

# Planning Policy Overview

## Introduction to the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

Philip McGowan & Joy Hargie  
Planning Policy Division

*Planning Policy*

*ICT*

*Operational  
Guidance*

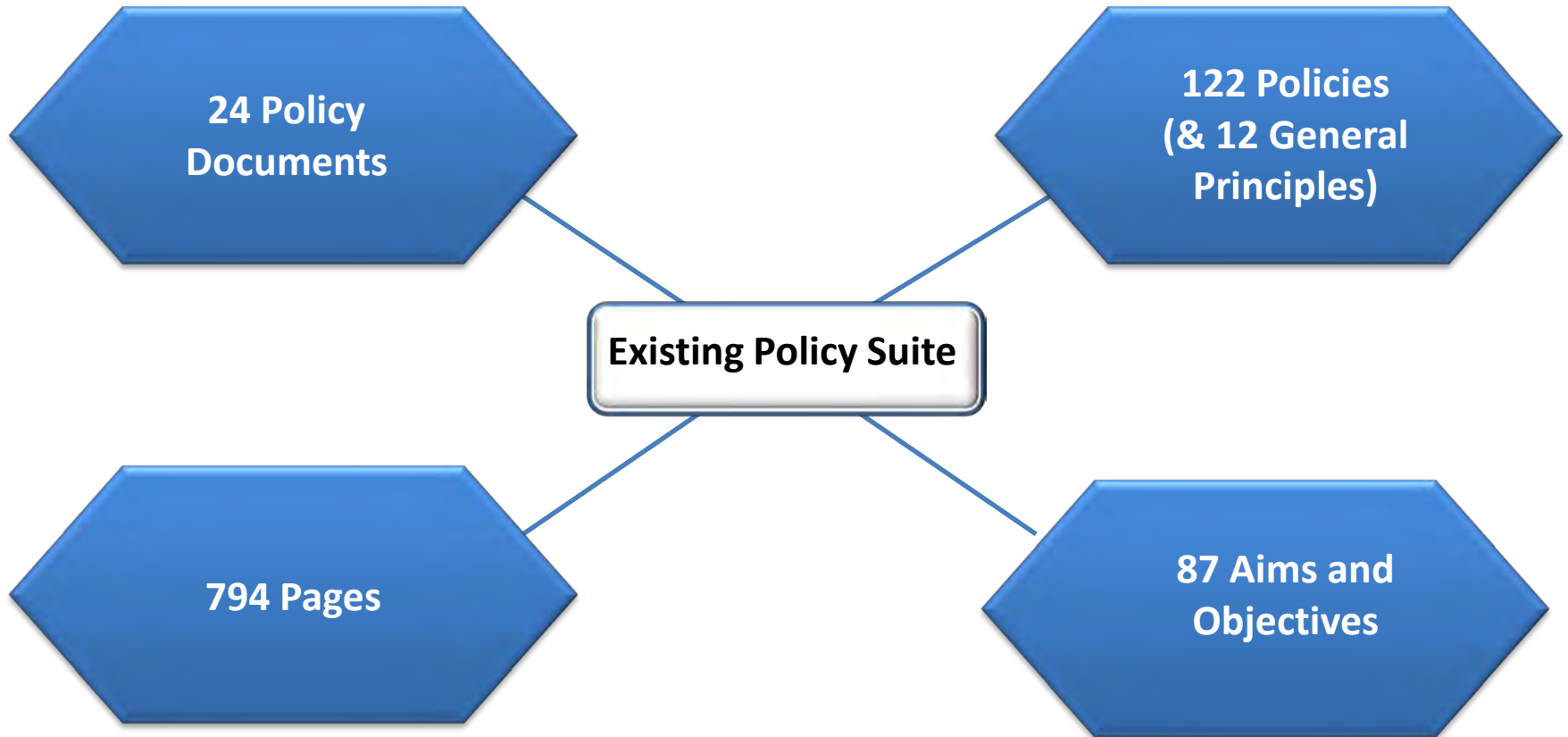
*Legislation*

*Capacity  
Building*

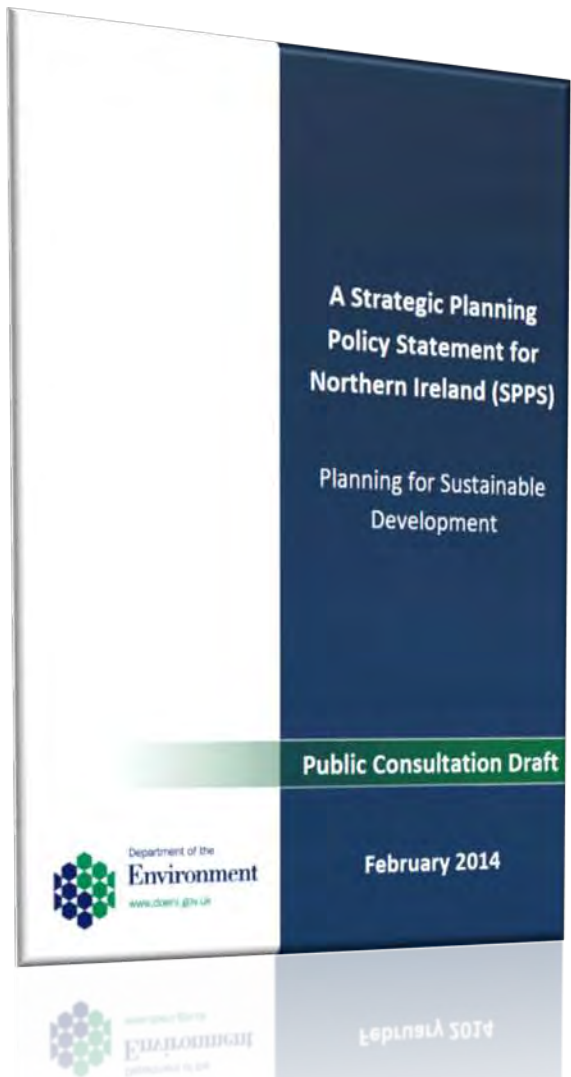
# Planning Policy Statements (PPSs)



# Detailed, Operational, Complex



# Draft SPPS for NI: Key Elements



- The **draft SPPS** consolidates some 20 separate pieces of planning policy to a single statement; reducing 800 pages of policy to less than 100.

# Draft SPPS for NI: A New Approach

- More strategic, simpler, shorter, and more accessible planning policy
- Statement on the Purpose of Planning

# Draft SPPS for NI: New Core Principles

- Eight new **core planning principles** to underpin delivery of the planning reforms set out in the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.
- These principles are intended to assist with this reform process and reflect the Ministers (and Executives) expectations for delivery post transfer.

# Draft SPPS for NI: The Public interest

- Furthering Sustainable Development
- Improving Health and Well-being
- Creating and Enhancing Shared Space
- Delivering Spatial Planning
- Observing a Plan-led System
- Supporting Good Design, Positive Place-making and Urban and Rural Stewardship
- Enhancing Stakeholder Engagement and Front-loading
- Enhancing Local Democracy and Accountability



# Subject Policies



# Draft SPPS for NI – Town Centre First

- GL Hearn Report – Updated Evidential Context
- This policy promotes a town centre first approach for the location of future retail and other town centre land uses and is consistent with the Regional Development Strategy.
- The policy seeks to support and sustain vibrant town centres and foster a more sustainable approach to future retail provision, consistent with the RDS.

# Draft SPPS for NI: Implementation

- The SPPS will support and guide local plan-making, the design and delivery of individual planning proposals and the determination of planning applications and appeals
- Enable and empower councils to bring forward detailed operational policies within new plans tailored to local circumstances.
- Must be taken into account in the preparation of LDPs and will be a material consideration in planning decisions, and at appeals.

# Draft SPPS : Transitional Arrangements

- During this interim phase, councils will apply retained operational policies (i.e. PPS series).
- Councils will be required to take account of both the SPPS and as an interim measure the retained operational planning policies
- Provides continuity in decision making
- Allows time for Local Councils to bring forward new plans and detailed operational policies tailored to local circumstances

# Outcome of Public Consultation

- Over 700 responses were received from individuals and a wide range of stakeholders, such as:
  - Business and Industry interests (including CBI, NIIRTA, IOD, NIFHA);
  - Environmental interests (including NIEL, RSPB);
  - Community / Academic / NGO interests (including Royal Town Planning Institute, Belfast Civic Trust, Historic Monuments Council, various residents groups); and
  - Local Government interests (including NILGA and a number of local councils).

# Emerging Key Themes 1

- General welcome to the approach & importance of the SPPS for the 2-tier planning system
- Support for the purpose of planning
  - Not enough v too much economic emphasis
- Core Planning Principles
  - Recognition of need for CPPs
  - Too many v include more
  - Too prescriptive v not enough detail
  - Principles v objectives

# Emerging Key Themes 2

- Transitional Arrangements
  - Mixed reaction
  - Potential confusion / Risk of challenge
  - Not needed v retain PPSs
  - Transitional period?
- Subject Policies
  - Town Centre & Retailing (New)- General support for TC first
  - A wide and varied range comments on other (consolidated) subject planning policies.

# Draft SPPS for NI: Next Steps & Timescale

- The public Consultation exercise closed **29<sup>th</sup> April 2014**
- Detailed assessment of responses on-going
- Revisions to SPPS
- Executive Committee clearance
- Aiming to agree the SPPS in final form by year end - in good time for transfer



# Concluding remarks

- The SPPS furthers the Ministers vision to create a planning system that is fast, fair and fit for purpose – a reformed two-tier planning system which is less complex, more effective, more efficient and more customer-focused without compromising on environmental standards
- Emphasises that the environment and the economy should not, and cannot be at loggerheads.
- The environment can be a driver of prosperity and job creation – A strong economy and a prosperous society can be good for the environment.