporting documentation will set out the long term vision, outcomes and indicators for the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a baseline of the existing conditions in the area • A review of the context of regional, national and European policies and strategies and taking account of communities and issues that extend into neighbouring council areas and jurisdictions; • Long term vision for area; • Long term outcomes against which progress can be monitored and evaluated; • A focus on delivering in the short to medium term to achieve the long term vision • Governance Structure and delivery arrangements.

Are there any proposed plans?

The Community Plan will be a high level strategic document containing outcomes and indicators. These are currently in draft form and are attached for information.

The action planning stage of the Community Plan process will include objectives for actions and initiatives developed by and for implementation by the Community Planning Partnership.

Criteria for determination of the likely significance of effects on the environment
The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to –
(a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature , size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;
Likely to have significant environmental effects? Yes No X
Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)
<p>The Community Plan is the long-term strategic planning framework for the Antrim and Newtownabbey area affecting the Council and its partners as outlined in the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014; the draft Local Government (Community Planning Partners order) 2014 and associated guidance. It will provide strategic and policy direction for the delivery of services by all of its partners.</p> <p>Its key principles and purpose will be to determine:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A shared vision for the Antrim and Newtownabbey geographic area. 2. To develop shared outcomes and under pinning principles. 3. Outcome delivery plans for performance against outcomes. 4. A mechanism for partnership working and effective co-ordination in the delivery of services. 5. A coordinated approach and a shared commitment to citizen participation. 6. A locally appropriate response to the needs of residents within the framework of the Plan's priorities <p>The Antrim and Newtownabbey Community Plan will be centred on a number of strategic high-level outcomes, with corresponding indicators/measures, which will be achieved through the development and implementation of strategies and programmes by the community planning partners.</p> <p>The Community Plan will not identify specific locations or projects/activities but will contain high-level outcomes and indicators/measures to determine progress. Therefore the plan will not set any precedent for development.</p>
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;
Likely to have significant environmental effects? Yes No X
Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)
<p>The Community Plan will be an influential and strategic plan governing the Antrim and Newtownabbey geographic area.</p> <p>It will inform all other strategies within Council and those of Partner Agencies. Partner agencies are legally obligated to align plans and strategies to 'take account' of the Community Plan.</p> <p>The Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014 and the amendments to the Planning Act (NI) 2011 provide a statutory link between the Community Plan and Local Development Plan. The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Sustainable</p>

Development 2014 clearly states that Councils '*must take account of the Community Plan when preparing a Local Development Plan*'.

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Community Plan will be centred on a number of strategic high-level outcomes, with corresponding indicators/measures, which will be achieved through the development and implementation of strategies and programmes by the community planning partners.

Other plans including the Economic Development Strategy, Leisure Strategy, Corporate Improvement Plan, Tourism Strategy, Peace IV Action Plan and Rural Development Strategy will become implementation plans for the delivery against the four outcomes in the Community Plan.

(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;

Likely to have significant environmental effects? Yes No X

Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)

The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 states that community planning will '*identify long-term objectives in relation to the district for contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in NI*'. Community Planning Guidance (section 8 page 22) states that the Community Planning Partnership '*should set out sustainable development and integration of social, economic and environmental priorities as a key principle of their community plans and should have regard to the Executives sustainable development strategy in development of their Community Plan*'.

The community planning outcomes are based on the three pillars of sustainable development and will help promote social, economic and environmental wellbeing

(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and

Likely to have significant environmental effects? Yes No X

Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)

The Community Plan for Antrim and Newtownabbey will be based upon strategic high-level outcomes, with corresponding indicators/measures, which should be achieved through the development and implementation of strategies and programmes by the community planning partners.

The Community Plan does not explicitly identify priorities and outcomes in relation to the environmental well-being of the Borough however, where appropriate, addressing such issues will be taken forward through the development of action plans or other strategies.

The Community Plan will not set a precedent to development and will not specify specific locations for activities.

(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste, management or water protection)

Likely to have significant environmental effects? Yes No X

Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)

The Community Plan for Antrim and Newtownabbey will be based upon strategic high-level outcomes, with corresponding indicators/measures, which should be achieved through the development and implementation of strategies and programmes by the community planning partners.

The Community Plan is the long-term strategic framework for the Antrim and Newtownabbey area affecting the Council and its partners as outlined in *the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014; the Local Government (Community Planning Partners order) 2014 and associated guidance*. It will provide strategic and policy direction for the delivery of services by all of its partners.

It is expected that all partners will take account of community planning outcomes in terms of their own corporate and business planning processes. However, legislative functions and responsibilities of each of the partners' will remain the duty of the designated body.

2.Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to -

(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;

Likely to have significant environmental effects? Yes No X

Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)

The Community Plan will set the overall strategic and policy direction on issues relating to the environment which will be implemented utilising action plans and associated strategies where applicable.

It is likely that other strategies and plans will have been informed by the Community Plan or will help implement the aims and actions of the Community Plan and could, in themselves, have permanent and irreversible effects. These include, for example decisions linked to the Local Development Plan such as housing development, road infrastructure and renewables. Such plans however will be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment in their own right. The Community Plan will not set a precedent to development, nor will it specifically identify locations of activity.

(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;

Likely to have significant environmental effects? Yes No X

Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)

The Community Plan will be a collaborative document which is informed by a wide and diverse range of statutory and support partners as outlined in the draft local Government (Community Planning Partners Order) 2014.

The collation of data and evidence in relation to social, economic and environmental wellbeing and development of associated long-term outcomes and actions allows for significant cumulative positive impact. It will create a platform to develop real synergy across many service areas. The Community Plan will not set a precedent for development and will not be specific as to the location of activity.

(c) the trans boundary nature of the effects;
Likely to have significant environmental effects? Yes No X
Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)
The Borough of Antrim and Newtownabbey does not border with the Republic of Ireland. It is agreed that there will be a need for discussion and engagement with neighbouring Councils to consider potential implications and areas of collaborative work that will increase the positive impact the Plan may have.
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)
Likely to have significant environmental effects? Yes No X
Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)
The overall purpose of the Community Plan is to improve health and well-being across social, economic and environmental issues for all citizens of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Area. While the Community Plan will include outcomes, indicators and delivery mechanisms will not contain information on specific projects as these will be undertaken via a Community Planning partner and if specific projects would require a SEA these would be undertaken separately.
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
Likely to have significant environmental effects? Yes No X
Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)
The Borough of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council covers an area of 728 km ² . In 2015, the population was estimated at 140,467 in an area of giving a population density of 246.1 people per km ² . (225.6 in 2001). A significant factor in the population distribution is the existence of Lough Neagh which accounts for 155 km ² or 21.3% of the total Council area. In the 2011 Census, there were 54,035 households in this area, and this figure is projected to rise to 58,373 by 2025 and to 59,814 by 2030. Whilst the total number of houses is projected to increase, the average household size is projected to decrease in the future: from 2.51 in 2012 to 2.41 in 2030. The Community Plan covers the whole of the Borough and all the services that are delivered for the benefit of people who live here. Community planning focuses on improving social, economic and environmental well-being and the draft outcomes developed for the Community Plan reflect this. The Community Plan will not set a precedent to development and will not specify specific locations for activities.
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to – (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceed environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use;

Likely to have significant environmental effects? Yes No X
Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)
<p>The Community Plan for Antrim and Newtownabbey will consist of four strategic high-level outcomes, with corresponding indicators/measures, which will be achieved through the development and implementation of strategies and programmes by the community planning partners.</p> <p>The Community Plan is unlikely to have a significant impact on the environment. Quality and accessibility of the local environment is emerging as a potential priority issue which will be addressed within the Community Plan, however this will be through related strategies and action plans which would be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment in their own right if applicable. The Community Plan will not set a precedent to development.</p>
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international Protection status.
Likely to have significant environmental effects? Yes No X
Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)
<p>The community plan is cognisant of the following areas of the Borough which have recognised protection status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority Habitats: 60 in Northern Ireland – 16 in Antrim and Newtownabbey • Priority Species: 513 priority species in NI – 81 in Antrim and Newtownabbey • National Nature Reserves: Rea's Wood Forest; Randalstown Forest; Farris Bay; Lough Neagh Islands • Local Nature Reserves: Newtownabbey Way; Carnmoney Hill • RAMSAR: Lough Neagh; Lough Beg; Belfast Lough • Special Areas of Conservation: Merville Garden Village; Rea's Wood; Farr's Bay • Special Protected Areas: Belfast Lough; Lough Neagh; Lough Beg • Areas of Special Scientific Interest: Belfast Lough; Lough Neagh; Lough Beg • 108 scheduled sites protected under planning law • 6 State care monuments: Settlement at Ballywee; Cranfield Church; Muckamore Abbey; Springfarm Rath; Steeple Round Tower; Witch's Stone (Steeple) <p>The Community Plan for Antrim and Newtownabbey will be based upon strategic high-level outcomes, with corresponding indicators/measures, which should be achieved through the development and implementation of strategies and programmes by the community planning partners. As such no precedent for development will be set by the Plan.</p>

Summary of Screening Report and the significant environmental effects of Antrim and Newtownabbey Community Plan.

The Community Plan for Antrim and Newtownabbey will be the long-term strategic framework which will provide the overarching policy and strategic outcomes for the

development and delivery of services by community planning partners within the Antrim and Newtownabbey area.

The Plan will include 4 high level outcomes and related indicators and will identify delivery mechanisms to ensure that the vision and commitments contained within the Plan are realised.

Sustainable development and its principles underpin the community planning process and the Plan will focus on improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Borough.

The Community Plan falls within the scope of Section 5(4) but as it does not set a precedent for development, and due to it being based on a series of high-level outcomes, the implementation of the plan will not have a significant environmental impact.

Following careful review it is considered that the Community Plan for Antrim and Newtownabbey does not require an SEA because it falls short of the scope of Section 5(1). The Community Plan will not set a precedent to development and will not specify specific locations for activities.