

Planning Committee

Tuesday, 17th February, 2026

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson);
Aldermen Lawlor, McCullough and Rodgers;
Councillors Abernethy, Anglin, Bell, Brennan,
T. Brooks, Carson, Doran, D. Douglas, S. Douglas,
Garrett, Groogan, Magee, McCabe,
McCann and Whyte.

Also attended: Councillor R. Brooks.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Mr. K. McDonnell, Solicitor (Regulatory and Planning);
Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager (Development
Management),
Ms. C Reville, Principal Planning Officer;
Ms. L. Walshe, Principal Planning Officer; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 20th January were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd February, 2026.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Carson declared an interest in the following three items in that he had previously discussed the applications with the applicants and officers, and he left the meeting whilst the applications were being considered:

- LA04/2023/2633/F - Proposed extension to existing clubhouse to provide indoor sports hall, changing rooms, reception, and fitness suite. Proposed relocation of grass pitch and new 3G training pitch with integrated ball walls. Proposed annex building with club store and matchday shop. Site works including increased parking, fencing, catch nets, floodlighting, dugouts, paths, and other associated amenities - St Teresa's GAC, 2 Glen Road Heights;
- LA04/2025/1896/F - Proposed mixed use development comprising of 77 No. social housing

units (mix of 26 dwellings and 51 apartments) and a new children's centre, car parking, landscaping, open space, access and all associated site works including the installation of a new substation.(amendment to planning permission ref: LA04/2024/0122/F). - Former Belfast Metropolitan College Campus Whiterock Road; and

- LA04/2024/1389/F - Community garden and improvements to existing unused space, scheme to include multi-use play-court, allotment area, pizza and BBQ area and pathways. - Newhill Youth and Community Centre, 261 Whiterock Road.

Councillor Whyte declared an interest in relation to the presentation, in that he had previously worked with a housing association, and he left the meeting whilst the Committee received the presentation.

Presentation

Mr. Seamus Leheny, Chief Executive at Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. S. Leheny to the meeting, who was in attendance following a request from the Committee to discuss the obstacles Housing Associations face with regard to partnering with housing developers in order to provide social housing.”

Mr. Leheny addressed the Committee and provided an update with regard to delivery of housing in the city and outlined some of the barriers and obstacles that developers face in relation to mixed tenure developments.

Following a question-and-answer session with the Members, the Chairperson thanked Mr. Leheny for his attendance and he retired from the meeting.

Committee Site Visits

Note of Committee Site Visit

The Committee noted that the previously scheduled site visit had not taken place and would be rescheduled.

Pre-emptive Site Visit

The Committee agreed to undertake a pre-emptive site visit to the following application site:

- Pre-emptive Committee site visit: LA04/2025/0837/F - Demolition of Mount Masonic Hall, erection of 35 no. social housing units in 2 no. blocks with associated private, shared, communal, and public space, 29 no. private car parking spaces, vehicle and pedestrian

access from Park Avenue, improvements to pedestrian steps linking Strandburn Drive to Sydenham Park, and demolition of 1no. garage. - Land of the former Mount Masonic Hall, 45 Park Avenue.

Notifications from Statutory Bodies

Traffic Control Measures

The Committee noted the proposed waiting restrictions at Bedford Street.

Planning Appeals Notified

The Committee noted the appeals decisions.

Planning Decisions Issued

The Committee noted the planning decisions issued in January, 2026.

Live Applications for Major Development

The Committee noted the list of live applications for major development.

Committee Decisions that have yet to issue

The Committee noted the list of Committee decisions which had not yet been issued.

Miscellaneous Reports

Review of Implementation of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

The Committee agreed the draft response to DfI's request in relation to second review of the Implementation of the Planning Act (NI) 2011.

Review of Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) Fees

The Committee noted the proposed increased PAD fees and the fundamental review of PAD fees over the next financial year

Local Applications Subject to NI Water Objections

The Committee agreed to delegate to the Director of Planning and Building Control those Local planning applications to which NI Water had objected.

Planning Applications previously considered

LA04/2022/0809/F - Amendments to approved schemes ref. Z/2008/0993/F (erection of 53 No. dwellings) & ref. Z/2013/0120/F (erection of 46 No. dwellings); to reduce overall density from 99 No. dwellings to 92 No. dwellings and associated and ancillary works. - Lands to the south and west of Woodland Grange to the north of Blacks Gate and to the east of Moor Park Mews

The Planning Manager outlined the application to the Committee and explained that the application had been approved in December, 2025 and was back before the Committee as the proposal had been amended to remove a small area of third-party land from the application site which had resulted in a reduction of the scheme by two dwellings.

He provided an overview of the amended site location and layout plans and stated that no additional representations had been received following the previous re-consultation on the application and that the proposal was considered to remain acceptable, the Section 76 planning agreement had been agreed in principle and that there were no outstanding matters.

He stated that it was recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

The Committee granted planning permission subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the Section 76 planning agreement and conditions, and to deal with any other matters that might arise provided that they were not substantive.

LA04/2025/0605/F - Erection of a four storey building to create 29no. short-term let accommodation units with ancillary roof-mounted solar panels - 341-345 Albertbridge Road

The Principal Planning Officer summarised the application for the Committee and outlined the following key areas:

- Principle of short term let at the location;
- Character, design and appearance; and
- Impact on amenity.

She reported that a final response had been received from the Waste Management Team which was content with the proposed waste management arrangements and that 37 objections had been received and the issues raised had been considered within the report.

She stated that it was recommended that the application be approved, subject to conditions.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor R. Brooks to the meeting who attended to speak in objection to the application.

Councillor R. Brooks stated that she didn't believe that the proposal was in line with the intent of the Belfast Local Development Plan, particularly with regard to the housing policies.

She stated that the assertion that the site sits within an existing tourism cluster was incorrect as the Oval football grounds was a periodic match day venue, organised tours were on an enquiry led basis and were very infrequent. She explained that the report referred to Eastside Visitor Centre, CS Lewis Square and Templemore Baths Heritage Experience and stated that, whilst they were important civic and heritage assets, they functioned primarily as a daytime attraction within a wider city tourism offer and that overnight accommodation demand would remain within the city centre.

She stated that, with regard to policies HOU1 and HOU2, insufficient weight had been given to the strategic housing objectives of the Local Development Plan and she referred to previous comments from the Housing Executive which asserted that there should be a residential development on the site and that a previous proposal for the application site had failed, not because the site had been unsuitable for housing but because the design had not met the required standards.

She concluded that land was limited in the east of the city and should be prioritised for housing rather than the provision of short-term lets and that the proposal was not compliant with policies HOU1, HOU2 and HOU13.

A number of Members questioned how the proposal met Criterion (c) of Policy HOU13, concerned that the site was not located within an existing tourism cluster or in close proximity to a visitor attraction and pointed out that there was a lack of clarity as to what qualified as a visitor attraction.

A Member pointed out that the social housing potential in the area should be maximised and that the application presented a cohesion issue with the local community. In response, the Principal Planning Officer stated that the application site was not on land that had been zoned for housing.

Proposal

Moved by Alderman Lawlor,
Seconded by Councillor Whyte

“That the Committee refuses the application on the grounds that it is contrary to:

- Policy HOU1, in that the proposal would result in the loss of a sustainable urban site located in an area of demonstrable and increasing housing need;
- Policy HOU2, in that the proposed short term let accommodation represents an inefficient use of the land and would permanently displace the opportunity to deliver housing in a sustainable location; and
- Policy HOU13(c), in that a tourism cluster needs to demonstrate a generated sustainable overnight need that the application would not facilitate and the area did not represent a meaningful tourism cluster.”

In response to the proposal, the Planning Manager explained that, with regard to Policy HOU1, the land was not zoned for housing and therefore it was not applicable. He added that Policy HOU2 applied to Windfall Housing and was therefore not applicable as the proposal was not a housing scheme. He explained that, to reject the application site as being within or in close proximity to a tourism cluster, would be inconsistent with the Planning Appeals Commission’s approach to recent decisions for short-term let accommodation and that community cohesion was not an applicable policy issue.

Subsequent to the advice of the Planning Manager, Alderman Lawlor amended his proposal, seconded by Councillor Whyte, to read as follows:

“That the Committee refuses the application on the grounds that, the proposal is contrary to Policy HOU13(c), in that a tourism cluster needs to demonstrate a generated sustainable overnight need that the application would not facilitate and the area does not represent a meaningful tourism cluster.”

On a vote, seven Members voted for the proposal and twelve against and it was declared lost.

Accordingly, the Chairperson put the case officer’s recommendation to the Committee and the Committee agreed to grant planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and to deal with any other issues that might arise, provided that they were not substantive.

Planning Applications

LA04/2024/0015/F - Erection of 53 residential units (including 43 dwellings and 10 apartments) including creation of access, internal roads, landscaping and associated works (revised information). - Lands at Cabin Hill, Upper Newtownards Road

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the application in order to review additional information following a recent fire at the application site.

LA04/2023/2633/F - Proposed extension to existing clubhouse to provide indoor sports hall, changing rooms, reception, and fitness suite. Proposed relocation of grass pitch and new 3G training pitch with integrated ball walls. Proposed annex building with club store and matchday shop. Site works including increased parking, fencing, catch nets, floodlighting, dugouts, paths, and other associated amenities - St Teresa's GAC, 2 Glen Road Heights

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application and highlighted the following key issues for consideration:

- Principle of the proposed use;
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area;;
- Impact on amenity;
- Open space;
- Access and transportation;
- Climate change;
- Health impacts;
- Wastewater Infrastructure;
- Flood Risk;
- Environmental protection;
- Impact on Built Heritage;
- Impact on Natural heritage; and
- Trees.

She reported that statutory consultees had not raised any objection, that since publication of the case officer's report, DfI Rivers had returned a response of no objection and that final comments from Shared Environmental Services (SES) were outstanding.

She informed the Committee that, following advertisement in the local press and neighbour notification, 14 letters of objection had been received from local residents and that the issues raised had been considered within the case officer's report.

She stated that, having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal was considered acceptable and it was recommended that planning permission be approved.

In response to concern from a Member with regard to a condition which required the windows of the gym to be closed during operating hours, the Principal Planning Officer advised that she would explore the removal of the condition and should removal of Condition 10 not be viable, that she would bring the application back to the Committee for further consideration.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions to include the removal of Condition 10, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to resolve a response from SES, finalise the wording of the conditions and to deal with any other issues that might arise, provided that they were not substantive.

LA04/2025/1896/F - Proposed mixed use development comprising of 77 No. social housing units (mix of 26 dwellings and 51 apartments) and a new children's centre, car parking, landscaping, open space, access and all associated site works including the installation of a new substation.(amendment to planning permission ref: LA04/2024/0122/F). - Former Belfast Metropolitan College Campus Whiterock Road

The Principal Planning Officer summarised the application and highlighted the following key areas for consideration:

- Principle of housing and community facility in this location;
- Housing density;
- Affordable housing;
- Housing mix;
- Adaptable and accessible accommodation;
- Design and placemaking;
- Public realm;
- Impact on heritage assets;
- Climate change;
- Residential quality and impact on amenity;
- Open space;
- Access and transport;
- Health impacts;
- Environmental protection;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Section 76 planning agreement; and
- Pre-application Community Consultation.

She explained that previous permission for the application site was granted by the Committee in December 2024 and pointed out that the key difference between the

proposals was the amalgamation of Apartment Block A and the children centre to create and additional 15 apartment units and that previous proposals for Apartment Blocks B and C remained unchanged.

She reported that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive was supportive of the social housing proposals and that there was an outstanding response from Environmental Health but that, given the comments Environmental Health provided on the previous approval, it was not considered that there would be any significant concerns that could not be overcome through planning conditions.

She stated that, having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it was recommended that planning permission be granted.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions, deal with Environmental Health's outstanding consultation, finalise the Section 76 planning agreement and to deal with any other issues that might arise, provided the issues were not substantive.

**LA04/2025/2183/F - Removal of conditions
14 and 15 from the permission referenced
LA04/2024/0714/F (Contamination). - Units
2a and 2b 38 Boucher Road**

The Principal Planning Officer reported that the application sought planning permission for the removal of Conditions 14 and 15 of approval LA04/2024/0714/F and explained that Condition 14 was not necessary as no remediation was required and Condition 15 was no longer required as it related to the verification report linked to Condition 14.

She stated that, following consultation with Environmental Health, which had previously suggested the conditions, it had concluded that it was content with their removal.

She informed the Committee that, having had regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies and consultation responses, it was considered that the removal of the conditions be approved.

The Committee approved the removal of Conditions 14 and 15 from the permission referenced LA04/2024/0714/F (Contamination) and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the conditions and deal with any other matters that might arise provided that they were not substantive.

LA04/2025/1716/F - Proposed change of use from, Use class B1(a) office, to short term Transitional Care Unit, Use Class C3 b) comprising of 73 no. ensuite beds, associated ancillary facilities including café, rehabilitation suites and treatment rooms, laboratory, consulting rooms, 2 no. external terraces and all other ancillary, staff and storage rooms. Development includes ambulance drop off bay, replacement of existing windows, and all other associated site and access works. - Santander House, 1 Mays Meadow

The Principal Planning Officer summarised the application for a change of use and outlined the following key issues for consideration:

- Principle of health facility in this location;
- Impact on transport infrastructure and road safety;
- Flood risk/ drainage;
- Health Impacts;
- Environmental impact;
- Climate change; and
- Pre-application Community Consultation.

She reported that, since the publication of the case officer's report, DfI Roads had provided a consultation response which offered no objection, subject to the conditioning of the provision of weather protected cycle parking and hard surfaced areas, in operation and in accordance with the Service Management and Travel Plans.

She stated that, having regard to the Development Plan and other material considerations, it was recommended that planning permission be granted.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and to deal with any other issues that might arise, provided the issues were not substantive.

LA04/2025/0288/F - Retrospective change of use from taxi passenger terminal, cafe, office and newsagent to a Homeless Centre, Category D1(B). The centre will provide meals, washing and changing facilities and an internal social amenity area for users.. The centre will operate Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week from 4:00 pm up until 10:00 pm (Amended Description) - Existing taxi passenger terminal and former retail unit located within 35a King Street

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the application on the grounds that there was an outstanding Environmental Health report.

(Councillor Carson retired from the meeting.)

LA04/2024/1389/F - Community garden and improvements to existing unused space, scheme to include multi-use play-court, allotment area, pizza and BBQ area and pathways. - Newhill Youth and Community Centre, 261 Whiterock Road

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application and outlined the following key issues for consideration:

- Principle of proposal;
- Impact on amenity;
- Access and transport;
- Climate change;
- Environmental protection; and
- Natural heritage.

She stated that the proposed works were considered subservient to the existing building and was sympathetic to both the character of the area and the setting of the surrounding residential use.

She reported that consultation with Environmental Health had resulted in conditions having been offered with regard to times of operation to protect neighbouring amenity from noise and risk of unknown ground contamination and that one third party objection had been received and the issues raised had been addressed within the case officer's report.

She stated that, having regard to the Development Plan and other material considerations, it was recommended that planning permission be granted.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the

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wording of the conditions and to deal with any other issues that might arise, provided the issues were not substantive.

LA04/2025/2216/LBC - Installation of Facade Lighting. - Ulster Hall, 30 Bedford Street

The Principal Planning Officer summarised the application for Listed Building Consent for the installation of new LED linear and spotlight lighting to the exterior of the Ulster Hall.

She outlined the impact on the setting of the Listed Building and reported that the DfC Historic Environment Division had been consulted and had offered no objection to the proposed works, subject to conditions.

She stated that, having regard to the development plan and other relevant planning policies and material considerations, it was considered that the proposal be approved.

The Committee granted listed building consent, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and to deal with any other issues that might arise, provided the issues were not substantive

LA04/2025/1135/F - Demolition of first floor rear return, first floor rear extension and additional site works - 57 Knock Eden Park

The Principal Planning Officer summarised the application and stated that the proposal was compliant with the relevant housing and design policies, built heritage policies and the residential extensions and alterations supporting planning guidance.

She reported that there were existing extensions of a similar scale located in the area and that, on balance, the proposed extension was considered acceptable. She added that no third-party objections had been received.

She stated that it was recommended that the application be approved, subject to conditions.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and to deal with any other issues that might arise, provided the issues were not substantive.

Chairperson