

**Independent Examination**  
**Derry City and Strabane District Council Local**  
**Development Plan 2032**  
**Draft Plan Strategy**  
**Examination opening notes**  
**5<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

Good morning and welcome to the opening of the public hearing sessions of the Independent Examination of the Derry City and Strabane District Council Local Development Plan 2032 – Draft Plan Strategy.

My name is Commissioner Diane O'Neill and I am a member of the Planning Appeals Commission. My Programme Officer, Mr Barry Fegan, will be present for the duration of the hearing. He will be responsible for all technical aspects of the remote hearing sessions and will assist you with any queries that you may have in relation to the examination.

The purpose of the examination is to determine whether the local development plan is legally compliant and sound in accordance with the twelve tests of soundness identified in the Department for Infrastructure's Development Plan Practice Note 6: Soundness.

The hearing programme for weeks 1 and 2, together with the Guidance Notes and Remote Hearings Protocol, were published on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023. The hearing programme sets out the topics and issues that I wish to discuss as well as identifies the list of participants for each session. I will assume that participants in the hearing sessions are familiar with the guidance notes, protocol as well as the Commission's Procedures for Independent Examination of Local Development Plans, all of which are available on the Commission's website.

The initial public hearing sessions will run from today for a 2-week period until Friday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The questions for this initial session were initially published on

30<sup>th</sup> June 2023 with the most recent version being Version 3 which was published on the Commission's website on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2023. The hearing programme and questions for weeks 3 and 4 were published on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2023. Week 3 hearing session will commence on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023. It is intended that the final week of hearing sessions, week 4, will commence on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023.

The public hearings will normally comprise of two daily sessions from 10.30 am – 12.00 pm and 2.00 – 3.30 pm. Participants should log on a minimum of 15 minutes prior to the starting time of each hearing session. Advice on joining the hearing sessions is contained within the Commission's Remote Hearings Protocol. If discussion of an issue can be completed with some run over of the indicative finishing time then this may be facilitated. If required, a roll-over day has been set aside each week in order to facilitate any unfinished discussions. A programme for any roll-over days will be published and updated on the Commission's website. It is your responsibility to ensure that you check this regularly as the start time, duration and number of sessions may alter in order to address any outstanding issues from the preceding day/s.

The remote hearing sessions will be conducted on the basis of the agenda in a 'roundtable' manner. Normally the Council will be invited to make an opening comment, followed by any participants who wish to contribute. The Council will then be given the opportunity to make any follow-up remarks. When discussion on an issue is complete, time permitting, I will move onto the next one. If different participants are joining the discussion of an issue, there will be a short break between topics and issues to allow them to do so.

Your devices should be on mute at all times until I invite you to speak. If you need to communicate with other members of your team or take instruction, please do so in private using a separate means of communication.

If you wish to respond to a question, please avail of the 'raise hand' facility on Webex to indicate your desire to speak. I will give each of those who have raised their hands an opportunity to have their say. If another speaker has covered the point that you want to make, please lower your hand. Repetition of points already made will be

curtailed. When you are invited to speak, you should turn your camera on, unmute your microphone, introduce yourself and, if appropriate, your organisation and/or client. There are a lot of issues to consider so please make your response brief and focused and adhere to the agenda bearing in mind that I have already read your written submission to the Council and the Council's evidence on the issue. There will not be any cross examination, participant interruption or open discussion. Responses should always be directed to me please. Participants will normally only be asked to speak once on each question. If invited to make a further contribution, please avoid repetition of points that either you or another party has already made. When you have finished speaking, please say so. At that stage please turn off your camera and mute your microphone.

I will terminate the discussion on any particular issue when I have enough information.

You are reminded that recording of the proceedings is not authorised.

All information relating to the examination can be accessed at any time on the Commission website at [www.pacni.gov.uk](http://www.pacni.gov.uk) by clicking the link Independent Examination of Local Development Plans –Derry City and Strabane. Please check the website regularly for updates. If you have any other queries, please do not hesitate to contact the Programme Officer (Mr Barry Fegan).

A copy of these Examination Opening Notes will be published on the Commission's website in the Derry City and Strabane Examination Library.