

DRAFT SCHEME OF DELEGATION FOR PLANNING

XXXXX 2025

3.8 Strategic Director of Place and Economy

The exercise of the following functions, **in line with relevant Council policies**, is delegated to the Strategic Director of Place and Economy, who may delegate his/her relevant powers to his/her deputy unless otherwise stated, namely Planning and Building Control and Director (Operational).

Planning

3.8.1 An elected Member of the Council may request that an application that relates to a site within their District Electoral Area or within an adjoining District Electoral Area or within the City Centre¹ is referred to the Planning Committee provided that the request is made in writing or by email to **the Planning Service** within 28 days of either: the date that the application is publicly advertised **(or re-advertised)** in the newspaper; or the date of Neighbour Notification **(or re-Neighbour Notification)**, whichever is the later. The Member shall clearly state their reason/s for requesting referral of the application to the Planning Committee, which must be material planning considerations. The Strategic Director of Place and Economy shall determine whether the reason/s are material planning consideration/s and of sufficient importance for consideration by the Planning Committee. **The Planning Service** will advise the relevant Member of their decision. If the decision is not to refer the application to the Planning Committee, then the decision shall be delegated to the Strategic Director of Place and Economy. **The Planning Service** will notify the Member that made the request of the outcome of their request to refer the application to the Planning Committee. Where the application is to be referred to the Planning Committee, Democratic Services will notify all Members. Where an application is referred to the Planning Committee under this provision the **Planning Service** shall notify **elected Member/s that requested the referral and** the applicant at least five calendar days before the application is discussed by the Planning Committee.

3.8.2 The functions listed below in relation to the legislation set out in Appendix C and legislation made thereunder for which the Planning Committee has responsibility. The thresholds set out at paragraph 3.8.2 (a) only apply where a representation² has been received which conflicts with the Planning Officer's recommendation. Where no representations have been received that conflict with the Planning Officer's recommendation, the thresholds do not apply and the decision is delegated to the Strategic Director of Place and Economy. **Notwithstanding the provisions below, in respect of applications, where additional or revised plans and/or information has been**

¹ City Centre as defined by the Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 **and as replaced by the draft Belfast Local Development Plan: Local Policies Plan 2035 once published.**

² Representation means a consultation response received during the consultation period including, but not limited to, responses from technical consultees, neighbours and the public. Conflict must be related to material planning considerations. Correspondence from an applicant is not deemed to be a Representation.

reasonably requested and not provided within 28 days of the request, the decision is delegated to the Strategic Director of Planning and Place.

- (a) determining applications for the following categories of local developments³, including building, engineering and other operations and material changes of use:
 - i. housing schemes up to and including 12 units other than proposals for change of house type on an approved scheme below 50 units;
 - ii. retailing below 1,000 square metres gross floor space outside the City Centre or District Centres; or below 2,500 square metres gross floor space within the City Centre or District Centres;
 - iii. office space below 5,000 square metres gross floor space;
 - iv. business, light industry, general industry and storage and distribution below 2,500 square metres gross floor space;
 - v. community-related below 1,000 square metres gross floor space;
 - vi. recreation and culture below 1,000 square metres gross floor space outside town centres or below 5,000 square metres gross floor space within town centres;
 - vii. hotels and hostels below 30 beds.
- (b) determining applications for landscaping, car parking and minor works ancillary to the main use of the land which they are to be located; works required for the purposes of providing disability access; the erection of smoking shelters etc.;
- (c) determining applications for alterations and extensions to residential property and ancillary and incidental residential development within the curtilage of residential property;
- (d) determining applications for change of use but excluding those relating to student accommodation; and amusement arcades;
- (e) varying **or** removing conditions except when the variation **or** removal relates to, or constitutes, a major development;
- (f) determining applications for discharge of conditions;
- (g) determining applications for a non-material change;
- (h) determining applications for works to, or demolition of, buildings or structures in conservation areas and areas of townscape character, except where it involves full demolition of a main building (excluding buildings which are ancillary or incidental) and the officer recommendation is to grant demolition consent or planning permission;
- (i) determining applications for listed building consent, excluding full demolition
- (j) determining applications for the display of advertisements;
- (k) determining applications for certificates of lawful development (existing and proposed);
- (l) **determining Proposal of** Application Notices;
- (m) exercising the Council's powers in relation to the preservation of trees;

³ The definition of local development is provided for by section 25 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

- (n) the making of a screening opinion or scoping opinion in relation to Environmental Impact Assessment⁴; Strategic Environmental Assessment/Sustainability Appraisal⁵; Habitats Regulations Assessment⁶; and Rural Needs Impact Assessment⁷
- (o) enforcing all regulations and orders made under the said legislation and issuing and serving of notices;
- (p) executing works in default of compliance with any notice or order and in an emergency where empowered by statute and recovering the costs of so doing;
- (q) temporary listing of buildings including the issuing of building preservation notices and listing in urgent cases;
- (r) instituting legal proceedings, in consultation with the City Solicitor, on behalf of the Council;
- (s) authorising officers pursuant to relevant legislation for the purpose of exercising statutory powers;
 - (t) lodging representations including objections, in consultation with the City Solicitor, in relation to planning applications where the Council has been notified as part of the statutory process or where the Council's interests are likely to be affected;
- (u) responding to consultations from neighbouring authorities in relation to their Local Development Plan;
- (v) administering statutory registers;
- (w) registering and removing notices and charges in the Statutory Charges Register, in consultation with the City Solicitor;
- (x) conducting of planning related appeals to the Planning Appeals Commission; Public Examinations and other planning related public inquiries;
 - (y) responding to planning related consultations from Government Agencies unless the Strategic Director of Place and Economy considers that the consultation raises a significant planning issue for the Council, relates to a matter which is controversial or likely to be of significant public interest.

3.8.3 In relation to planning related Public Examinations, the Strategic Director of Place and Economy may, in consultation with the City Solicitor / Chief Executive where it is considered necessary, carry out the following functions:

- (a) agree minor, typographical or factual changes or modifications to the Council's Local Development Plan Documents; and
- (b) agree changes to the wording (but not the trigger points) of the operational policies which may change the emphasis but not the overall objectives of the policy.

3.8.4 Negotiating **Financial Developer Contributions** in respect of those agreements in which the contribution is equal to or less than £30,000.

⁴ Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017

⁵ Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 (EAPP)

⁶ Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended)

⁷ Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

3.8.5 The delegated functions set out above do not apply to the following planning applications⁸:

- (a) Those made by the Council;
- (b) Those in which the Council has an estate;
- (c) Those made by elected members of the Council;
- (d) Those made by Council staff at senior management grade (Grade 14 or above) and all staff in Place and Economy Department and Legal Services;
- (e) Proposals for major development⁹;
- (f) There is an objection from a statutory consultee and the recommendation of the Planning Officer is to approve
- (g) Purpose built student accommodation

3.8.6 All other applications, permissions or provisions of the legislation which are not specifically listed above shall be deemed to be delegated unless otherwise provided for within this Scheme.

3.8.7 Where a function is normally delegated but raises issues which the Strategic or Operational Director believes should be considered by the Committee, that matter will be referred to the Committee.

⁸ This provision relates to applications seeking planning permission for development and does not refer to other forms of approval such as applications for Advertisement Consent, Listed Building Consent, Conservation Area Consent and Certificates of Lawful Use or Development.

⁹ Excludes applications associated with a planning permission for Major development such as applications for a Non-Material Change or Discharge of Condition