

Public Document Pack

**Democratic Services Section
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**



**Belfast
City Council**

4th March, 2026

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room, City Hall on Tuesday, 10th March, 2026 at 5.00 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

7. Miscellaneous Reports

- (a) Planning Performance Framework (Pages 1 - 12)
- (b) Local Applications subject to NI Water Objections (Pages 13 - 18)

9. Planning Applications

- (f) **LA04/2025/0973/F** - Retrospective change of use from student accommodation to short term lets accommodation (limited to July & August only) - Bradbury Place 30-44 Bradbury Place (Pages 19 - 28)
- (m) **LA04/2025/1692/F** - Extension of existing ballstop fencing from 5m to 8m along three sides. This will total 220m in length. (Amended Proposal Description) - Existing soccer pitch at Marrowbone Millenium Park (approx. 25m north of No. 8 Ardoyne Court), Ardoyne Avenue (Pages 29 - 36)



Subject:	Draft Planning Service Performance Framework
Date:	10th March 2026
Reporting Officer(s):	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
Contact Officer(s):	Ciara Reville, Principal Planning Officer (Development Management) Mark Whitaker, Acting Principal Planning Officer (Development Planning and Policy)

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	No
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
<p style="margin-left: 40px;">After Committee Decision</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">After Council Decision</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Some time in the future</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Never</p>	

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	This report sets out a new Planning Performance Framework that provides for the regular reporting of the performance and continuous improvement actions of Belfast's Planning Service.
1.2	It is intended that a performance report for the Planning Service will be produced on a yearly basis in line with the Performance Framework and that the Framework will bring a more formal structure to the performance management of the Service.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the contents of the Performance Framework (Appendix 1) and the intention to bring a Performance report to a subsequent Committee.

3.0	Main Report
3.1	Belfast City Council's Corporate Plan 2025–2028 sets out how the Council will deliver the priorities of the Belfast Agenda, with a focus on building a sustainable, inclusive economy and a fair society. It also outlines the Council's vision, values and priorities for the city.
3.2	<p>The Planning Service sits within the Department of Place and Economy, whose objective is to provide an effective and efficient planning service. The Departmental Plan includes the following performance measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver planning services including customer advice, pre-application discussions, planning application processing, Tree Preservation Orders, and enforcement. • Monitor delivery of the Local Development Plan Strategy and produce the Local Policies Plan (LPP). • Establish a Belfast Planning Partnership with agents, architects and developers to improve planning processes and support regional reform. • Progress preparation of the LPP, including local planning policies and land-use zonings aligned with the Eastern Transport Plan. • Key Performance Indicators (statutory): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Average processing time for major applications: 30 weeks ○ Average processing time for local applications: 15 weeks ○ % of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks
3.3	<p>Since planning powers transferred to councils in 2015, Belfast City Council's Planning Service has continually worked to improve performance. Members will recall several improvement actions over the past decade, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Service Improvement Plan • 10 Operating Principles and Guide to the Planning Application Process • Application Checklist and Validation Checklist • Improvements to the Pre-Application Discussion process • Lean systems redesign project
3.4	<p>It is hoped that renewed and regular performance reporting will help to ensure that the Planning Service remains transparent, accountable and focused on continuous improvement. It will provide clear evidence of how effectively public resources are being used, support informed decision-making, and help to identify areas where change may be needed. Performance information will also enable the Planning Service to plan ahead, meet statutory and regulatory obligations, and improve customer experience by better understanding demand, service quality and outcomes. It is considered that consistent reporting will help to strengthen public confidence and support the delivery of an efficient, high-quality service aligned with the Council's priorities.</p>
3.4	<p>Officers have produced a Performance Framework (Appendix 1). In drafting this, officers considered approaches used elsewhere in the UK and the Republic of Ireland, along with findings from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the NI Audit Office report on Planning, • the Public Accounts Committee report (2022), and • local audit reports.
3.5	<p>In the short-term, it is important to have proper measurement and reporting systems in place. In the longer-term, these performance measures will help drive improvements and support better-quality planning outcomes.</p>
3.6	<p>The draft Planning Performance Framework uses best practice from other regions and outlines how the Council's Planning Service can meet its objectives through continuous improvement and by contributing to wider planning improvement work across Northern Ireland.</p>

3.7	The draft Planning Performance Framework has four parts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts 1 and 2 set out the key objectives that define success • Parts 3 and 4 outline how the Planning Service will work to achieve these objectives
3.8	Overall, this framework brings together all existing and ongoing improvement work and provides a single, strategic approach to performance management and customer service. It will allow the Council to track progress, show how planning contributes to city-wide outcomes, and monitor annual performance.
3.9	The framework will be implemented before the new performance year begins on 1 April 2026 and the first performance report will be brought to Committee alongside the annual monitoring reports for housing land, employment land and developer agreements in Autumn 2026.
6.0	Financial & Resource Implications
6.1	No financial or resource implications have been identified.
7.0	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
7.1	No Equality or Good Relations implications have been identified. There is no need for a Rural Needs Assessment.
8.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 –Belfast City Council Draft Planning Performance Framework

This page is intentionally left blank

Belfast Planning Service

Planning Performance Framework

March 2026

1. Introduction

1.1 This planning performance framework has been prepared by Belfast Planning Service to provide greater transparency and accountability in the council's delivery of its planning functions. It sets out how the council will report on delivery, making use of meaningful qualitative and quantitative indicators for planning activity during each annual reporting period.

Planning performance in Northern Ireland is measured by three statutory indicators that generally relate to the speed of decision-making for planning applications (major scale and local scale) and the resolution of enforcement complaints. There are no statutory targets relating to the preparation of Local Development Plans.

1.2 The statutory targets for processing planning applications can be impacted by matters that are outside the control of the City Council and the published statutory figures do not adequately reflect the planning application process, its purpose or outcomes. Similarly, the absence of statutory indicators for the development planning process means that this critical element of planning is largely unmeasured.

1.3 This framework sets out additional indicators that will provide greater meaning and transparency and accountability that assist in measuring the performance of the Belfast Planning Service across its key functions. It also better demonstrates and measure the value of the planning process through reporting outcomes that help to deliver corporate priorities and societal/environmental benefits for the city.

1.4 A **Planning Performance Report** (PPR) will be prepared on an annual basis (using the financial year) in line with this Framework and will be submitted to Planning Committee as soon as possible following financial year end. Following Members' approval, the report will be published on the council's planning webpage.

This framework identifies the following key aims of the annual PPR:

- To provide transparency and accountability in terms of performance of the planning system in Belfast and to help drive improvements in the system at both a local and regional level;
- To recognise and evidence the contribution that the Belfast Planning Service makes to the economy, society and the environment; and
- To build political and public understanding of the importance and achievements of the Council's planning functions.

1.5 As other NI planning authorities bring forward their own planning performance reports, this will facilitate comparison and benchmarking between authorities and help identify common challenges and opportunities for improvement. The PPR will set out how a planning authority is achieving a high-quality planning service and helps to identify where improvements can be made. In relation to Belfast City Council, this aligns with the council's priorities in service delivery, including the objectives of the Belfast Agenda, our Corporate Plan and our Council and Service Improvement Plans.

PART 1 – The services we provide

2.0 Service Overview

Belfast City Council's Planning Service sits within the Place and Economy Department which is responsible for driving the future growth and regeneration of the city, creating a sustainable, attractive, vibrant, unique and dynamic place to live, work, visit and invest.

The Planning Service sits within the Planning and Building Control directorate and includes the development of the statutory Local Development Plan and its implementation through the processing of planning applications and managing enforcement complaints.

[Additional narrative may be included in any annual report as appropriate.]

2.1 People and resources:

[Any significant resourcing constraints or impacts will be reported here annually.]

2.1.1 Skills and Training: Input structure in line with Training Plan

Through the Planning Performance Framework a training plan will be brought forward as a parallel process. This will be a management tool to support improvements to the service as a whole.

2.2 Development Planning and Policy Team Indicators.

The principal role of the Development Planning and Policy Team is to prepare and monitor the planning policy framework for Belfast. This includes the preparation of a new Local Development Plan for Belfast, ensuring all local planning policies, allocations and designations are based on sound evidence and satisfactorily reflect the city's needs and priorities. The Team is also responsible for the preparation of any Supplementary Planning Guidelines (SPG), technical advice notes (TANs) and other guidance.

In addition to the planning policy responsibilities, the Team also determines applications for works to protected trees and requests for new Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). The Team also provides advice, guidance and training on a wide range of policy implementation and detailed technical matters, including trees & landscaping, built heritage and urban design. It is also an internal consultee as part of the development management process.

There are no existing statutory performance indicators for development planning. Reporting of performance to date has generally referenced the progression of the new LDP and any supplementary documents through the preparation and adoption process.

This framework sets out the following new indicators and targets (where appropriate) to demonstrate performance in the Development Planning and Policy Team:

- Stage of Local Development Plan preparation, including date of PS adoption, current status of LPP preparation, key milestones passed and anticipated future timetable.*
- Status of statutory Timetable; e.g.: under review, consulting PAC/Dfl, adopted.
- Next milestone, e.g.: Members' agreement, public consultation, intention to submit, etc.
- Compliance with SCI and commentary of any engagement/consultation completed, ongoing or planned.

*Commentary will be added as appropriate to contextualise performance, highlight key learning points or areas for performance improvement

- Details on the production of any Supplementary Planning Guidance or other non-statutory guidance and monitoring information.
- Annual Housing Monitor – target publication autumn annually.
- Annual Employment Land Monitor – target publication autumn annually.
- Annual Monitoring Report (post-LDP adoption) – target autumn annually.
- S76 Monitoring Report – target autumn annually.*
- Tree works applications – number and average time (target <6 weeks).
- TPO Request decisions - number and average time (target <6 weeks).
- Statement on number of TPOs.
- Policy advice and other internal DM consultations – number and average time (target 21 calendar days). Reporting to be consistent with all other consultee reporting*.

2.3 Development Management - Application and Enforcement Indicators

2.3.1 Development Management Comprises the planning application process, including Pre-Application Discussions (PADs), determination of planning applications, handling of post planning permission matters such as discharges of conditions, planning appeals and enforcement of planning control. It is the mechanism by which objectives at city and local area plan level are implemented on the ground.

There are existing statutory performance indicators for development management that relate to the speed of decision-making for planning applications (major and local). These indicators are published quarterly and annually by DfI for all councils. Additional reporting of DM performance to date has generally referenced the implementation of the Service Improvement Plan, including the implementation of new processes and guidance for applicants.

This framework establishes the following new indicators and targets (where appropriate) to demonstrate performance of the Development Management process;

- Statutory KPI's – the current measures for local (15 weeks) and major (30 weeks) applications recorded by local authorities and reported to the DfI, alongside a commentary.*
- The number of applications received and decided (local, major and other) by BCC
The application approval rate (%) of all applications determined during the year.
- Number and percentage of Major applications determined within 30 weeks
- Number and percentage of Local applications determined within 15 weeks
- Number and percentage of Householder and advertisement applications determined within 12-weeks
- The number of pre-application discussions received and by category
- The delegation rate – the number and percentage of applications that have been determined under delegated authority.

*Commentary will be added as appropriate to contextualise performance, highlight key learning points or areas for performance improvement

- The number of elected member referral application requests to committee, and the percentage agreed. *
- The number of decisions made by the Planning Committee and the number of those decisions (as a percentage) that were contrary to the officer recommendation. *
- The number of applications which were subject to an appeal to the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC)
- % of appeal decisions that upheld the decision of the Council*

2.3.2 The Development Management Team is also responsible for the **enforcement** of planning, investigating alleged breaches of planning control and determining what action should be taken

KPI's – the current measure for enforcement is % of cases closed within 39 weeks.

- Details of any enforcement strategy / charter (date of publication and proposals for review) Published Quarterly/Yearly Updates
- Annual Figures on the number of complaints lodged and investigated.
- Percentage of Priority 1 complaints received.*
- The number of "live" enforcement cases at the start and end of the year.
- The number of enforcement cases closed.
- Number of enforcement notices serviced / and any direct action taken.
- The number of successful enforcement prosecutions
- Number of enforcement appeal cases & outcomes
- Report on court outcomes

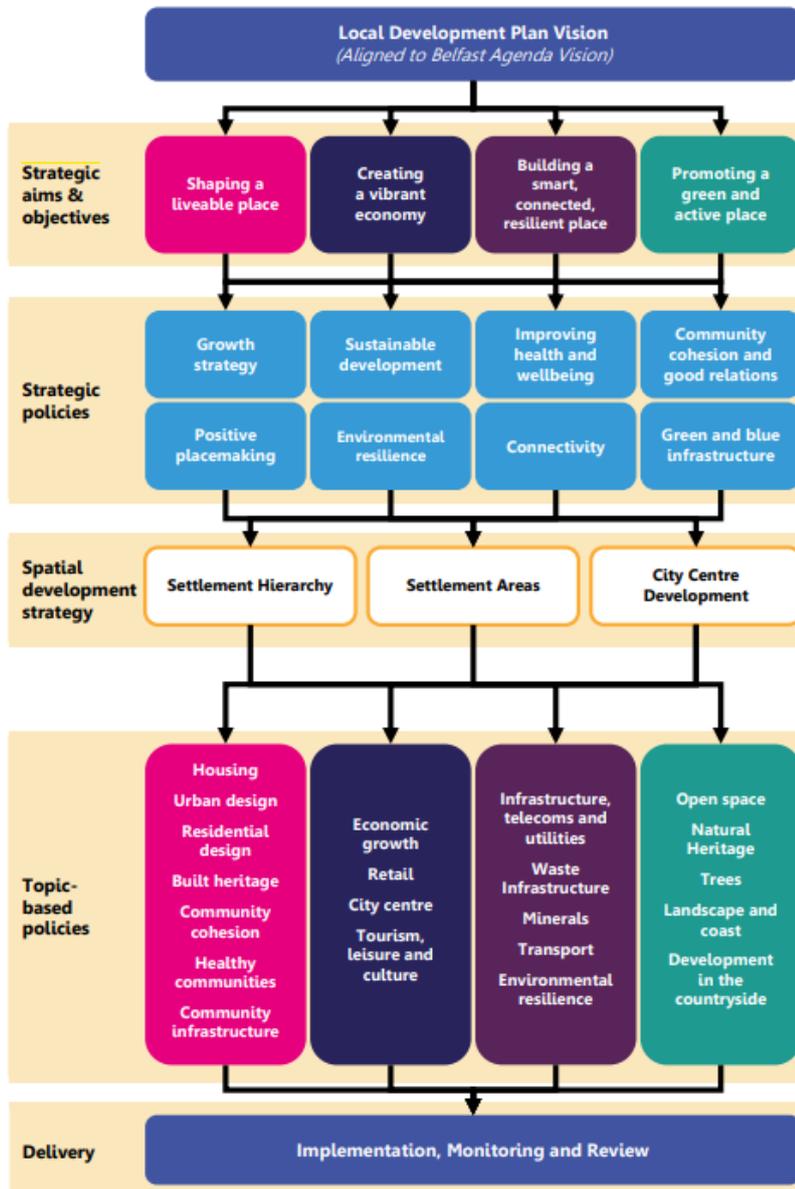
PART 2

3.0 Our Contribution to outcomes

3.1 In 2017 Belfast Published its first Community plan, the *Belfast Agenda*, updated in 2024 it sets out the joint vision and long-term ambitions for Belfast's future, as well as outlining Belfast City Council's priorities for action over the next four years. The five strategic themes of the Belfast Agenda:

- Our people and communities
- Our economy
- Our place
- Our planet
- Compassionate

3.2 The four strategic aims of the LDP below closely reflect these Belfast Agenda priorities. These aims are supported by a series of strategic objectives designed to help achieve the delivery of this vision.



*Commentary will be added as appropriate to contextualise performance, highlight key learning points or areas for performance improvement

3.3 Our Outcomes in performance year*

The below is a sample of potential annual outcomes we can report on. It is likely that only one or two from each theme will appear in the annual performance report, which can be agreed in advance and continuously reviewed throughout the reporting year. Whilst some can be measured quantitatively, other outcomes may be better reported through case studies and narrative.

1. Shaping a liveable Place

- No of housing units permitted
- No. affordable housing units (social and intermediate) permitted broken down by tenure
- Percentage of affordable homes granted permission as a proportion of all dwelling units approved [or just for schemes of 5 units or more where Policy HOU5 applies]
- No of householder applications permitted
- No of Listed building consent applications approved
- Sq metres of community facilities approved
- Urban Design impacts – improved schemes, no of consultations issued?
- No of PADs where scheme is improved – qualitative measure could form basis of case study?

2. Creating a Vibrant Economy

- Sqm New employment floorspace, split by use class
- Supporting tourism, hotel bed approved, STLs approved
- No of retail approvals
- Development Opportunity Areas, Sites approved within and if guidance produced on.
- Bar restaurant approvals

3. Building a Smart, connected Resilient Place

- No of telecoms permitted
- No of infrastructure related approvals
- Renewable energy approvals
- No of majors apps Section 76s on active travel/ green travel fund / cycle infrastructure measures
- Mitigating climate change, refusals on env2,
- No of applications permitted with suds

4. Promoting a green and active place.

- No of applications with new public open space
- No of applications for new sports facilities
- No of applications for works to protected trees approved
- Greenway/ Landscape approvals
- Countryside refusals
- Environmental improvement schemes

*Commentary will be added as appropriate to contextualise performance, highlight key learning points or areas for performance improvement

Planning in Motion

(Summary of up to 5 approvals in past year in line with strategic aims, and where value was added Eg significant housing or employment schemes, green roof schemes, listed/ heritage buildings back onto use, any refusals based on environmental impacts.

Planning in Action

(Summary of on the ground schemes completed or award winning in the last year in line with strategic aims, previous years planning in motion schemes) link to training plan for officer and committee site visits.

PART 3

4.0 Our Continuous Improvement

4.1 **The Council's Improvement Plan Objectives for Planning has one agreed action:**

That Management will:

Update of the Planning Service Improvement Plan to include actions relating to the service as a whole: the ongoing development of the additional performance measures (i.e. both qualitative and quantitative) that management would require in managing and monitoring the aspects of the planning process that are within the control of BCC; demonstrating the value of the planning process, for example customer satisfaction, large developments completed, social housing; and previously agreed audit actions regarding internal informal targets for major applications and monitoring and reporting on the timeliness of internal consultee responses.

4.2 To ensure we continuously improve and to assist in consistency in measuring performance across the Planning Service, the following steps will act as a guide in the first year of this framework, and will allow each area of the service to consider their own performance and how measured improvement can be made to enhance performance. These steps will also inform the updated Planning Service Improvement Plan. These 12 steps should be considered against the objectives of each work area and a local work plan put in place, for reporting on in line with audit requirements.

- a. Having the right information
- b. The right people having access to relevant up-to-date information
- c. Everyone understands their role and responsibility in their work area.
- d. Make dynamic changes but only when needed
- e. Praise good performance, challenge poor performance
- f. Monitor workloads
- g. Importance of the recording of decision making
- h. Communicate with the Customer
- i. Involve members in performance conversations
- j. Learn from Experience
- k. Learn from Others.

4.3 This should focus on improvements and changes for the incoming year.

- Demonstrating a culture of continuous improvement focusing on the last 12 months.
- Evidence ongoing training of staff, management and members in priority areas.
- Act as clear vision and programme as basis for service improvement.

*Commentary will be added as appropriate to contextualise performance, highlight key learning points or areas for performance improvement

- Keep the focus on improvement activity rather than carrying out core / routine work or tasks.
- Be clear about Service Improvement actions and their purpose – there should be a flow of information through the report from problem to solution.
- Aim to ensure that Service Improvement commitments are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-related).
- Take appropriate action in response to complaints and ombudsman cases to address any process or performance issues.

4.4 After the first year, there will be a review of the delivery of service improvement key actions committed in the previous year. This should report on the commitment made and the specific actions carried out in relation to each commitment, including any evidence of those actions and their impact.

PART 4

5.0 Accountability to Improve the System

5.1 Belfast City Council continues to collaborate and build relations with other councils and DfI and customers, including through attendance at the following levels.

- 5.1.1 SOLACE, HOP and PIP programme*
- 5.1.2 Officer cross authority working groups
- 5.1.3 Belfast Planning Partnership*

5.2 Strategic issues raised by Belfast in the above groups have directly inputted into the ongoing Regional Improvement work.*

- 5.2.1 Validation checklist
- 5.2.2 DCA pilot scheme

5.3 Review and highlight key factors which contribute to delays outside council's control and any steps taken to improve performance.

- 5.3.1 EG Performance of consultees



Subject:	Delegation of Local applications with NI Water objections
Date:	10 th March 2026
Reporting Officer(s):	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
Contact Officer(s):	Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management) Ciara Reville, Principal Planning Officer (South and West) Lisa Walshe, Principal Planning Officer (North and East)

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	Since June 2022, the Planning Committee has periodically considered reports seeking delegated authority for the Director of Planning and Building Control to determine certain Local applications to which NI Water (NIW) has objected.
1.2	The Council continues to receive objections from NIW to some Local applications. The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's agreement to delegate to officers those Local planning applications to which NIW has objected as set out at Appendix 1 .
1.3	For the avoidance of doubt, it is only those applications which would have been delegated to officers under the Scheme of Delegation were it not for the objection from NIW (a statutory consultee) which are proposed to be delegated. Therefore, any of the Local applications listed at Appendix 1 which it may later transpire require to be referred to the Committee for other reason/s (other than the NIW objection) will be reported to the Committee to determine.

1.4	Elected Members can also still request that the applications at Appendix 1 are referred to the Committee under paragraph 3.8.1 of the Scheme of Delegation.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	That the Committee agrees to delegate to the Director of Planning and Building Control those Local planning applications to which NIW has objected set out at Appendix 1 .
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	As reported to the Committee Workshop in November 2021, NIW is objecting to a significant number of Local applications on grounds of insufficient waste-water infrastructure capacity.
3.2	As advised at the Committee Workshop, officers have been engaging with NIW to try to resolve those objections in a strategic context. Whilst progress is being made, and NI Water has been considering a threshold for the scale and nature of development above which they would like to be consulted on future planning application, the objections to these Local applications remain.
	<u>Scheme of Delegation</u>
3.3	The Committee will be aware that the Council operates a Scheme of Delegation for Planning which identifies which matters are to be determined by the Committee and which are delegated to officers.
3.4	Paragraph 3.8.5 (f) of the Scheme of Delegation (December 2025) states that planning applications are not delegated where ' <i>There is an objection from a statutory consultee and the recommendation of the Planning Officer is to approve.</i> ' This means that those applications are required to be determined by the Planning Committee.
3.5	The Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 identifies NIW as a statutory consultee ' <i>...where a development proposal is likely to significantly impact upon the availability of suitable water and sewerage infrastructure to service development proposals.</i> '
3.6	This means that where NIW has lodged an objection to a Local application and the officer recommendation is to approve, the application is not delegated and must be determined by the Committee.
3.7	Therefore, the Committee has agreed to delegate Local applications with the NIW objections to the Director of Planning and Building Control, as set out in similar previous reports to the Committee. This has avoided the potential need to report to date 323 individual applications to the Committee. To have reported all those applications to the Committee would have been logistically extremely challenging, costly and would have resulted in further delays for applicants.
	<u>Nature of NI Water objections</u>
3.8	NI Water has lodged objections to Local applications for one or both of the following reasons. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) there is insufficient capacity at the local Waste Water Treatment Plant to support the proposed development, and/or

	<p>b) there is insufficient network capacity within existing Combined Storm Overflows to support the development, and/ or</p> <p>c) there is insufficient network capacity within the foul sewerage system and a Wastewater Impact Assessment is required.</p>
3.9	In broad terms, NIW is concerned that a lack of infrastructure capacity would give rise to risk of environmental harm including pollution, flooding and adverse impact on existing property. In some cases, NIW is concerned that the application site may be hydrologically linked to Belfast Lough and may harm its water quality.
3.10	However, allowance must be made for existing significant committed development across the city including extant planning permissions. It is highly unlikely that all such development, which includes unimplemented permissions for around 20,000 houses and significant levels of commercial floor space across the city, will come forward at once, if at all. In practical terms it would be unreasonable for the Council to withhold planning permission given the fall-back of the need to connect those developments to existing waste water infrastructure.
3.11	In the case of Waste Water Treatment capacity, NI Water advises that there was an increased capacity from July 2023, albeit this will not be sufficient to address long term waste water treatment plant infrastructure requirements.
	<u>Habitats Regulations Assessment</u>
3.12	Officers have met with Shared Environmental Services (SES). Belfast City Council is the Competent Authority under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) for undertaking an Appropriate Assessment where a proposal is likely to have a significant environmental effect on Belfast Lough, an environmentally protected Special Protection Area (SPA), RAMSAR and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Water quality of the lough is a key consideration. The Habitats Regulations are framed in such a way that it is not only the impacts of individual development proposals that need to be considered, but also “in combination” impacts with other development.
3.13	A precautionary approach applies to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). Competent Authority, the Council may take its own objective view on whether a proposal is likely to have a “significant effect” on water quality of the Lough. However, having regard to the precautionary approach, where NIW object to an application stating concerns about potential environmental pollution, the Planning Service will automatically consult SES and ask them to undertake a HRA Appropriate Assessment Screening to ascertain whether there would be a likely significant impact. This would also trigger statutory consultation with DAERA NIEA.
	<u>Local applications for which delegated authority is sought to determine</u>
3.14	The further Local applications to which NIW has objected and which delegated authority is sought to determine are listed at Appendix 1 .
3.15	It should be noted that only those applications which would have been delegated to officers under the Scheme of Delegation were it not for the objection from NIW are proposed to be delegated. Therefore, any of the Local applications listed at Appendix 1 which it transpires need to be referred to the Committee for other reason/s under the Scheme of Delegation will be reported to the Committee to determine. Individual Members can also still request

	that the applications at Appendix 1 are referred to the Committee under paragraph 3.8.1 of the Scheme of Delegation.
4.0	Financial & Resource Implications
4.1	The cost, time and resources involved in individually reporting all Local applications to which NI Water has objected to the Planning Committee would be considerable. It would also require several additional sittings of the Committee. The recommended approach set out in this report is considered to be a much more efficient use of resources.
5.0	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
5.1	No adverse impacts identified.
6.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – List of Local applications which are proposed to be delegated to officers to determine.

DRAFT

**Appendix 1 – Local applications with NIW objections
(March 2026)**

	DEA	REFERENCE	DATE RECEIVED	PROPOSAL	ADDRESS
1	Titanic	LA04/2025/0049/F	04/03/25	Amalgamation of ground floors of No's 74 and 76 and change of use to one 2-bed (Class C1) apartment. Change of use of first and second floors of No74 from office to one 2-bed apartment (Class C1). Change-of-use of first and second floors of No76 to create a 4-bed/4-person Home in Multiple Occupation (HMO). Associated site works.	74 & 76 Castlereagh Road, Belfast, BT5 5FP
2	Castle	LA04/2025/2163/F	15/12/2025	Change of use from existing office block (A2 & B1) to 25no. bedroom hotel / bar / restaurant (Sui Generis). Façade improvements, creation of new openings and PV panels on roof and additional site works.	27-31 Donegall Street & 3-5 Commercial Court, Belfast, BT1 2FG
3	Oldpark	LA04/2025/2145/F	15/12/2025	Change of use from dwelling (C1) to community and cultural use (D1). Alterations to building façade and roof to create projecting rooflight. Delineation of 11no. additional car parking spaces.	47 Frederick Street Belfast BT1 2LW
4	Titanic	LA04/2026/0078/F	19/01/2026	change of use from commercial to 2-bedroom dwelling	112 Beersbridge Road
5	Titanic	LA04/2026/0149/F	30/01/2026	Change of use of vacant premises (A1) to 3no. apartments at No.56 (C1) and 1no. 6-	56-58 Castlereagh Street, Belfast, BT5 4NH

				bedroom 10-person HMO (Sui Generis) at No.58. 2-storey rear extension, metal access stairs, front dormers, facade alterations and additional site works.	
--	--	--	--	--	--

Development Management Report

Committee Application

Committee Meeting Date: 10 th March 2026	
Application Ref: LA04/2025/0973/F	
Proposal: Retrospective change of use from student accommodation to short term lets accommodation (limited to July & August only)	Location: Bradbury Place 30-44 Bradbury Place, Belfast, BT7 1RS
Referral Route: Paragraph 3.8.2 (d) of the scheme of delegation – change of use application involving student accommodation	
Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions	
Applicant Name and Address: Bradbury Student Properties Limited 1 Linfield Road Belfast BT12 5DR	Agent Name and Address: Clyde Shanks Ltd 2nd Floor 7 Exchange Place Belfast BT1 2NA
Date Valid: 12.06.2025	
Target Date: 25.09.2025	
Contact Officer: Ciara Reville, Principal Planner (Development Management)	
<p>Executive Summary: The application site is situated at 30-44 Bradbury Place, Belfast, BT7 1RS.</p> <p>Permission was granted under LA04/2017/2753/F for the Demolition of buildings and erection of a mixed-use development to include purpose built managed student accommodation with 100 en-suite cluster bedrooms and 56 studios (156 total) and ancillary facilities with ground floor retail unit. 5 storeys addressing Bradbury Place and 6 storeys addressing Albion Lane to rear.</p> <p>The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of the proposed change of use outside of term time • Access, movement and parking <p>One representation was received from the Northern Ireland Hotel Federation. Their concerns are set out below with response.</p> <p>DFI Roads were consulted and had no objections</p> <p>A Section 77 to vary the Section 76 of the host approval is necessary and is agreed in principle with Legal Services.</p>	

Recommendation

Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions. Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions, resolve the relevant Section 77, and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.

Officer Report

1.0

Drawings

1.1

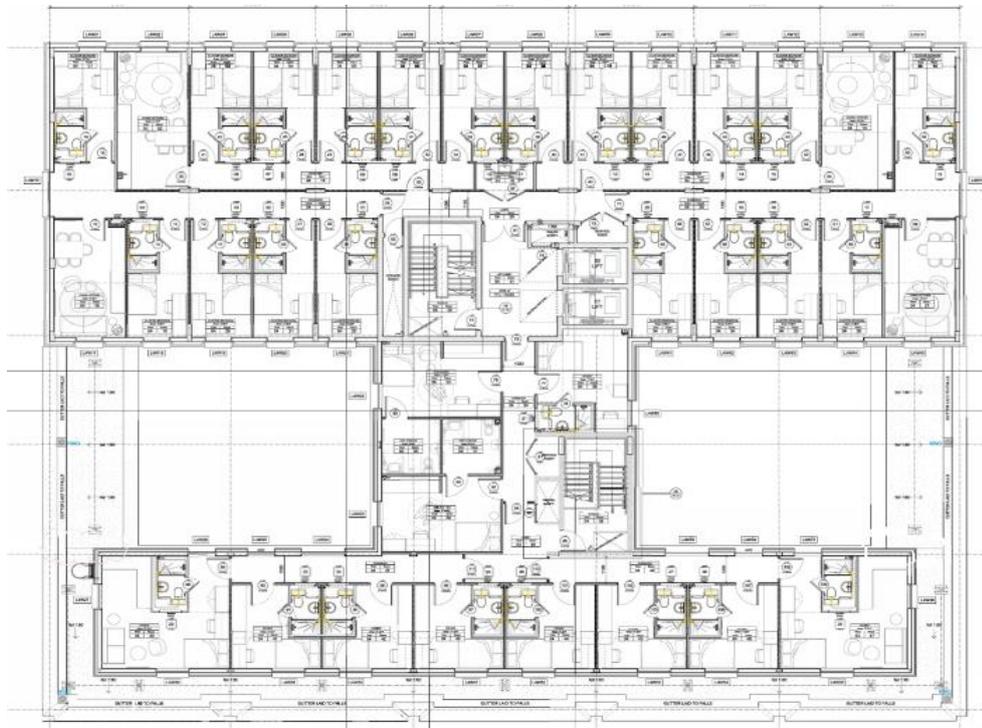
Site Location

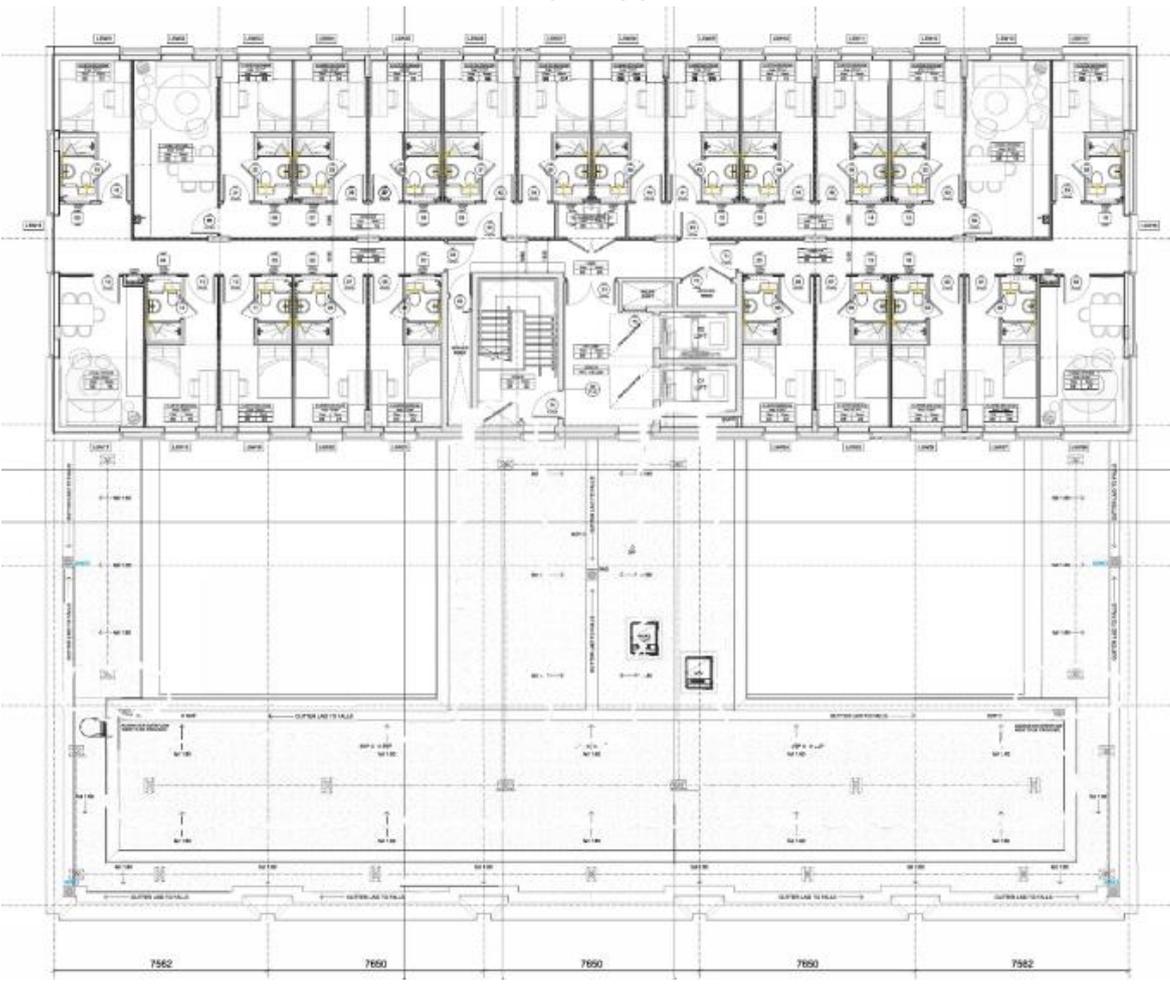


Typical First to Third Floor Layout



Fourth Floor



	<p style="text-align: center;">Fifth Floor</p> 
2.0	Characteristics of the Site and Area
2.1	The site is a multi-story purpose-built student accommodation on Bradbury Place. The surrounding area is commercial in character with retail hotel and bar/restaurant uses dominant.
3.0	Description of Proposal
3.1	Retrospective change of use from student accommodation to short term lets accommodation (limited to July & August only)
4.0	Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations
4.1	Development Plan – Plan Strategy Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035
4.2	<i>Strategic Policies:</i> Policy SP2 – sustainable development

<p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p> <p>4.5</p>	<p><i>Operational Policies:</i></p> <p>HOU13 – Short-term let accommodation</p> <p>TLC1 - Supporting tourism leisure and cultural development</p> <p>TLC3 - Overnight visitor accommodation</p> <p>TRAN 8 - Car parking and servicing arrangements</p> <p>Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality</p> <p>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps</p> <p>Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP</p> <p>Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004)</p> <p>Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014)</p> <p>Regional Planning Policy</p> <p>Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)</p> <p>Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</p> <p>Relevant Planning History</p> <p>LA04/2017/2753/F Decision: Permission Granted Decision Date: 01 August 2019</p> <p>Proposal: Demolition of buildings and erection of a mixed-use development to include purpose built managed student accommodation with 100 en-suite cluster bedrooms and 56 studios (156 total) and ancillary facilities with ground floor retail unit. 5 storeys addressing Bradbury Place and 6 storeys addressing Albion Lane to rear. (amended scheme)</p> <p>LA04/2025/0245/CA on-going enforcement case relating to Unauthorised use of student accommodation for short-term let during non-term time.</p>
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Consultations and Representations</p>
<p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p> <p>5.3.1</p>	<p>Statutory Consultations</p> <p>DFI Roads – No Objections subject to conditions</p> <p>Non-Statutory Consultations</p> <p>Northern Ireland Tourist Board – Only comment on major applications.</p> <p>Representations</p> <p>The application has been advertised and neighbours notified. One representation has been received from the Northern Ireland Hotel Federation. Their concerns are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict with intended use and approved consent: The approved consent for this development was for purpose-built managed student accommodation (PBSA) to serve the needs of Queen’s University Belfast and Ulster University students. The proposed change to short-term lets, even if limited to July and August, represents a significant departure from

that approved use and creates a precedent for non-student occupancy in PBSA buildings. This undermines the clarity and purpose of the city's student accommodation strategy. *The proposal will be restricted to July & August months only, a period when the universities are in summer recess. Therefore, the proposal will not significantly impact approved PBSA use.*

- **Impact on the hotel and regulated accommodation sector:** Allowing PBSA stock to convert to short-term lets adds quasi-hotel capacity into an already competitive city-centre visitor market without equivalent regulatory burden, standards, or tax treatment. Hotels operate under strict regulation, incur higher operating costs, and contribute substantially to employment and tourism infrastructure. Introducing additional short-term let supply erodes this regulated framework and risks financial displacement during peak trading months. This accommodation will compete with other certified products including, hotels, hostels, guest accommodation and self-catering accommodation. *The tourism policies within the Plan Strategy 2035 seeks to extend the offer for day and nighttime tourism facilities within the city centre boundary. The proposal complies with policy, financial impacts on existing tourism provision is not a determining factor in assessment.*
- **Policy precedent, compliance concerns and the integrity of PBSA planning.** The conversion of student accommodation to short-term visitor use undermines the city's ability to ensure an adequate, predictable supply of student housing. With growing undergraduate numbers and pressure on the private rented sector, safeguarding PBSA for its original purpose is essential. *As stated previously the proposed use will be limited to July & August only when the PBSA will not be in use as student accommodation.*
- **Evidence of unauthorised use and regulatory loopholes.** This project was certified for tourism use by Tourism Northern Ireland in March 2025 and was actively advertising rooms on online platforms, including Booking.com, by May 2025. At that time, no change-of-use planning consent had been granted, and the property held permission only to operate as purpose-built student accommodation. The NIHF raised this matter and brought it to the attention of both Belfast City Council and Tourism NI. *Section 55 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 allows for the granting of permission for development already carried out.*
- **Amenity, management and neighbourhood impact** Short-term-lets operate with higher turnover, differing visitor behaviour, and reduced stability. This can lead to noise, disturbance and increased comings and goings, which are not consistent with the controlled management protocols typically required for PBSA. The applicant has not demonstrated how they will maintain equivalent standards of oversight during short-term visitor use. *The application includes a non-term time letting management plan which will be included within the s.77 legal agreement.*
- **Temporal restriction does not adequately mitigate concerns.** A July-August limitation does not eliminate concerns around enforcement,

	<p>management, or market precedent. Experience shows that once a dual-use pattern is established, operators may seek incremental extensions or may drift into additional months with limited oversight. This business traded in the tourism market in May last year. <i>The proposal will be required to operate within the specifics of the planning approval or be subject to legal/enforcement action.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic and economic implications. Belfast’s accommodation strategy emphasises balanced growth across regulated hotels and guest accommodation. The unmonitored conversion of PBSA into short-term visitor stock risks distorting market conditions, reducing investor confidence, and undermining the city’s long-term tourism planning. <i>This is a statement that cannot be given determining weight in assessment.</i> • Monitoring and Enforcement 1) Who will have responsibility for monitoring and verifying that this property operates solely during July and August? <i>It is the responsibility of the developer/operator to operate in accordance with planning permissioned, breaches of planning management are the responsibility of Planning Enforcement and s76 monitoring teams.</i> 2) How will the current loophole be addressed whereby premises can obtain Tourism Northern Ireland certification without having the necessary planning consent in place, and what steps will be taken to close it? <i>This is not a matter for Planning Service.</i> 3) Does the Council have the required resources and statutory powers to effectively monitor and enforce compliance with the two-month change-of-use restriction? <i>Yes, a planning enforcement and s.76 teams are in place.</i> 4) Which agency will be designated as the enforcement authority, and how will breaches of this planning condition be investigated and addressed? <i>The planning enforcement team are responsible for investigating any complaints relating to breaches of planning condition.</i>
6.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT
6.1	Development Plan Context
6.1.1	Section 6(4) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 states that in making any determinations under the Act, regard is to be had to the local development plan, and the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
6.1.2	Section 45(1) of the Act states that in determining planning applications, the Council must have regard to the local development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations.
6.1.3	The Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP), when fully completed, will replace the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 as the statutory Development Plan for the city. The Belfast LDP will comprise two parts. Part 1 is the Plan Strategy, which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 02 May 2023. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan, which will provide the zonings and proposals maps for Belfast and has not yet been published. The zonings and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 remain part of the statutory local development plan (“Departmental Development Plan”) until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.

6.1.4	Operational policies – the Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application, which are set out in the following section of this report.).
6.1.5	Proposals Maps – until such time as the Local Policies Plan is adopted, the Council must have regard to the land-use zonings, designations and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001, both versions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (v2004 and v2014) (draft BMAP 2015) and other relevant area plans. The weight to be afforded to these proposals is a matter for the decision maker. It is considered that significant weight should be given to the proposals map in draft BMAP 2015 (v2014) given its advanced stage in the development process, save for retail policies that relate to Sprucefield which remain contentious.
6.1.6	Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 - The site is located within the settlement development limit in the BUAP and is not zoned for any use.
6.1.7	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004 and 2014) – The is located within the city centre.
6.1.8	Key Issues
6.1.9	<p>The key issues to be considered in this application are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle • Access, movement and parking
6.2	Principle of the proposal
6.2.1	<p>Policy HOU13 relating to short term lets set out a number of key criteria which must be satisfied.</p> <p>Criterion a. requires that the proposal <i>strengthens and diversifies the range of short-stay visitor accommodation in the city</i>. As of June 2024, short-term lets comprise 21% of Belfast City Council’s tourist accommodation. The proposal is for additional rooms outside of term time which would strengthen and diversify the range of short-term visitor accommodation in the city.</p> <p>Criterion b. requires that the proposal <i>is accessible by public transport</i>. The site’s city centre location is highly accessible by public transport.</p> <p>Criterion c. requires that the proposal <i>is sited within an existing tourism cluster or in close proximity to a visitor attraction</i>. The site is within the city centre with several visitor attractions in proximity. City Hall, Queens University and Botanic Gardens are within a 20 min walk.</p> <p>Criterion d. requires that the proposal <i>has appropriate management arrangements in place to ensure a positive and safe living environment whilst minimising any potential negative impacts</i>. The applicant has provided an appropriate</p>

	<p>management plan to the council for consideration. The management plan also addresses the property security, management, booking and vetting and the key operational policies including noise / anti-social behaviour, waste disposal and transportation.</p> <p>Criterion e. requires that <i>the site is not located within a designated HMA (see policy HOU10), unless it can be demonstrated that the development is needed to meet a specific demand in that location.</i> As the site is not located within a designated HMA, this criterion is not applicable.</p> <p>Criterion f. requires that <i>in the case of a change from permanent residential use, part of the property must be retained as permanent residential housing.</i> The existing building is a PBSA therefore this criterion is not applicable.</p>
6.3	<p>Policy TLC1 states that the Council will seek to support tourism, leisure and cultural development that contributes to extending the offer of these forms of development across daytime and nighttime for the visitor. It is also expected that the proposal will lead to improving the quality and accessibility of tourism, leisure and cultural assets to support the city's reputation as an attractive tourism destination.</p>
6.4	<p>Policy TLC3 states that planning permission will be granted for tourism development for new overnight accommodation within the city centre boundary. Although the policy advises that short-term lets are considered under policy HOU13, nonetheless it demonstrates that there is a thrust for tourism development to be located within the city centre.</p>
6.5	<p>Car Parking</p> <p>Policy TRAN8 seeks to ensure that there is sufficient car parking and servicing arrangement for all developments. The development is car free with 42 cycle parking spaces available for short-term guests. Also, a Belfast bike docking station is located on Bradbury Place convenient to the site. Short-term guests will therefore be encouraged to use more sustainable means of transport, such as cycling, walking or take advantage of regular local transport facilities. For short-term guests who do need parking, there is on-street paid parking within the general area of the site.</p> <p>Whilst the approved scheme is not subject to a Travel Plan, a Travel Plan was submitted for this application. The Travel Plan supports the proposal and outlines all travel options available to staff, guests and visitors to the proposed short-term let units i.e. multiple forms of public transport such as Metro, Glider, Goldline and Ulsterbus bus services alongside Translink Train services at Botanic Station, as well as the pedestrian and cycle infrastructure in the surrounding area. It also addresses private car usage in that it will still be a mode of travel to some, with street pay and display parking and other longer duration car parks.</p> <p>DFI were consulted and offered no objection to the development's Travel Plan.</p>
6.6	<p>Section 76 Planning Agreement</p> <p>Application LA04/2017/2753/F was subject to a Section 76 agreement which restricted the use to student accommodation and shall not be rented out or sub-let</p>

6.7	<p>for any other purpose. As such a Section 77 is required to modify the original S76 to ensure that the student use is compliant with its legal obligations.</p> <p>A Section 77 to vary the Section 76 of the host approval has been agreed in principle with Legal Services and delegated authority is sought to resolve the finalisation of same.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>The proposal is, on balance, an appropriate form of development within the city centre, it will provide additional visitor accommodation within the city centre outside of term time, adding to the diversity of visitor accommodation on offer, during peak times. It will also assist with vacancy rates within the building. Approval is recommended.</p>
7.0	<p>Recommendation</p>
7.1	<p>Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.</p>
7.2	<p>Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions, resolve the Section 77 variation to the host Section 76 planning agreement and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.</p>
<p>DRAFT CONDITIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This planning permission has effect from the date which the development hereby approved was carried out. Reason: As required by Section 55 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. 2. The short-term let use hereby permitted, shall only operate between 1st July and 31st August each year. Accordingly, the short term let use will cease on the 31st of August and not recommence until the 1st July the following year. Reason: To ensure the premises are retained as permanent student accommodation during the academic year, 1st September to 30th June. 3. The development shall operate in accordance with the Travel Plan dated June 2025 and uploaded to the Planning Portal. Reason: To encourage alternative modes of transport to the private car. 4. The development hereby permitted shall operate in accordance with the Serving and Waste Management Plan bearing the Belfast City Council Planning Office date stamp 28 August 2018. Reason: In the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users. 	

Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

Summary	
Committee Meeting Date: 10 th March 2026	
Application Ref: LA04/2025/1692/F	
Proposal: Extension of existing ball stop fencing from 5m to 8m along three sides. This will total 220m in length.	Location: Existing soccer pitch at Marrowbone Millenium Park (approx. 25m north of No. 8 Ardoyne Court), Ardoyne Avenue, Belfast.
Referral Route: The application is made by Belfast City Council and on lands to which the Council has an estate (as per the Scheme of Delegation paragraph 3.8.5 (a) and (b))	
Recommendation: Approval subject to condition	
Applicant Name and Address: Michael Small Cecil Ward Building 4-10 Linenhall Street Belfast BT2 8BP	Agent Name and Address: Michael Small Cecil Ward Building 4-10 Linenhall Street Belfast BT2 8BP
Recommendation	Approval
Date Valid: 21/10/2025	
Target Date: 03/02/2026	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe (Principal Planning Officer)	
Executive Summary: The application seeks planning permission for the installation of 1 no Ball stop fence along three sides with a total length of 220m x 8m (height). This will increase the height of the existing fencing from 5m to 8m. The site is located within Marrowbone Millennium Park, off the Old Park Road. The playing fields are a Council operated site which offers sport pitches and open space for nearby residents. The site comprises of one soccer pitch and playground. Within the pitch there is an existing changing room. The topography of the site is broadly level with areas of trees outside the site boundary. An area of hardstanding to the front of the park serves as the entrance. The proposed works are due to take place to the east of the existing soccer playing field. The areas to the northern and southern sides of the site are predominantly residential. The site is partly located within the Oldpark Local Landscape Policy Area. The site is situated within the development limit as designated under both versions of dBMAP (2004 & 2014).	

The key Issues relevant to consideration of the application are:

- Principle of Development
- Impact on amenity
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area
- Other considerations

There is no objection from Environmental Health, and no representations have been received.

Recommendation

Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is acceptable.

Having regard to the development plan and all other material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission is approved. Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive

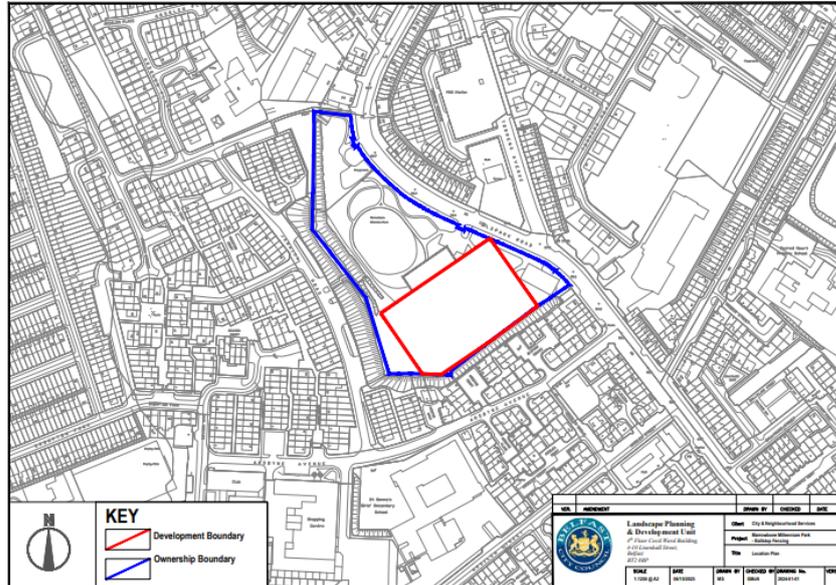
Officer Report

1.0

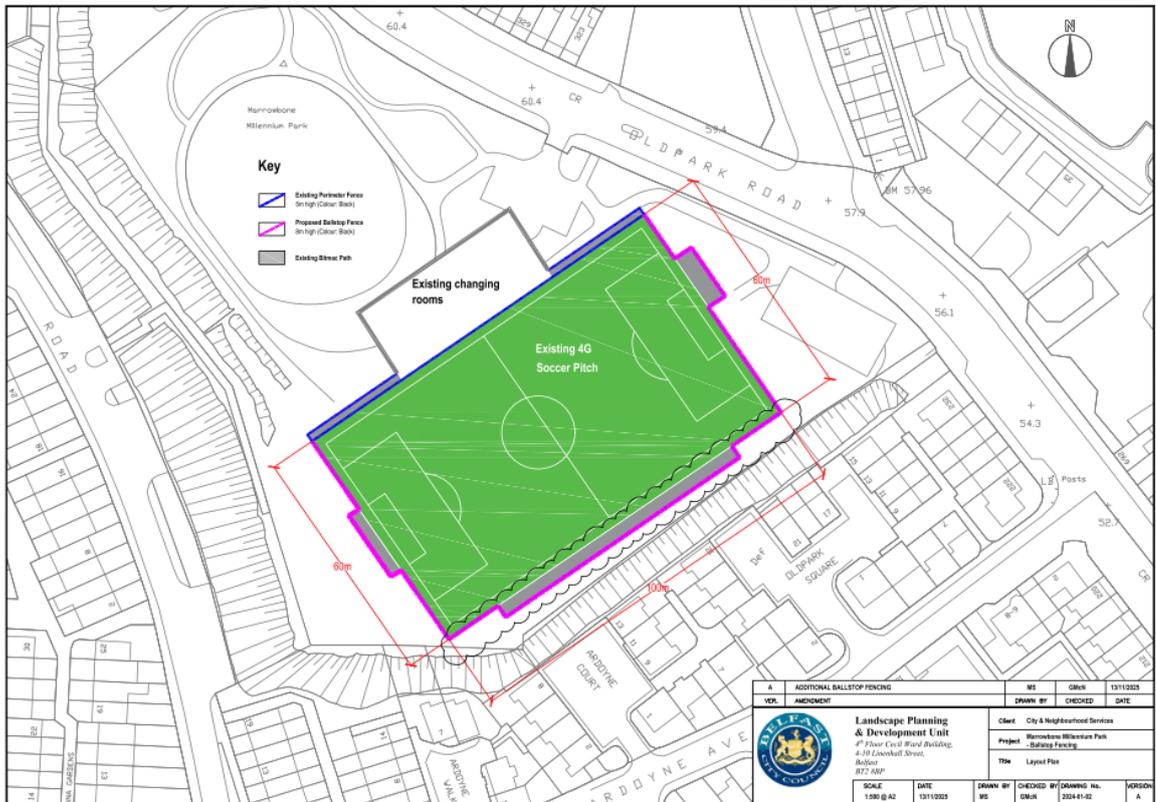
Drawings

1.1

Site Location



Block Plan



	<p>Proposed Elevations</p> <p>Proposed Ballstop Fence Extension - Section / Elevation 1:20</p>
<p>2.0</p>	<p>Characteristics of the Site and Area</p>
<p>2.1</p>	<p>The site is located within Marrowbone Millennium Park, off the Old Park Road. The playing fields are a council operated site which offer a 4G sport pitch and a multi-use games area. The site has been recently redeveloped under planning permission LA04/2020/1593/F. The site benefits from a wide range of community infrastructure, which includes a playground and outdoor gym facilities.</p>
<p>2.2</p>	<p>The sports pitch is in close proximity to the pedestrian entrance. Changing rooms and outdoor seating area has been provided and backs onto the event space of Marrowbone Millennium Park.</p>
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Description of Proposal</p>
<p>3.1</p>	<p>The planning application is seeking permission for a new ball stop net system which faces onto three sides of the 4G pitch. The northern elevation has an existing 5m high Ball Stop fence</p>

4.0	Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations
4.1	Development Plan – Plan Strategy Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035
4.2	Policies in the Plan Strategy relevant to the application include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy GB1 - Green and Blue Infrastructure network. - Policy HC1 – Promoting Healthy Communities - Policy CI1 – Community Infrastructure - Policy TRE1 – Trees - Policy OS5- Intensive Sports Facilities
4.4	Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014)
4.5	Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) Edition 2
4.6	Relevant Planning History LA04/2020/1593/F - Marrowbone Millennium Park Oldpark Road Belfast BT14 6QS. Refurbishment works to existing park, comprising: revised accesses from Jamaica Road and Old Park Road; extension of existing 3G pitch; refurbishment of existing flood lighting; a replacement 405m2 GFA changing pavilion incorporating community facilities and a shelter for up to 101 spectators; new MUGA; new multi-use community event space; new street furniture, outdoor gym equipment and park lighting; new inclusive/multi-age playground; new 2.4m boundary fencing; rationalisation of existing path network including resurfacing; new SUDS pond/wetland wildlife area; landscape interventions including planting, woodland management, entrance improvements and all associated works. Decision Approval Date: 09/08/2021.
5.0	Consultations and Representations
5.1	Non-Statutory Consultations Environmental Health – No objections subject to conditions.
5.2	No representations were received.
6.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT
6.1	Development Plan Context
6.1.1	Section 6(4) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 states that in making any determinations under the Act, regard is to be had to the local development plan, and the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
6.1.2	Section 45(1) of the Act states that in determining planning applications, the Council must have regard to the local development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations.
6.1.3	The Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP), when fully completed, will replace the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 as the statutory Development Plan for the city. The Belfast LDP

	will comprise two parts. Part 1 is the Plan Strategy, which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 02 May 2023. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan, which will provide the zonings and proposals maps for Belfast and has not yet been published. The zonings and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 remain part of the statutory local development plan (“Departmental Development Plan”) until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.
6.1.4	Operational policies – the Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application, which are set out in the following section of this report.).
6.1.5	Proposals Maps – until such time as the Local Policies Plan is adopted, the Council must have regard to the land-use zonings, designations and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001, both versions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (v2004 and v2014) (draft BMAP 2015) and other relevant area plans. The weight to be afforded to these proposals is a matter for the decision maker. It is considered that significant weight should be given to the proposals map in draft BMAP 2015 (v2014) given its advanced stage in the development process, save for retail policies that relate to Sprucefield which remain contentious.
6.1.6	Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 - The site is located within the settlement development limit in the BUAP and is not zoned for any use.
6.1.7	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004) - The site is located within the settlement development limit in the BUAP and is not zoned for any use.
6.1.8	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) - The site is located within the settlement development limit in the BUAP and is not zoned for any use.
6.2	<p>Key Issues</p> <p>The key issues to be considered as part of this assessment are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of Development • Impact on amenity • Impact on the character and appearance of the area • Other considerations
6.3	<p>Principle of Development</p> <p>The principle of open space / recreational development has already been established and is deemed acceptable at this location. The proposal retains the use as existing open space and supports the continued use as a pitch as per Policy OS1. The proposed ball stop system supports the continued use of the site as an intensive sports facility under Policy OS5. The principle of the development is acceptable subject to further considerations below.</p>
6.4	<p>Impact on Amenity</p> <p>The proposed ball stop net fencing is to the south, east and west sides of the pitch, which is closest in proximity to Old Park Square. These structures are 8m in height and 220m in length. It is considered that the separation distances to existing residential properties will assist in mitigating noise impacts. Officers consider that noise levels will not increase from the existing situation.</p>
6.5	Allowances under permitted development are also a significant consideration in relation to the pitch-side fencing. In summary, the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area, or landscape.

6.6	<p>Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area</p> <p>The proposal is incidental to an existing use within an area of open space. The proposed ball stop net fencing is considered appropriate for the operation this pitch. The design of these structures will result in limited visual impacts. Public views of the ball stop net fencing would largely be limited to near distance views from Marrowbone Millennium Park and the junction from old park road which splits into Torrens Avenue. It is also considered that the existing trees around the site periphery will filter views of structures and on balance, the proposal would not result in detrimental visual impacts.</p>
6.7	<p>Other Considerations</p> <p>The proposal would not cause any loss of existing trees and therefore complies with Policy TRE1.</p>
8.0	<p>Recommendation</p>
8.1	<p>Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.</p>
8.2	<p>Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.</p>
<p>DRAFT CONDITIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission. Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. 2. The panels of the ball stop fencing hereby permitted must be securely fixed using noise resilient fittings, as shown in drawing from Landscape Planning & Development Unit, titled 'Ballstop Fencing Extension - Section & Elevation', drawing number 2024-01-03 Drawing no. 03A and dated 06/10/2025, with the noise resilient fittings to be maintained and retained thereafter. Reason: Protection of residential amenity 	

This page is intentionally left blank