

Appendix 10.2 Policy Context Summary

Appendix 10.2: Policy Summary

European Planning Policy

- 10.2.1 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) was created by the Council of Europe. The ELC aims to promote landscape protection, management and planning, as well as European co-operation on landscape issues. The UK Government signed ELC in February 2006 and the ELC became binding from March 2007. It applies to all landscapes, urban as well as rural; and includes ordinary or even degraded landscapes, as well as those that are afforded protection.

National Planning Policy

- 10.2.2 Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland (2010) includes Strategic Guidance RG11, which requires the conservation, protection and, where possible, enhancement of built heritage and the natural environment. The supporting text to this policy includes emphasis on the protection of landscape quality, character and local identity and the protection of designated areas.
- 10.2.3 Draft Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 2: Natural Heritage (2011), includes Policy NH 5 - Species, Habitats or Features of Natural Heritage Importance, which notes the need to avoid a significant adverse impact on any natural heritage feature worthy of protection. Whilst the majority of these features are related exclusively to wildlife conservation, Supplementary Planning Guidance to Draft Planning Policy Statement 2 Natural Heritage notes in paragraph 6.10.2 in relation to Trees, Woods and Hedgerows that **“careful consideration will be given to the potential impact of proposed development upon trees, woods and hedgerows”**. The document notes that existing trees should be integrated wherever possible into the design and layout of development proposals and additional trees should be planted. Conditions on the granting of planning permission may be used to protect existing trees, woodlands and important hedgerows and where loss of trees or hedgerows is proposed, re-planting will be required, with appropriate species, number and sizes.
- 10.2.4 PPS 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage (1999), includes policy BH6 which refers to the protection of Parks, Gardens and Demesnes of Special Historic Interest, including any planned historic views of or from the site or buildings within it.

- 10.2.5 PPS 18: Renewable Energy (2009), includes Policy RE1: Renewable Energy Development, which requires that such development will not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on *inter alia* visual amenity and landscape character. PPS 18 is supported by Best Practice Guidance (2009), which includes guidance on landscape and visual planning and design considerations. With specific reference to energy from waste developments, the document notes that such developments can be prominent features, and that a high standard of design and landscaping is expected in order to minimise their visual impact.
- 10.2.6 PPS 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside (2010), includes Policy CTY1 – Development in the Countryside which notes that proposals must be sited and designed to integrate sympathetically with their surroundings. PPS 21 also includes Policy CTY 13 – Integration and Design of Buildings in the Countryside which notes that buildings in the countryside must be visually integrated into the surrounding landscape and of an ‘appropriate’ design. New buildings will be found unacceptable for a number of reasons, including: where they are prominent features in the landscape; on a site which lacks long established natural boundaries or is unable to provide a suitable degree of enclosure for the building to integrate into the landscape; reliant on the use of new landscaping for integration; where ancillary works do not integrate with their surroundings; where the design of the building is inappropriate for the site and its locality; and where the building fails to blend with the landform, existing trees, buildings, slopes and other natural features which provide a backdrop. PPS 21 also includes Policy CTY 14 – Rural Character, which provides planning and design requirements for new buildings in the countryside to ensure visual integration, appropriate design and avoid detrimental change in character.
- 10.2.7 Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (1993), Policy DES 6: Rural Character, echoes PPS 21, Policies CTY 13 and 14, in seeking the avoidance of detrimental change in character resulting from new buildings. The application site lies within the Green Belt. Whilst this is a functional planning designation rather than one relating to landscape and visual issues, Policy GB/CPA 2 notes that **“Development, which does not interfere with the open character of the land, may be acceptable in terms of siting and design. However, in all but the most special cases, the decision will depend on the need for the proposal, or whether it is an appropriate rural use, as well as whether it will do harm to the rural character of the landscape.”** It is noted that PPSs are gradually replacing policies within this document.

- 10.2.8 Design Guide for Rural Northern Ireland (1994) includes guidance to improve the quality of design and to help to ensure that new buildings fit into the landscape.
- 10.2.9 Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance: Building on Tradition - a Sustainable Design Guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside (2011) notes that **“A core requirement of much of the development covered by PPS 21 is that it is integrated within (and in particular instances ‘Visually Linked’ to) the countryside”**.

Local Planning Policy

- 10.2.10 The majority of the application site lies within the Antrim Borough Council administrative area with a small amount of the Boghill Road part of the application site lying within the Newtownabbey Borough Council administrative area.
- 10.2.11 The Antrim Area Plan 1984-2001 remains the current adopted plan for the borough. This plan includes a direction under the heading of Control of Non-Residential Development for the satisfactory restoration of mineral workings. This section goes on to describe the potential use of well-screened derelict quarries for waste disposal, although reference is not made to processing facilities but instead to landfill sites and vehicle and scrap metal dumps. Under the heading of Location, Siting and Design, the document describes the importance of absorbing development into rural settings to ensure that buildings are **“properly integrated within the existing scene”**. In relation to siting, the document notes that development on the skyline should be avoided and notes that the smaller the massing of built form, the better. The shape, scale, orientation and height of built form must all be considered as well as type and colour of materials, which should be of limited variety. The document goes on to note the importance of the treatment of the immediate surroundings of a building, with the minimum felling of hedges and hedgerow trees.
- 10.2.12 The Antrim, Ballymena and Larne Area Plan 2016 is currently being prepared. The Issues Paper (2002) highlights strategic opportunities and constraints and notes in relation to Conservation and Protection of the Environment, that the Plan will **“seek to facilitate appreciation and care of both the natural and man-made elements of the environment of the Plan area”**, balancing development pressures against the protection of the natural and man-made environment.

10.2.13 In relation to Newtownabbey Borough, the most up to date planning policy is included in the Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA) Plan 2015 (2004). The Site lies within the Green Belt. In relation to this, Designation COU1 BMA Green Belt, notes that particular protection is afforded to designated areas including Areas of High Scenic Value and The Belfast Hills.