

<b>Report on</b>	Report on Mid Ulster District Council's Response to Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) draft 3 <sup>rd</sup> Cycle River Basin Management Plan..
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> October 2021
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Chris Boomer
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Colin McKeown

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to inform members that the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs have invited comments on their draft 3 <sup>rd</sup> Cycle River Basin Management Plan (RBMP).
1.2	This report and the attached letter sets out the Councils' considered response to same.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
<b>2.1</b>	The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 require the production and implementation of a RBMP in six yearly cycles. The RBMP takes an integrated approach, identifying those water bodies which can be classified as being at 'good or better' status. It also sets the objectives and a programme of measures for the next six year cycle to help improve those water bodies which are classified as below 'good' status. The 3 <sup>rd</sup> cycle RBMP period runs from 2021-2027
<b>2.2</b>	The consultation on the third RBMP will close at midnight on 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2021.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>

3.1	<p>Northern Ireland is divided into a series of River Basin Management Districts with Mid Ulster District being almost exclusively located within the Neagh Bann River Basin Management District (NBRMD). For that reason, our response focuses mainly on the findings within the NBRBD as well as the general measures recommended for the entire country.</p>
3.2	<p>The attached letter summarises the findings of the draft RBMP in so far as the overall picture within the NBRBD is one that suggests that whilst there is a slight improvement in combined status for all waterbodies, the chemical and ecological status of lakes has declined.</p>
3.3	<p>The letter notes that there was an overall improvement in the classification of waterbodies in the NBRBD between the years 2015-2018; with 28.4% of waterbodies classed as “good or better” compared to 27.4% in 2015. It also notes that three lakes in the NBRBD have declined in status since 2015 and that Lough Neagh continues to be classified as having “Bad Ecological Potential” (BEP).</p> <p>We further note that in relation to lakes in the NBRBD, 100% had high ecological status in 2015, with only 30% having that classification in 2020. In terms of chemical status, two lakes had good status in 2015, whilst zero lakes had that status in 2020.</p> <p>The overall picture therefore for the NBRBD is one that suggests that whilst there is a slight improvement in combined status for all waterbodies, the chemical and ecological status of lakes has declined.</p> <p>The principal measures proposed in the draft River Basin Management Plan for reducing the amount of pollution entering watercourses include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in nutrient and pesticide pollution from agriculture</li> <li>• Upgrades of WWTW infrastructure</li> <li>• Reduce nutrient pollution from sewerage and industry</li> <li>• Incorporate SuDS in all development</li> <li>• Educational campaigns</li> <li>• Reduce bankside erosion – Riparian strips</li> </ul> <p>Mid Ulster District Council support measures to reduce pollutants entering our watercourses. We would be concerned however, at any move that views the planning system as a primary method of addressing these concerns. Whilst conditions may be used to control the impact of nutrients and pollutants from agriculture and industry, the effectiveness of such measures are limited. The key solutions relate to regulation re. farm feeds and public investment in in sewerage infrastructure to reduce the reliance on septic tanks.</p> <p>In relation to the use of SuDS in development schemes, this has been an ongoing theme in Planning for well over a decade. At present, the implementation of SuDS is secured via negotiation and goodwill of developers and as such, the level of success in securing implementation can be limited. MUDC have been successful in securing SuDS in a recent industrial approval and in addition, our draft Plan</p>

Strategy includes a general principal that all development proposals should be encouraged to utilise a SuDs scheme as a means of achieving appropriate drainage.

Mid Ulster are also supportive of the need for riparian protection in order to reduce bankside erosion and the subsequent levels of pollution entering our watercourses. To this end, policy OS2 in our draft Plan Strategy, has been included so that development adjacent to river corridors will conflict with the Plan unless a range of criteria are met, including the provision of a 10m biodiversity strip. This policy will apply to five main rivers in Mid Ulster, namely the Owenkillew, Moyola, Ballinderry, Blackwater, Bann.

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: None identified
	Human: None identified
	Risk Management: None identified
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: None identified
	Rural Needs Implications: None identified
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
<b>5.1</b>	Members are requested to note and agree the contents of this report and the attached letter which will be issued to DAERA in response to their consultation on the draft 3 <sup>RD</sup> Cycle River Basin Management Plan .
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	Appendix A – Draft Letter (Consultation Response) to DAERA.

## APPENDIX A



Comhairle Ceantair  
**Lár Uladh**  
**Mid Ulster**  
District Council

Mid Ulster District Council  
Planning Department  
Local Development Plan Team  
50 Ballyronan Road  
Magherafelt  
BT45 6EN  
Tel – 03000 132 132  
Email – [developmentplan@midulstercouncil.org](mailto:developmentplan@midulstercouncil.org)

Integrated Catchment Planning  
NIEA Water Management Unit  
17 Antrim Road  
Tonagh  
Lisburn  
BT28 3AL

Dear Sir / Madam

Date: October 2021

**RE: draft 3<sup>rd</sup> Cycle River Basin Management Plan; For the North Western, Neagh Bann and North Eastern River Basin Districts**

Mid Ulster District Council has noted the findings of in relation to water bodies within the Neagh Bann River Basin District, which encompasses the overwhelming majority of the Mid Ulster LGD.

We note that there was an overall improvement in the classification of waterbodies in the NBRBD between the years 2015-2018; with 28.4% of waterbodies classed as “good or better” compared to 27.4% in 2015. We also note that three lakes in the NBRBD have declined in status since 2015 and that Lough Neagh continues to be classified as having “Bad Ecological Potential” (BEP).

We further note that in relation to lakes in the NBRBD, 100% had high ecological status in 2015, with only 30% having that classification in 2020. In terms of chemical status, two lakes had good status in 2015, whilst zero lakes had that status in 2020.

The overall picture therefore for the NBRBD is one that suggests that whilst there is a slight improvement in combined status for all waterbodies, the chemical and ecological status of lakes has declined.

We note the measures proposed for reducing the amount of pollution entering watercourses, and that these include;

- Reduction in nutrient and pesticide pollution from agriculture
- Upgrades of WWTW infrastructure
- Reduce nutrient pollution from sewerage and industry

- Incorporate SuDs in all development
- Educational campaigns
- Reduce bankside erosion – Riparian strips

Mid Ulster District Council support measures to reduce pollutants entering our watercourses. We would be concerned however, at any move that views the planning system as a primary method of addressing these concerns. Whilst conditions can may be used to control the impact of nutrients and pollutants from agriculture and industry, the effectiveness of such measures are limited. The key solutions relate to regulation re. farm feeds and public investment in in sewerage infrastructure to reduce the reliance on septic tanks.

In relation to the use of SuDS in development schemes, this has been an ongoing theme in Planning for well over a decade. At present, the implementation of SuDS is secured via negotiation and goodwill of developers and as such, the level of success in securing implementation can be limited. MUDC have been successful in securing SuDS in a recent industrial approval and in addition, our draft Plan Strategy includes a general principal that all development proposals should be encouraged to utilise a SuDs scheme as a means of achieving appropriate drainage.

Mid Ulster are also supportive of the need for riparian protection in order to reduce bankside erosion and the subsequent levels of pollution entering our watercourses. To this end, policy OS2 in our draft Plan Strategy, has been included so that development adjacent to river corridors will conflict with the Plan unless a range of criteria are met, including the provision of a 10m biodiversity strip. This policy will apply to five main rivers in Mid Ulster, namely the Owenkillew, Moyola, Ballinderry, Blackwater, Bann.

Thankyou for the opportunity to comment on the contents of the draft River Basin Management Plan. If you have any further queries in relation to this consultation response, then please feel free to get in touch.

Yours Faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Boomer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Chris Boomer,  
Planning Manager  
Mid Ulster District Council

