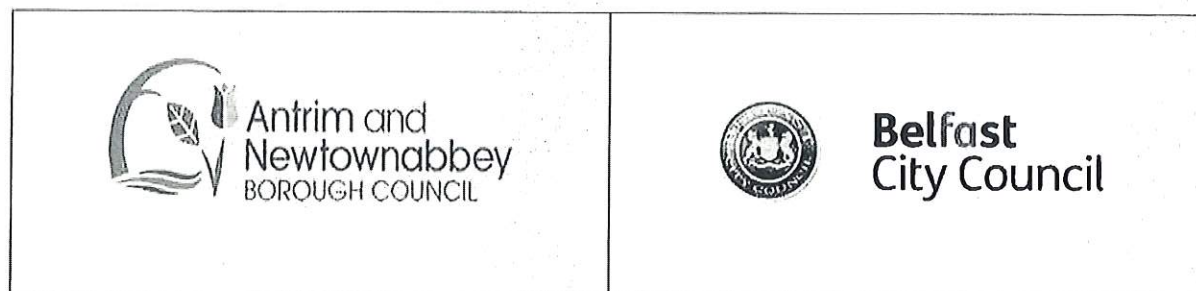


Statement of Common Ground

Between

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council; and

Belfast City Council



March 2022

V2

Introduction

This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) identifies the areas of agreement between Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (ANBC) and Belfast City Council (BCC) on matters relating to each respective Local Development Plan (LDP) Draft Plan Strategy (DPS).

This Statement addresses key issues raised by BCC in their representation submitted (Ref: LA03/DPS/0051) to the ANBC DPS public consultation period in late 2019.

The 12 tests of Soundness as set out in the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 are the basis on which all LDPs in Northern Ireland will be examined at Independent Examination (IE). These tests are based around three main headings: (1) Procedural tests, (2) Consistency tests, and (3) Coherence and Effectiveness tests.

In relation to Consistency, one of the key tests is whether Plans have had regard to other relevant plans, policies and strategies relating to any adjoining council's district.

In relation to Coherence and Effectiveness, ensuring that where cross boundary issues are relevant, Development Plan policies and allocations are not in conflict with the Development Plan documents of neighbouring councils.

As a consequence of these legislative tests, SoCGs between neighbouring authorities are a useful tool to evidence the co-operation in considering each other's plans and avoiding potential conflicts.

Accordingly, Development Plan Practice Note 10: Submitting Development Plan Documents for Independent Examination, paragraph 6.9 identifies that:

"Statements of Common Ground can be used to establish the main areas of agreement between two or more parties on a particular issue. These can be a useful way to evidence commitment and deliverability and can be refined as work on the DPD progresses".

Statement

ANBC and BCC are close neighbours within the wider Belfast Metropolitan Area and beyond. They share a common physical boundary. As a result of this close physical relationship, the Council areas are also closely linked by strategic and site specific matters.

This SoCG sets out the areas of common ground identified between ANBC and BCC.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and Belfast City Council will work collaboratively in an effort to identify and resolve the key strategic and site specific matters which may arise, as each respective Local Development Plans progress towards adoption.

These may include, but are not restricted to:

- Consideration and resolution of matters around Retail and Town Centres, in particular, the relationship between Belfast City Centre and the Abbey Centre;*
- Consideration of matters around Housing, Environment and Landscape and Transport and Infrastructure; and*
- Any other such matters identified during the progression of LDPs.*

The collaborative approach will include:

- Continued engagement in preparation process of each stage of the Council's respective plan progresses;*
- Continued engagement at the Metropolitan Area Spatial Working Group (MASWG) consistent with the groups agreed Terms of Reference (ToR);*
- Continued engagement at any other Working Group;*
- Consideration of Joint Framework, Masterplan, Studies on specific topics or supplementary planning guidance where deemed relevant; and*
- Any other agreed collaborative best practice arrangements.*

Signed on behalf of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council

[Redacted Signature]

Position: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Date: 20 APRIL 2022

Signed on behalf of Belfast City Council

[Redacted Signature]

Position: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Date: 28 APRIL 2022

