

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



**Belfast
City Council**

14th January, 2026

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room - City Hall on Tuesday, 20th January, 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:

8. Miscellaneous Reports

- (a) Local Applications subject to NIW Objections (Pages 1 - 6)
- (b) Section 76 Monitoring Report (Pages 7 - 28)

9. Planning Applications previously considered

- (b) **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 (Pages 29 - 46)

10. Planning Applications

- (c) **WITHDRAWN: LA04/2025/1461/F** - ~~Change from use from dwelling (C1) to short term rental property (Sui Generis) (Retrospective) - 32 Millar Street~~
- (f) **LA04/2025/1695/F** - Extension to existing spectator fencing on site, new ball stop system along with pedestrian and vehicular access gates. New kerb line and drainage along car park boundary. - Existing soccer pitch at Dixon Playing Fields (approx. 50m north-east of No. 100 Orby Road), Grand Parade (Pages 47 - 54)

- (g) **LA04/2025/1696/F** - Installation of 2 No. ballstop systems @ 30m x 6m (high). - Existing soccer pitches at Clarendon Playing Fields (approx. 130m south-west of No. 5 Abbeydale Court), Abbeydale Gardens (Pages 55 - 60)



Subject:	Delegation of Local applications with NI Water objections
Date:	20 th January 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

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	The Planning Committee will recall that at its meetings on 27 June 2022, 15 November 2022 14 February 2023, 14 March 2023 18 April 2023, 15 August 2023 17 October 2023, 12 December 2023, 12 February 2024 19 March 2024, 24 th May 2024, 27 th June 2024, 13 th August 2024 15 th October 2024 21 st January 2025 18 th March 2025 15 th April 2025 13 th May 2025, 17 th June 2025, 12 th August 2025, 14 th October 2025 11 th November 2025 and 9 th December 2025, it agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control the determination of a number of Local applications to which NI Water had 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 NI Water 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 NI Water 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 NI Water objection) 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.
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 NI Water has objected set out at Appendix 1 .
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	The Committee will be aware from the Committee Workshop on 18 November 2021 that NI Water has objected 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 NI Water to try to resolve those objections. Whilst progress is being made, and NI Water is actively 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	Members 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 (January 2020) 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 NI Water 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 NI Water has lodged an objection to a Local application and the officer recommendation is to approve, the application cannot be delegated and must be determined by the Committee.
3.7	Therefore, at those previous meetings, the Committee agreed to delegate Local applications, as appended to the respective reports, with NI Water objections to the Director of Planning and Building Control. This has avoided the potential need to report to date 300 applications individually to the Committee. To have reported all those applications to the Committee would have been logistically extremely difficult, 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, NI Water 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, NI Water is concerned that the application site may be hydrologically linked to Belfast Lough and may harm its water quality.
3.10	However, despite requests, NI Water has to date not provided robust evidence to support individual objections including demonstration of actual specific impacts resulting from individual proposals that stems from their broad concerns outlined above.
3.11	Importantly, 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 over 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.
3.12	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.
3.13	The Council must be mindful that were it to refuse planning permission based on NI Water's concerns, it would need to provide robust evidence to the Planning Appeals Commission in the event that the applicant appeals the decision. In the absence of robust evidence, it would be unreasonable to refuse planning permission. NIW have in recent months added further detail to their responses but sufficient robust evidence has not been provided.
	<u>Habitats Regulations Assessment</u>
3.14	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.
3.15	Whilst a precautionary approach applies to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), SES confirms that the onus is on NIW to provide evidence of likely actual impacts, rather than hypothetical impacts. As 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 there is clear intensification, the Council will 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 NI Environment Agency. The Planning Service will consult SES and DAERA on a case-by-case basis as required.

	<u>Local applications for which delegated authority is sought to determine</u>
3.16	The further Local applications to which NI Water has objected and which delegated authority is sought to determine are listed at Appendix 1 .
3.17	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 NI Water 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.

Appendix 1 – Local applications with NIW objections (January 2025)

	DEA	REFERENCE	DATE RECEIVED	PROPOSAL	ADDRESS
1	Ormiston	LA04/2025/1472/F	22/10/25	Erection of apartment development comprising 44no. units across 4no. buildings with amenity space, landscaping, car parking and associated site works.	Former Site of Blocks 4, 5 & 6 Clonaver Drive, Belfast, BT4 2FB
2	Court	LA04/2025/1796/F	03/12/25	Proposed single storey community building including associated fencing, parking and site works.	Lands north west of 98 Forthriver Road, Glencairn, BT13 3SE
3	Oldpark	LA04/2025/1708/F	14/11/25	Proposed change of use of retail unit to indoor padel tennis facility with minor external alteration	Unit 3, Hillview Retail Park, Crumlin Road, Belfast
4	Beersbridge	LA04/2025/1762	22/10/25	Change of use from commercial building to 5 bed / 5 person HMO	Gibsons Bakery 352 Woodstock Road, Belfast, BT6 9DP
5	Botanic	LA04/2025/2162/F	16/12/2025	Proposed change of use from first and second floor office to guest accommodation (Class C2). Proposed renovation includes part demolition of rear roof and installation of new roof profile.	98 Botanic Avenue, Belfast, BT7 1JR
6	Botanic	LA04/2025/2012/F	18/11/2025	A Change of use of 2 previous restaurants to an integrated digital technology aquarium themed entertainment visitor attraction venue, including a change of use of the internal uncovered canopy (at level 2) to create a new glazed entrance area with ancillary retail, exhibition area and	Units R2-R3 Level 2 and Level 3, Victoria Square, 1 Victoria Square, Belfast, BT1 4QG

				meeting room area and all associated site works Units R2-R3 Level 2 and Level 3, Victoria Square, 1 Victoria Square, Belfast, BT1 4QG	
7	Black Mountain	LA04/2025/1887/F	23/10/2025	Material Change of Use from Ground and First Floor Office (Class B1) to Irish Language Nursery and After-School Care Facility (Class D1)	The Print Hall 2 Hannahstown Hill, Hannahstown, Belfast, BT17 0LT
8	Titanic	LA04/2025/1146/F	08/07/2025	Proposed replacement changing room and managers office, New 111 seated covered stand. Replacement of 2G pitch to 3G and existing flood lighting upgraded to LED.	Nettlefield Primary School 16 Radnor Street, Belfast, BT6 8BG
9	Titanic	LA04/2025/1702/F	30/09/2025	Change-of-use from Dwelling (C1) to 5-bed, 5-person HMO (Sui Generis). Partial demolition of rear return with new single storey extension.	5 McMaster Street, Belfast, BT5 4HP



Monitoring Report for Planning Agreements

Including Financial Developer Contributions

2020/21 - 2024/25

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

The main purpose of this monitor report is to track financial Developer Contributions and other planning obligations secured by Belfast City Council (“the Council”) as part of a Section 76 Planning Agreement. Since the reform of local government and transfer of planning powers to councils in April 2015, the Council has secured over **£4.3 million** in financial Developer Contributions, required to mitigate the impacts of new development on the City and make it acceptable.

This document publishes key information around financial Developer Contributions secured between 1st April 2015 - 31st March 2025 and follows on from the first monitor report published in 2020. This report also provides an overview of other planning obligations secured between 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2025.

Planning Agreements

Planning Agreements are used to secure a planning obligation, such as developer contributions, where it is not possible to do so by a planning condition. Section 76 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (“the Act”) gives the Council, as the Planning Authority, the legislative power to enter into a Planning Agreement, which is a legally binding document between the Council and an applicant.

Planning Agreements can be used to serve a variety of planning purposes, including securing financial payments to mitigate the impacts of development on the City’s infrastructure (Developer Contributions); to facilitate or restrict the development or use of land; and require specific operations or activities to be carried out in relation to the land.

A planning agreement may be considered appropriate where what is required cannot be adequately addressed by the imposition of conditions. If the impact of a development is complex or long-term, and can't be managed through simple conditions, a planning agreement provides a legally binding framework. A planning agreement may be considered appropriate where it:

- is directly related to the development and to the use of the land after its completion, that the development ought not to be permitted without it;
- is fairly and reasonably related in scale to the development;
- is focused on addressing the specific, site-related impacts of a new development;
- will contribute to meeting the costs of providing necessary facilities in the near future; or
- is intended to offset the loss of, or impact on, any amenity or resource present on the site prior to development.

Developer Contributions

A developer will be expected to pay for, or contribute to, the cost of infrastructure that would not have been necessary but for the development or which needs to be rescheduled to facilitate the development. These agreements must be entered into as legal deeds and are enforceable by the Council. They're tailored to the specifics of each development and negotiated during the planning application process.

Developer Contributions may either be "in kind" or "financial", whether it is to facilitate the provision of infrastructure that is needed to support the development; or to manage the environmental effects of development to an acceptable level. "In kind" contributions are where the developer directly provides the infrastructure or environmental mitigation themselves. "Financial contributions" are where the developer pays a commuted sum to the council or a government department, which will then be used to deliver the infrastructure or environmental mitigation. The monies received will be ring-fenced solely for that purpose.

Monitoring

All Planning Agreements, including those that secure financial Developer Contributions, are routinely monitored by the Council's Planning Service to ensure compliance. The Council has a dedicated Section 76 Monitoring Officer whose role is to record and monitor all signed Planning Agreements. The Council maintains a database which records and provides the financial information contained in this Monitoring Report. The main purposes of monitoring such agreements is:

- **Compliance Checks:** The Council reviews whether developers are fulfilling the terms of their planning agreements, such as delivering affordable housing, infrastructure, or environmental improvements.
- **Timely Delivery:** The Council tracks deadlines and milestones to ensure contributions are made or works are completed on schedule.
- **Charging Monitoring Fees:** The Council charges a fee to cover the administrative costs of monitoring Section 76 obligations. These fees help fund staff time and systems needed to track compliance.
- **Reporting and Transparency:** The Council publishes an annual monitoring report detailing contributions received, spent, and allocated. This promotes transparency and public accountability and allows the public and developers to understand what community benefits have been secured in exchange for granting planning permission. S76 agreements are legally binding and publicly accessible documents, and the Council publishes them on its website.
- **Enforcement:** If developers fail to meet their obligations, councils can take enforcement action, including legal proceedings or withholding further permissions.

Local Development Plan

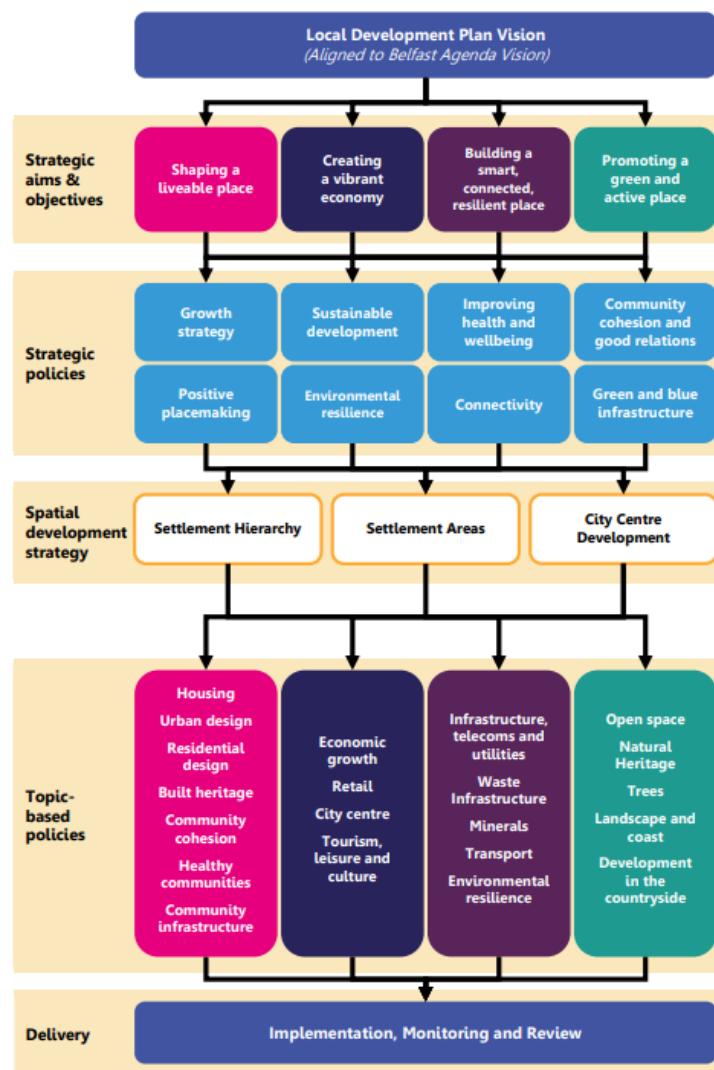
To help deliver the city envisaged in 2035, the LDP identifies a series of strategic aims and related objectives that have been identified below to support the delivery of the vision. The LDP's strategic aims and objectives align with the Belfast Agenda's long-term Outcomes and shorter-term Priorities. The strategic objectives outlined below show how the LDP will address the key issues and shape future development to deliver the vision for Belfast 2035. In supporting the strategic aims, the following objectives are set out below the relevant strategic aims.

Figure 1 - Belfast LDP Strategic Aims and Objectives



The Plan Strategy sets out a series of strategic and operational policies designed to help meet these objectives many of which are supported by Section 76 agreements and developer contributions to help ensure their delivery. They range from supporting the affordable housing, public realm improvements and the provision of open space as well as helping to support more sustainable modes of travel which is particularly important as we are tasked with addressing the challenges posed by overreliance of carbon fuels and climate change.

Figure 2 - Belfast LDP Plan Strategy structure

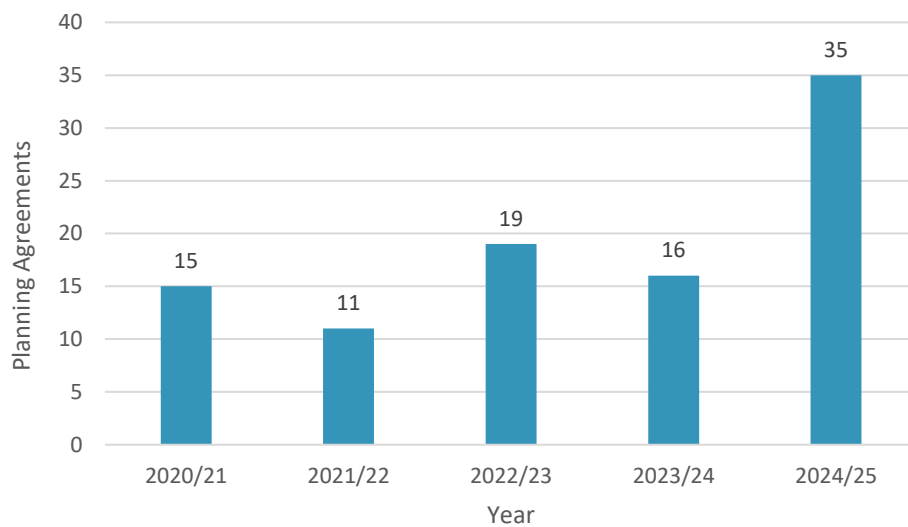


Chapter 2: Planning Agreements

Overview of Planning Agreements

During the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2025, Belfast City Council entered into a total of **96 Planning Agreements** (see Figure 3) which either secured a Financial Developer Contribution, one or more non-financial planning obligations, or a combination of both.

Figure 3 - Number of Planning Agreements entered into between 2020/21 – 2024/25



Overview of Financial Developer Contributions

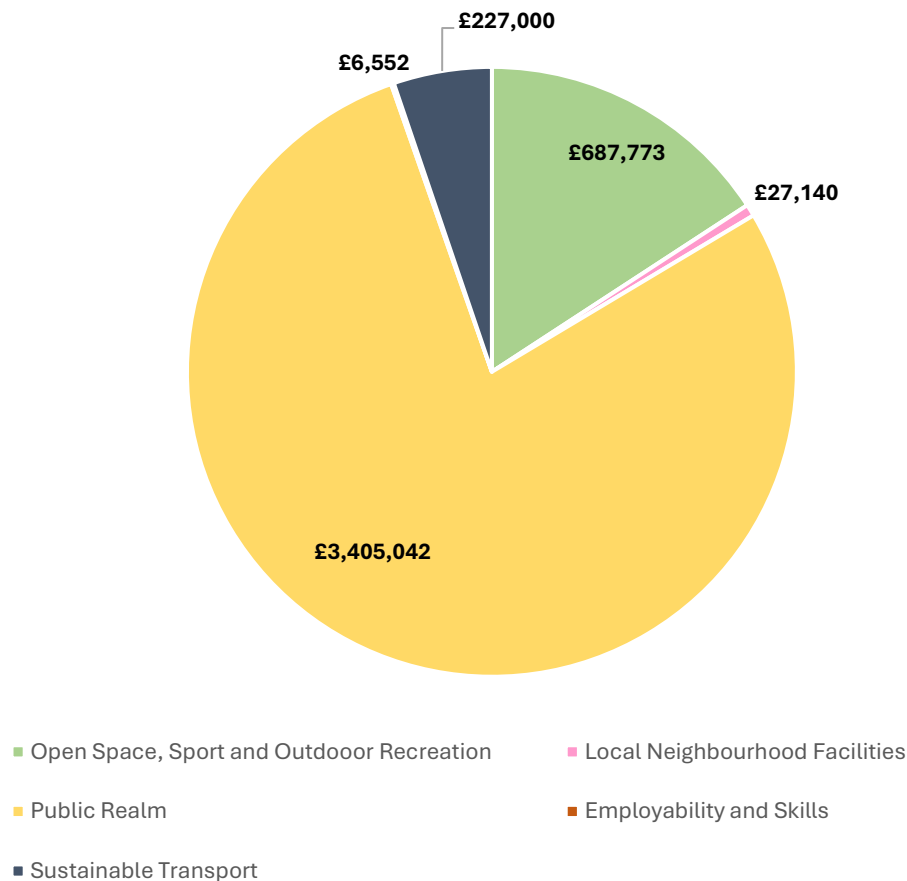
An overview of the Belfast City Council Financial Developer Contributions at 31st March 2025 is provided below:

Secured in principle	£4,353,507
Received	£3,130,937
Committed	£2,718,112
Spent	£ 325,795

Further details can be found in Table 1 together with Appendix 1 which provides information for Planning Agreements requiring a Financial Developer Contribution.

Figure 4 below illustrates how the monies secured in principle between 1st April 2015 - 31st March 2025 is distributed across various categories of deliverable. Public Realm (78%) represents the main use for which Financial Developer Contributions have been secured with Open Space (16%) and Sustainable Transport (5%) providing the majority of the remainder.

Figure 4 - Financial Developer Contributions secured between 2015/16 – 2024/25 by Category of Delivery



During the period 2020/21 to 2024/25 the Council entered into **12 Planning Agreements** which secured Financial Developer Contributions. A total of **£851,485** was secured in principle with a total **£850,925** received by the Council during this period. The total amount received also includes any financial contributions received from Planning Agreements the Council entered into before 1st April 2020 (see Table 1).

It should be noted that there may be occasions where developers decide not to implement their planning permission and subsequently the amount secured in principle from the Section 76 Agreement does not need to be paid. This principle can also apply to non-financial contributions and obligations.

Table 1 - Summary of the Financial Developer Contributions from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2025

Category of Deliverable	Secured			Received			Committed	Spent
	Amount secured up to 31 March 2020 (£)	Amount secured between 01 April 2020 - 31 March 2025 (£)	Amount secured between 01 April 2015 - 31 March 2025 (£)	Amount received carried forward from 31 March 2020 (£)	Amount received between 01 April 2020 - 31 March 2025 (£)	Amount received between 01 April 2015 - 31 March 2025 (£)	Committed Expenditure as at 31 March 2025 (£)	Actual Expenditure as at 31 March 2025 (£)
Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation	278,750	409,023	687,773	53,000	411,233	464,233	182,750	58,331
Local Neighbourhood Facilities	-	27,140	27,140	-	27,140	27,140	-	-
Public Realm	3,223,272	181,770	3,405,042	2,227,012	361,000	2,588,012	2,490,362	242,650
Employability and Skills	-	6,552	6,552	-	6,552	6,552	-	-
Sustainable Transport	-	227,000	227,000	-	45,000	45,000	45,000	24,814
Air Quality	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Natural Heritage	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Built Heritage	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Waste Management	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	£3,502,022	£851,485	£4,353,507	£2,280,012	£850,925	£3,130,937	£2,718,112	£325,795

Overview of other planning obligations secured through Planning Agreements

During the period 2020/21 to 2024/25 a total of **49 Planning Agreements** secured, in principle, a range of obligations to mitigate the impacts of new development on the City and make it acceptable in planning terms. These obligations can apply to matters including, but not limited to: Travel Plans, travel cards and other sustainable transport measures; Affordable Housing; management of land; management of Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation; and apprenticeships during the construction phase of the development.

These planning obligations should also help ensure, where appropriate, that development aligns with the policy requirements set out in the Belfast Local Development Plan. For example. Policy HOU5 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy requires that a minimum of 20% of dwelling units on sites greater than 0.1 hectares and/or containing 5 or more dwelling units should be provided as Affordable Housing.

The following sections provide an overview of the planning obligations secured in relation to the provision of Affordable Housing and sustainable transport measures.

Affordable Housing

For the period from 2020/21 to 2024/25 a total of **1,738 Affordable Housing units** have been secured in principle through **38 Planning Agreements**. All but 80 of these Affordable Housing units have been allocated as either **Social Housing for Rent (1,416)** or **Intermediate Housing for Sale or Rent (242)** as shown in Table 2 and Figures 3 & 4. Note – In some instances the Planning Agreement allows for some flexibility as to the Affordable Housing type that is eventually provided. This may result in some units identified below as Intermediate Housing being delivered as Social Housing and vice-versa.

Table 2 - Summary of Affordable Housing secured in principle between 2020/21 – 2024/25

Period	No. of Agreements	Total Affordable Housing Units secured	Affordable Housing Type	
			Social Housing	Intermediate Housing
2020/21	3	535	431	104
2021/22	1	63	63	-
2022/23	6	351	256	95
2023/24	4	*291	211	-
2024/25	24	498	455	43
Total	38	1,738	1,416	242

* The Affordable Housing Type for 80 of these units to be confirmed at Reserved Matters or Full application stage.

According to the BCC Housing Land Availability Monitor two of these schemes have been completed as at 31st March 2025; **63 units** on the site of the former Park Avenue Hotel (LA04/2021/0493/F) and **12 units** on lands at Alloa Street and Manor Street (LA04/2020/2042/F).

Figure 5 - Number of Affordable Housing units secured in principle between 2020/21 – 2024/25

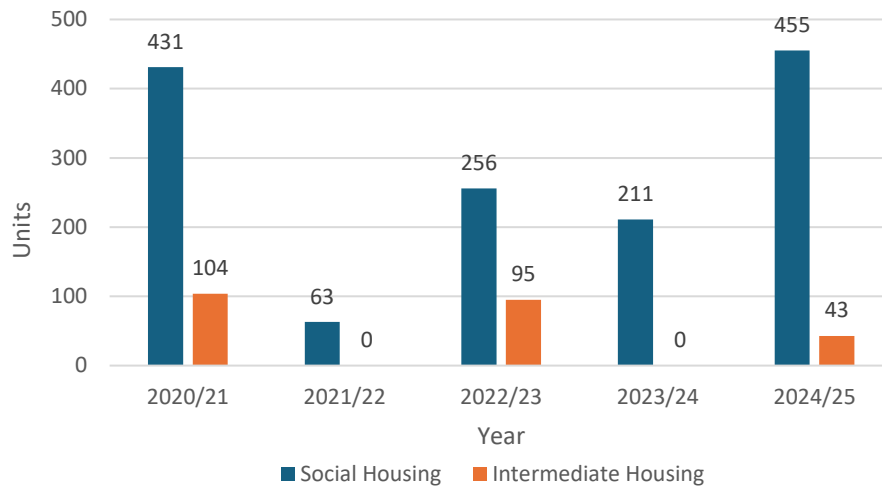
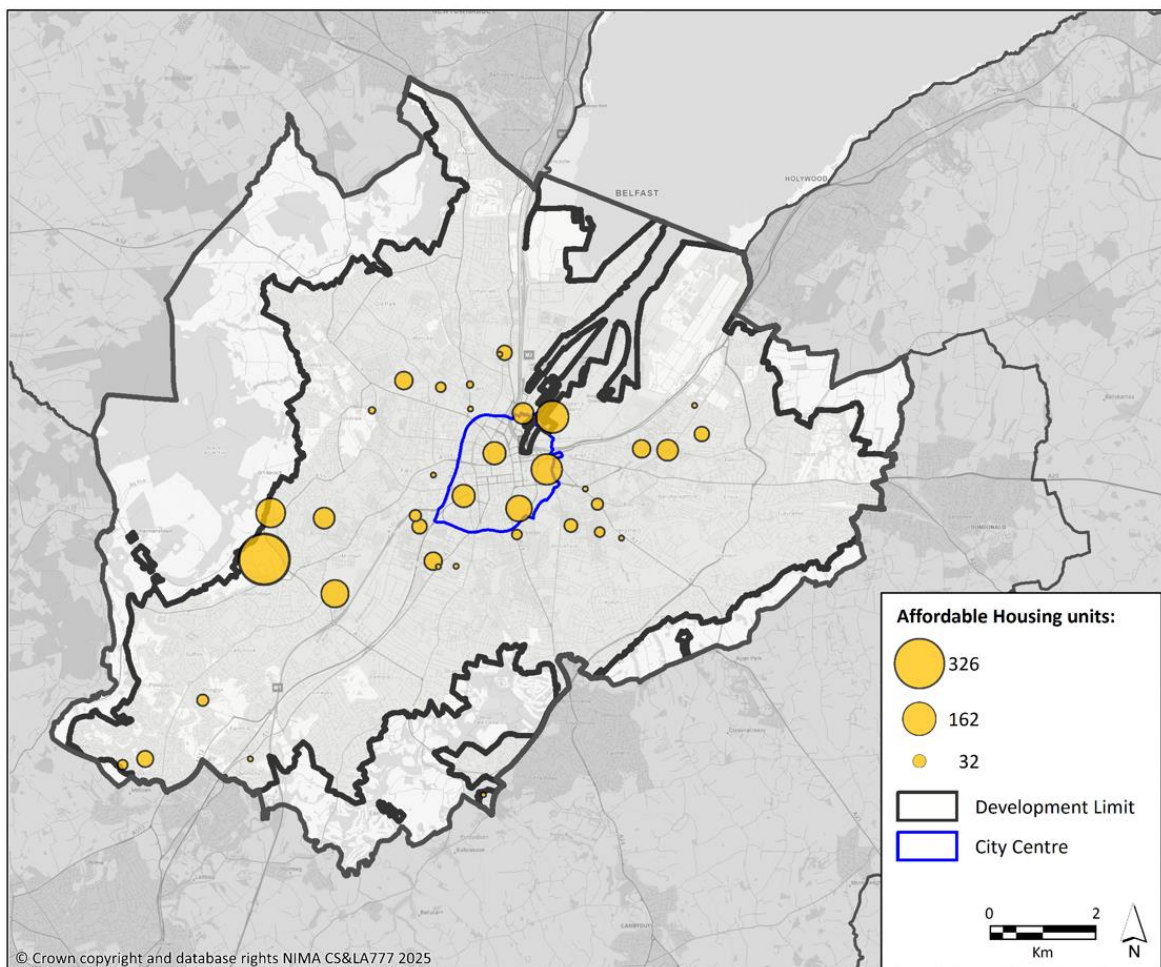


Figure 6 - Distribution of Affordable Housing units secured in principle between 2020/21 – 2024/25



Sustainable Transport

During the period 2020/21 to 2024/25 a total of **51 Planning Agreements** secured in principle one or more planning obligations relating to the delivery of **Sustainable Transport** measures:

- **Travel Plans**

51 agreements make provision for the implementation of a **Travel Plan**, typically by a Travel Plan coordinator, which will set out a package of complementary measures, some of which are identified below, to assist in the delivery of more sustainable travel patterns.

- **Travel Cards**

44 agreements make provision for the offer of a Travel Card, typically on the occupation of a residential unit. This potentially equates to **4,946 Travel Cards**. Many of the agreements require that the provision of this offer is renewed annually for up to four years.

- **Bike Offer**

A total of **23 agreements** make provision for a “Bike Offer”. Of these, **20 agreements** make provision for the offer of Belfast Bike Scheme membership. This potentially equates to **3,860 Belfast Bike Scheme memberships**. Many of these agreements require that the provision of this offer is renewed annually for up to three years. A further **3 agreements** make provision for the offer of a Bike Voucher potentially equating to **666 vouchers** towards the cost of purchasing a bicycle.

- **Car Club**

34 agreements make provision for the need to submit a “Car Club Strategy” to the Council and/or the offer of Car Club membership, typically one membership per residential unit, either fully subsidised or provided at a discounted rate. This potentially equates to **3,953 Car Club memberships**. Many of the agreements require that the period of Car Club membership offered shall be for up to three years.

- **Green Travel Measures Fund**

In a number of instances a planning agreement has required the owner to put in place a “Green Travel Measures Fund” to fund one or more of the above sustainable transport measures until such times that the fund is fully depleted. Consequently, offer uptake will influence the composition of the potential outcomes identified in the points above. **5 agreements** have a **Green Travel Measures Fund** requirement with a combined total amount of **£1 million** to be designated to these funds.

- **Public Transport Fund**

1 agreement makes provision for a total of **£417,777** to be deposited by the owner into the **Public Transport Fund** over a period of two years. This contribution relates to the Loftlines development and will be used by Translink to enhance the G2 Glider service.

Chapter 3: Next Steps & Further Information

Next Steps

The Planning Service is continuing to negotiate s76 agreements in order to mitigate harm from individual developments and to also compensate for the loss of environmental features or open space in line with the tests set by National Guidance. Obligations will also be used to continue to add to the supply of affordable housing across the City subject to policy tests and viability.

Further Information

For more information about Planning Agreements and Financial Developer Contributions please contact the Section 76 Monitoring Officer at section76@belfastcity.gov.uk

Information on the location and details of planning approvals subject to a Planning Agreement can be found using our interactive map viewer which can be accessed using the following link:

https://explore.belfastcity.gov.uk/connect/analyst/mobile/#/main?mapcfg=%2FAnalyst%2FNamedProjects%2FPlanning_Agreements

This map viewer also provides a link to a copy of the Planning Agreement which alternatively can be accessed through the [Planning Register](#) section of the Northern Ireland Planning Portal in 'Planning decisions and reports' under the Documents tab for the relevant planning application.

Appendix 1:

Details of Planning Agreements that require a Financial Developer Contribution

Planning Reference	Site Address	Amount Secured in Principle	Amount Received	Amount Committed/Spent
Z/2014/1657/F	Site at 28-30 Great Patrick Street, Belfast, BT1 2LT	£237,500	£237,500	£237,500 Committed
Z/2015/0118/F	37-41 Little Patrick Street, Belfast	£60,000	-	-
Z/2015/0176/F	21-29 Corporation Street and 18-24 Tomb Street, Belfast, BT1 3BA	£125,000	-	-
Z/2015/0177/F	123-137 York Street, Belfast, BT15 1AB	£203,500	-	£203,500 Committed
LA04/2015/0264/F	Lands bounded by Bedford Street, INI building, McClintock Street and Franklin Street, Belfast, BT2 7GP	£260,000	£130,000	£130,000 Committed
LA04/2015/0418/F	Land south of Franklin Street, east of Brunswick Street and west of McClintock Street Belfast BT2 7GX	£115,000	£115,000	£115,000 Committed
LA04/2015/0419/F	78 College Avenue, Belfast, BT1 6BU	£200,000	£200,000	£200,000 Committed
LA04/2015/0420/F	Land South of Franklin Street East of Brunswick Street and West of McClintock Street, Belfast, BT2 7GX	£107,100	£107,100	£107,100 Committed
LA04/2015/0668/F	Lands adjacent and east of No. 43 Stockmans Way, Belfast	£96,000	-	-
LA04/2015/0670/F	Lands at Castlehill Manor, Castlehill Road, Belfast	£39,750	£39,750	£39,750 Committed of which £24,273 Spent
LA04/2015/0707/F	Land at 33-39 Bridge End Belfast south of Bridge End and east of Belfast/Londonderry railway line	£16,000	£16,000	-
LA04/2015/1175/F	Lands at 78-86 Dublin Road, Belfast, BT2 7BY	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000 Spent
LA04/2015/1252/F	41-49 Queen Street, 24-30 College Street and 29 Wellington Place, Belfast	£142,650	£142,650	£142,650 Spent
LA04/2016/0548/F	19-27 Chichester Street, Belfast, BT1 4JB	£85,000	£85,000	£42,500 Committed
LA04/2016/0967/F	55-71 Ormeau Road, Belfast	£30,000	-	-
LA04/2016/1252/F	Site bounded by Little York Street, Great George's Street and Nelson Street, Belfast	£309,600	£309,600	£309,600 Committed
LA04/2016/2385/F	81-107 York Street, Belfast	£339,955	£339,955	£339,955 Committed

Planning Reference	Site Address	Amount Secured in Principle	Amount Received	Amount Committed/Spent
LA04/2017/0235/F	Rosepark House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3NR	£53,000	£53,000	£53,000 Committed of which £34,058 Spent
LA04/2017/0288/F	4-5 Donegall Square South, Belfast	£100,000	-	-
LA04/2017/1081/F	20 Brunswick Street, Belfast, BT2 7GE	£17,300	£17,300	£17,300 Committed
LA04/2017/1707/F	1-5 Albert Square, Belfast	£116,760	-	-
LA04/2017/2306/F	26-44 Little Patrick Street, Belfast	£207,547	£207,547	£207,547 Committed
LA04/2017/2341/O	Land bounded by Royal Avenue York Street and Church Street to the north; North Street to the west; Rosemary Street to the south and High Street to the south; and Donegall Street to the east	£45,000	-	-
LA04/2018/0811/O	Lands at former Sirocco Works, Short Strand and adjacent to Bridge End and the River Lagan, Belfast	£90,000	-	-
LA04/2018/0824/F	1 McClintock Street Belfast BT2 7GL	£113,400	£113,400	£113,400 Committed
LA04/2018/0831/F	8 College Avenue Belfast BT1 6DS	£136,150	£136,150	£136,150 Committed
LA04/2019/0025/F	Parklands, Knocknagoney Dale, Knocknagoney, Belfast	£90,000	£90,000	£90,000 Committed
LA04/2019/0909/F	Lands at Nos. 43-63 Chichester Street, 29-31 Gloucester Street and Seymour Lane, Belfast	£200,810	£200,810	£200,810 Committed
LA04/2019/2285/F	Lands at the corner of Little York Street and Little Patrick Street adjacent to 123 York Street 14 Little Patrick Street and opposite 23-33 Little York Street, Belfast	£51,770	-	-
LA04/2019/2387/F	Land adjacent to Quay Gate House, 15 Scrabo Street, Belfast	£19,600	-	-
LA04/2019/2810/F	Lands to the south and east of Belfast Metropolitan College, east of PRONI, north of Sydenham Road, west of Cumming Road and south of Hamilton Road, Titanic Quarter, Belfast	£45,000	£45,000	£45,000 Committed of which £24,814 Spent
LA04/2020/1360/F	491-495 Lisburn Road, Belfast, BT9 7EZ	£20,556	-	-
LA04/2021/0165/F	176-178 Shore Road and 194-196 Shore Road, Belfast, BT15 3QA	£6,552	£6,552	-
LA04/2021/0320/F	Lands bounded by Bedford Street, INI Building, McClintock Street and Franklin Street, Belfast, BT2 7GP	£130,000	£130,000	£130,000 Committed

Planning Reference	Site Address	Amount Secured in Principle	Amount Received	Amount Committed/Spent
LA04/2021/0629/F	Lands north east of 43 Stockmans Way and south west of 49 Stockmans Way, Belfast, BT9 7ET	£87,384	-	-
LA04/2021/2280/F	Lands adjacent to and south east of the river Lagan, west of Olympic Way off Queen's Road, Queen's Island, Belfast, BT2 9EQ	£47,000	-	-
LA04/2022/0002/F	100-116 Stewartstown Road and land to the immediate south and southeast bounded by Kells Avenue, Oranmore Drive, 37-55 Suffolk Crescent (odds) & 28 Suffolk Drive, Belfast	£281,483	£281,483	-
LA04/2023/2890/F	Christ the Redeemer Parish Hall and lands immediately north and west of Christ the Redeemer Church, Lagmore Drive, Dunmurry, BT17 0TG	£27,140	£27,140	-

Belfast Planning Service

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Cecil Ward Building
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Belfast BT2 8DP



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Belfast
City Council



Subject:	S76 Planning Agreements Monitoring Report
Date:	20/01/2026
Reporting Officer:	Dermot O’Kane – Acting Development Planning & Policy Manager
Contact Officer:	Mark Whittaker – Acting Principal Planner

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The S76 Monitoring Report tracks developer contributions received and how they are used. Since the reform of local government and transfer of planning powers to councils in April 2015, Belfast City Council has secured over £4.3 million in financial Developer Contributions, required to mitigate the impacts of new development on the city and make it acceptable.
1.2	The first report was published in 2020 covering the period from April 2015 March 2020. The second report attached at APPENDIX 1 provides an overview of key information around financial Developer Contributions collected to date.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the outcomes of the annual S76 Monitoring report for 2020/21 to 2024/25 contained at Appendix 1 ; and the intention to publish this summary document and accompanying online map viewer on the Council's website.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	<p>the main aims of the Annual Monitoring Report are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track Financial Contributions: Monitor the amount of money collected through Section 76 agreements. • Assess Delivery of Infrastructure: Evaluate how developer contributions are being used to support infrastructure such as affordable housing, public realm. • Ensure Compliance and Stewardship: Confirm that contributions are spent in accordance with legal agreements and planning policies. • Improve Governance and Coordination: Align developer funding with broader capital programs and local development plans to maximize impact. • Inform Stakeholders: Provide communities, elected officials, and developers with clear insights into how contributions are managed and spent. • Support Strategic Planning: Help local authorities forecast future needs and refine policies for securing contributions in line with growth and development targets.
3.2	Planning Agreements are used to secure a planning obligation, such as developer contributions, where it is not possible to do so by a planning condition. Section 76 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 ("the Act") gives the Council, as the Planning Authority, the legislative power to enter into a Planning Agreement, which is a legally binding document between the Council and an applicant.
3.3	<p>Planning Agreements can be used to serve a variety of planning purposes, including securing financial payments to mitigate the impacts of development on the City's infrastructure (Developer Contributions); to facilitate or restrict the development or use of land; and require specific operations or activities to be carried out in relation to the land. A planning agreement may be considered appropriate where what is required cannot be adequately addressed by the imposition of conditions. If the impact of a development is complex or long-term, and can't be managed through simple conditions, a planning agreement provides a legally binding framework. A planning agreement may be considered appropriate where it:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is directly related to the development and to the use of the land after its completion, that the development ought not to be permitted without it; • is fairly and reasonably related in scale to the development. • is focused on addressing the specific, site-related impacts of a new development.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will contribute to meeting the costs of providing necessary facilities in the near future; • is intended to offset the loss of, or impact on, any amenity or resource present on the site prior to development.
3.4	A developer will be expected to pay for, or contribute to, the cost of infrastructure that would not have been necessary but for the development or which needs to be rescheduled to facilitate the development. These agreements must be entered into as legal deeds and are enforceable by the Council. They're tailored to the specifics of each development and negotiated during the planning application process.
3.5	Developer Contributions may either be "in kind" or "financial", whether it is to facilitate the provision of infrastructure that is needed to support the development; or to manage the environmental effects of development to an acceptable level. "In kind" contributions are where the developer directly provides the infrastructure or environmental mitigation themselves. "Financial contributions" are where the developer pays a commuted sum to the council or a government department, which will then be used to deliver the infrastructure or environmental mitigation. The monies received will be ring-fenced solely for that purpose.
3.6	<p>All Planning Agreements, including those that secure financial Developer Contributions, are routinely monitored by the Council's Planning Service to ensure compliance. The Council has a dedicated Section 76 Monitoring Officer whose role is to record and monitor all signed Planning Agreements. The Council maintains a database which records and provides the financial information contained in this Annual Monitoring Report. The primary purpose of monitoring such agreements is:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance Checks: The Council reviews whether developers are fulfilling the terms of their planning agreements, such as delivering affordable housing, infrastructure, or environmental improvements. • Timely Delivery: The Council tracks deadlines and milestones to ensure contributions are made or works are completed on schedule. • Charging Monitoring Fees: The Council charges a fee to cover the administrative costs of monitoring Section 76 obligations. These fees help fund staff time and systems needed to track compliance. • Reporting and Transparency: The Council publishes an annual Monitoring report detailing contributions received, spent, and allocated. This promotes transparency and public accountability and allows the public and developers to understand what community benefits have been secured in exchange for granting planning permission. S76 agreements are legally binding and publicly accessible documents, and the Council publishes them on its websites. • Enforcement: If developers fail to meet their obligations, councils can take enforcement action, including legal proceedings or withholding further permissions.
3.7	During the period from April 2020 to March 2025 Council entered into 96 Planning Agreements. The report generally focuses on total money secured, monies received, committed expenditure and actual expenditure. The triggers for implementing planning agreements is often based upon commencement of a development and so where a development has not started, monies generally are not draw down for spend. Notwithstanding this, it is important to monitor outstanding payment or commitments, and any monies received that have not yet been spent, as well as the delivery of projects themselves on the ground.
3.8	<p>For the purposes of clarity, the nature of the spend has been categorised into several broad areas to reflect those identified in the Developer Contributions Framework. These include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation • Local Neighbourhood Facilities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Realm • Employability and Skills • Sustainable Transport • Air Quality • Natural Heritage • Built Heritage • Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage • Waste Management
3.9	<p>Most of the expenditure (74%) in Belfast has been on public realm infrastructure requirements. It is also important to highlight that significant levels of affordable housing have been secured through this process (1,738 dwelling units), although it is acknowledged that these are not through contributions per se but through identified housing association who are funded directly by the NIHE and their own funding processes. Nevertheless, process is helping to bring forward affordable schemes as an integral part of wider mixed tenure developments.</p>
3.10	<p>One of the key issues over the last ten years is that whilst a number of agreements have been secured and significant sums have been received, processes for spending were not put in place until the last two years and so spending on projects has been limited until recently. This process will undoubtedly continue to develop. Consequently, spend is likely to increase over the next few years whilst monies received are likely to decrease as developers now tend to opt for in-kind contributions which they deliver themselves.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The Council has secured in principle over £4.3 million in financial Developer Contributions since 2015, of which £3.1 million has been received to date. Other services areas within the Council are responsible for managing and spending those monies.</p> <p>The Planning Service employs an Assistant Planning Officer to proactively monitor compliance with Section 76 planning agreements – the vehicle used to secure financial Developer Contributions. This post is currently temporary and funded by monitoring fees secured through the Section 76 planning agreement process. Those monitoring fees are ring-fenced for that purpose.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The report presents factual information and makes no recommendations relating to the future allocation of land for development. There are therefore no relevant equality or good relations implications attached to the report.</p>
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	APPENDIX 1 – Draft S76 Monitoring Report

ADDENDUM REPORT	
Committee Date: 20 th January 2026	
Application ID: LA04/2025/0605/F	
Proposal: Erection of a four-storey building to create 29no. short-term let accommodation units with ancillary roof-mounted solar panels.	Location: 341-345 Albertbridge Road, Ballymacarret, Belfast, BT5 4PY
Applicant Name and Address: ALMCC (NI) LIMITED 25 Shore Road Hollywood BT18 9HX	Agent Name and Address: Richard O'Toole O'Toole & Starkey Ltd 1st Floor River House 48-60 High Street Belfast
Referral Route: Para 3.8.7 of the Scheme of Delegation – Director Discretion	
Date Valid: 09/04/2025	
Target Date: 23/07/2025	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe, Principal Planning Officer (Development Management)	
Background: This application was due to be considered by the Committee at its 9 th December 2025 meeting. The application was deferred for a Committee site visit. The site visit is due to take place on Monday 19 th January 2026. This addendum report should be read in conjunction with the original report to the 9 th December 2025 Committee meeting, appended. Additional representations: 10 additional objections have been received, raising the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal is not wanted by the community. Concerns about people coming and going and not knowing who they are. • Concerns about community safety. • The site would be better used for family housing to meet local need or for business premises benefiting local people. • Overshadowing and loss of privacy. In response to the representations, officers advise that the Council must determine the application before it. Whilst community safety can be a material planning consideration, there is no evidence to suggest that the proposal would result in significant harm to the public interest in this respect that would override normal planning policy considerations.	

As discussed in the original report, appended, there would be no harmful impacts in respect of overshadowing and loss of privacy.

Recommendation:

Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, the recommendation remains that planning permission should be granted subject to conditions.

Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions, the Waste Management Plan and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.

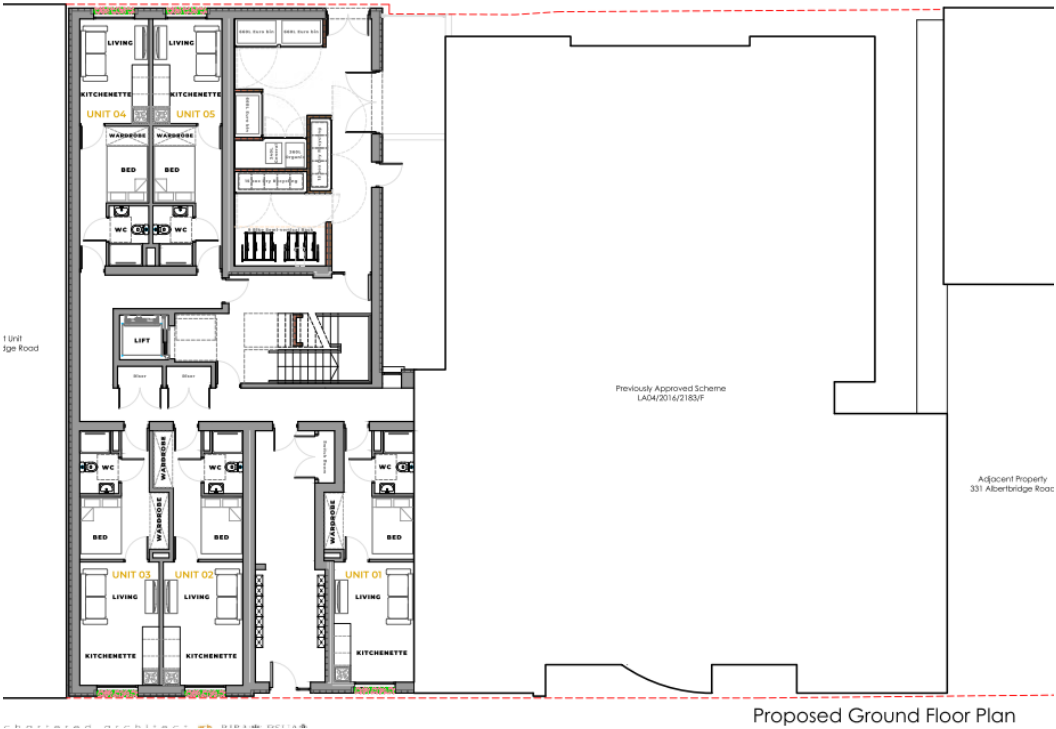
Development Management Report Committee Application

Summary	
Committee Date: 9 th December 2025	
Application ID: LA04/2025/0605/F	
Proposal: Erection of a four-storey building to create 29no. short-term let accommodation units with ancillary roof-mounted solar panels.	Location: 341-345 Albertbridge Road, Ballymacarret, Belfast, BT5 4PY
Applicant Name and Address: ALMCC (NI) LIMITED 25 Shore Road Hollywood BT18 9HX	Agent Name and Address: Richard O'Toole O'Toole & Starkey Ltd 1st Floor River House 48-60 High Street Belfast
Referral Route: Para 3.8.7 of the Scheme of Delegation – Director Discretion	
Date Valid: 09/04/2025	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe, Principal Planning Officer (Development Management)	
Executive Summary: <p>The application seeks permission for the erection of a four-storey building to create 29no. short-term let accommodation units with ancillary roof-mounted solar panels</p> <p>The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principle of short term let at this location Character, Design & Appearance Impact on Amenity <p>DfI Roads, DfI Rivers, Environmental Health, SES and NIEA has offered no objection.</p> <p>27 letters of objection have been received.</p> <p>All representations and associated issues have been fully considered in the appended report.</p> <p>The proposal complies with policies HOU13 and DES1 of the Belfast Local Development Plan. It is not considered to impact negatively on existing residential amenity, it will strengthen and diversify short term let accommodation, is located close to public transport and within walking distance of a tourist attraction. Appropriate management arrangements will be secured via a planning condition.</p>	
Recommendation	

Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, 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, the Waste Management Plan and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.

Proposed Ground Floor Plan



Elevations



1.1	Erection of a four-storey building to create 29no. short-term let accommodation units with ancillary roof-mounted solar panels
1.2	The building will measure approximately 12.5m in height and extend over four stories. The front and rear windows will also have Juliet balconies from first to third floor level. The roof will be flat with solar panels to the south facing roof slope. The materials will be a mix of red brick and smooth white render and the doors and windows will be finished in grey uPVC.
2.0	<p>Characteristics of the Site and Area</p> <p>The site is located at 341-345 Albertbridge Road, Belfast, BT5 4PY. The site was formally a restaurant which has since been demolished leaving the site vacant. The surrounding area is predominately a mix of commercial and residential uses. Adjacent northeast of the site is a paint shop, southwest to the other side is a vacant site with a previous approval for a 4-storey apartment block comprising 24 apartments (LA04/2016/2183/F). Connswater Retail Park is located to the rear and directly opposite the site is residential.</p> <p>The site is located within the settlement development limit on unzoned whiteland within the Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP) 2001. Within the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (dBMAP) the site is located within a shopping/commercial area and Albertbridge Road is an Arterial Route. This section of the Albertbridge Road is included within a HMO Development Node.</p>
3.0	<p>Planning History</p> <p>3.1 Site History</p> <p>Z/2008/2538/F - 341-345 Albertbridge Road, Belfast, BT5 4PY. Change of use from retail to restaurant and single storey extension to rear. Approved 09/03/2009.</p> <p>Z/2007/2741/F - 331 & 341-345 Albertbridge Road, Ballymacarret, Belfast, BT05 4PY. Construction of 2No. 4 storey residential apartment blocks (14 units). (Amended proposal). Approved 11/11/2008.</p> <p>Z/2006/2192/O - 341-345 Albertbridge Road, Belfast, BT5 4PY. Erection of 3 storey building to include ground floor car parking and 1 retail unit and 9 apartments. Refused 20/12/2007.</p> <p>Z/2004/0481F/F - 341-345 Albertbridge Road Belfast BT5 4PY. Change of use of ground floor from hire shop to sandwich / coffee bar and hairdressing salon. Approved 26/05/2004.</p> <p>3.2 Surrounding Area Planning History</p> <p>LA04/2016/2183/F - 333-339 Albertbridge Road. Demolition of existing buildings with replacement by a 4-storey apartment block consisting of 24 apartments. Renewal of Z/2009/1657/F. Approved 17.01.2019. This approval has been shown in context with the proposed site on the drawings submitted. The Council notes a Certificate of Lawfulness has not been submitted to formally demonstrate that this proposal has commenced development.</p>

	<p>Z/2009/1657/F - 333-339 Albertbridge Road. Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 4 storey apartment block comprising 24 apartments (13no. 1 bed and 11no. 2 bed). (Amended Scheme). Approved 03.11.2011.</p> <p>LA04/2023/4393/F – 321-331 Albertbridge Road. Demolition of existing building and erection of a 3-storey building to provide a trade sales area to ground floor (class A1) and associated offices and storage to the first and second floor. The existing vacant two storey warehouse to the rear of this building to be used for paint storage (class B4). Single storey extension to rear of existing store (class B4). Under Consideration.</p>
4.0	Policy Context
4.1	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.
4.2	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.
4.3	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 until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.
4.4	Operational policies – the Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These are listed below:
4.5	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), HMO Subject Plan 2015 and other relevant area plans. The weight to be afforded to these proposals maps is a matter for the decision maker. Whilst the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 remains the statutory plan insofar as the proposals maps (“Departmental Development Plan”), 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.
5.0	Planning Policy
5.1	<p>Belfast Local Development Plan – Plan Strategy 2035</p> <p>Policy HOU13 – Short-term let accommodation</p> <p>Policy DES1 – Principles of urban design</p> <p>Policy TRAN 8 – Car Parking and servicing arrangements</p> <p>Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality</p> <p>Policy ENV2 – Mitigating environmental change</p>

	<p>Policy ENV3 – Adapting to environmental change Policy ENV4 – Flood Risk Policy ENV5 – Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) Policy NH1 – Protection of Natural Heritage Resources Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland</p> <p><u>Supplementary Planning Guidance</u></p> <p>Placemaking and Urban Design Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Transportation</p> <p>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps 5.2 Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014)</p> <p>Regional Planning Policy 5.3 Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</p> <p>Other Material Considerations 5.4 <i>Belfast Agenda</i> (Community Plan)</p>
6.0	Consultations and Representations
6.1	<p>Statutory Consultations DfI Roads - no objection subject to condition DfI Rivers - no objection subject to condition NI Water – objection NIEA Water Management Unit – objection NIEA Regulation Unit – no objection subject to condition NIEA NED – No objection</p>
6.2	<p>Non-statutory consultees BCC Environmental Health – no objection subject to condition Shared Environmental Services – no objection subject to condition</p>
6.3	<p>Representations</p> <p>The application has been advertised in local press and the relevant neighbours have been notified. The council received 27 objections. The key issues raised are outlined below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking and traffic 2. Noise and disturbance 3. Impact on community cohesion 4. Impact on available social housing/residential housing 5. Impact on rent and house prices

	Issues 1-4 are considered in the report below. Issue 5 is not considered to be a material planning consideration.
7.0	Planning Assessment
7.1	<p>Main Issues</p> <p>The main issues relevant to consideration of the application are set out below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of short term let accommodation at this location • Character, Design & Appearance • Impact on Amenity • Parking • Climate Change • Environmental Protection • Floodrisk and Drainage • Natural Heritage • Waste Management
7.2	<p>Principle of short term let at this location</p> <p>The proposal seeks planning permission for the erection of a four-storey building to create 29no. short-term let accommodation units with ancillary roof-mounted solar panels.</p>
7.3	<p>Paragraph 7.1.19 of the Belfast Local Development Plan – Plan Strategy states that “short-term holiday accommodation falls outside of the residential use class”. Short-term let accommodation is commercial in nature and occupants change regularly, between 1–90-days. It is deemed an alternative form of tourist accommodation.</p>
7.4	<p>The final paragraph of policy TLC3: Overnight visitor accommodation, stipulates that proposals for holiday self-catering apartments, serviced apartments, or short term holiday lets will be considered under the short term let policy HOU13.</p>
7.5	<p>Policy HOU13 of the LDP – ‘Short-term let accommodation’ includes six criteria (a. – f.) which must be met for planning permission to be granted for short-term let accommodation:</p> <p><i>Criterion (a) of HOU13 – The proposal strengthens and diversifies the range of short-stay visitor accommodation in the city.</i></p> <p>As the proposal adds an additional use to the area and provides additional variety and choice of accommodation for tourists and families visiting the city. The proposal is considered to comply with this criterion.</p> <p><i>Criterion (b) of HOU13- . It is accessible by public transport</i></p> <p>The site is located along Albertbridge Road which is an Arterial Route. There are various bus stops within 70m of the site, served by the Glider service as well as Metro and Ulsterbus. It is therefore considered that the proposal would satisfy this criterion.</p> <p><i>Criterion (c) of HOU13 - It is sited within an existing tourism cluster or in close proximity to a visitor attraction</i></p> <p>The applicant has provided a list of visitor attractions including Eastside Visitor Centre (290m/4 min walk), CS Lewis Square (400m, 5 min walk). There is also access to the Comber Greenway, Templemore Baths Heritage Experience (500m</p>

	<p>/7mins walk) and Glentoran FC's Oval (800m / 11mins walk). Having considered all the attractions in close proximity, it is concluded that the site is located within an existing "tourism cluster", or "in close proximity" to a visitor attraction. The proposal therefore satisfies criteria c. of HOU13.</p> <p><i>Criterion (d) of HOU13. Has appropriate management arrangements in place to ensure a positive and safe living environment whilst minimising any potential negative impacts;</i></p> <p>An Accommodation Management Plan has been provided. It provides specific details on the management company, guest screening and booking policy, noise management measures, antisocial behaviour prevention, check-in and check-out procedures, communication with neighbours, emergency procedures and monitoring and review. It is considered to be acceptable and robust and will be conditioned within the decision notice. It is deemed that the proposal meets criterion d. of HOU13.</p> <p><i>Criteria (e) of HOU13. 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 unsatisfied demand in that location</i></p> <p>The application site does not fall within a designated Housing Management Area (HMA) and therefore satisfies this criterion.</p> <p><i>Criteria (f) of HOU13. In the case of a change from permanent residential use, part of the property must be retained as permanent residential housing.</i></p> <p>The proposal does not involve a change from residential use, therefore this criterion is not engaged.</p> <p>Officers note concerns by residents regarding the impact of the proposal on residential housing including affordable housing, however as criterion (f) is not engaged, and the proposal meets the other relevant criteria, this is considered acceptable. Concerns regarding community cohesion are noted, however there is no evidence to suggest that the proposed use would have a negative impact on same.</p> <p>Character, Design & Appearance</p>
7.6	<p>The proposal seeks to erect a four-storey building to create 29no. short term let units. Policy DES1 – Principles of Urban Design applies. It is noted that the scale, height and character of the proposed building has been designed to reflect and integrate with the approved apartment scheme adjacent under approval LA04/2016/2183/F. This approval has not yet been built out, evidence of commencement has been submitted alongside this application however nothing has formally been submitted under a certificate of lawfulness; therefore, the Council cannot consider the approval to be extant.</p>
7.7	<p>Nonetheless, the overall scale, height and massing of the proposal when assessed on its own merits is considered acceptable. The building is four storeys and will measure 12.5m in height. The surrounding area is predominately mixed-use characterised by two-storey residential buildings and 3-4 storey commercial buildings further along the Albertbridge Road. The building line of the proposal respects the established building line defined by the adjacent paint shop and the previous restaurant that once occupied the application site. The proposal will retain the existing footpaths along the Albertbridge and Skipton Street frontages and ensure passive surveillance and activity at ground floor level by introducing ground floor windows from the main habitable rooms.</p>

7.8	<p>The fenestration is of a vertical emphasis with four openings extending across each level facing onto Albertbridge Road and Skipton Street to the rear, this reflects the surrounding area and is considered an acceptable design. The front and rear windows will also have Juliet balconies from first to third floor level. The roof will be flat with solar panels to the south facing roof slope. The materials will be a mix of red brick and smooth white render which help break up the massing of the building, the doors and windows will be finished in grey uPVC. The materials and overall design reflect the surrounding area and are considered acceptable. The character, design and appearance is therefore compliant with DES1 of the LDP.</p>
	<p>Impact on Amenity</p>
7.9	<p>As discussed above, criterion (d) of Policy HOU13 requires that all proposals (for short term let accommodation) must demonstrate the ability to manage accommodation satisfactorily.</p>
7.10	<p>A robust Accommodation Management Plan has been submitted which includes management of general behaviour of occupants and promotion of good practice and will be conditioned in order to protect surrounding residential amenity. There are no neighbouring dwellings to the rear and those to the front are facing the other side of the Albertbridge Road. All properties within the neighbour engagement area as identified in the Management Plan will be contacted prior to the operation of the short-term let accommodation. There is not considered to be any overlooking, overshadowing or loss of daylight for any neighbouring properties. Belfast City Council Environmental Health has been consulted on the application and has considered the proposed development in terms of noise, air pollution, general amenity, ambient air quality, contaminated land and other considerations. They offer no objections subject to conditions.</p>
	<p>Residential Policy consideration</p>
7.11	<p>Point 7.1.89 under Policy HOU13 of the Council's Plan Strategy states that "<i>as short-term let accommodation falls outside of the residential use class, the change of use to permanent residential use is considered a material change of use requiring planning permission. Such an application would be assessed in line with the wider policy requirements for residential development. Where proposals for short-term let accommodation fail to meet minimum standards for residential accommodation, conditions will be used to limit use of the property to short-term lets only (i.e rentals to the same person(s) for no longer than 90 consecutive nights).</i>" The proposed short-term let accommodation comprises 1-bed units. Appendix C of the Plan Strategy states that the minimum space standard for 1-bed residential accommodation is 35sqm. The proposed units are under this minimum standard (unit size ranges from 21.75sqm to 25.9sqm). The proposal would also not provide adequate amenity and open space and includes units which are wholly in the rear of the property, failing a number of points within Policy RD1 – New Residential Developments. The proposal would not be appropriate for long term residential use and a condition is therefore recommended to limit use of the property to short-term lets only to no longer than 90 consecutive nights.</p> <p>Parking</p>

7.12	<p>Policy TRAN 8 states that development proposals will be required to provide adequate provision for car parking and appropriate servicing arrangements. Beyond areas of parking restraint, a reduced level of car parking provision may be acceptable where the development is in a highly accessible location well served by public transport and where the development would benefit from spare capacity available in nearby public car parks or adjacent on-street car parking, amongst other criteria. The proposal does not include on-site car parking and given the accessibility to sustainable forms of transport in the area including bus and glider stops, this is considered acceptable. A Parking Statement has also been provided which demonstrates adequate on-street capacity in the area. DfI Roads have been consulted on the application and offer no objections.</p>
7.13	<p>Climate Change</p> <p>The submitted Drainage Assessment includes SuDS measures including 'Gravity Over Engineered' pipes to provide the on-line storage and a Vortex Flow Control as the flow restrictor limited to the approved flow of 10 l/s/hectare which will effectively mitigate the flood risk to the proposed development and from the development. Solar panels are proposed on the roof, box planters are provided at ground floor level and all main habitable rooms have windows to reduce reliance on artificial lighting. All building control regulations will be met in terms of energy efficiency, insulation and air tightness as well as EPBD requirements. The proposal is considered to comply with policies ENV2, ENV3 and ENV5 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy.</p>
7.14	<p>Environmental protection</p> <p><u>Contaminated land</u></p> <p>Environmental Health (EH) has reviewed the contamination assessment and have no objection subject to a condition regarding unexpected contamination. NIEA Regulation Unit has also been consulted in respect of contamination and offer no objections.</p> <p><u>Air quality</u></p> <p>EH has not raised any concerns with regards to air quality subject to a condition regarding heating sources and in this regard, the proposal is considered compliant with Policy ENV1.</p> <p><u>Noise</u></p> <p>EH states that <i>'the proposed development is to be located on a main arterial route and is in close proximity to existing commercial uses and may therefore be impacted by noise. We would advise that the onus lies with the developer, as the agent of change, to incorporate appropriate noise mitigation measures, as may be necessary, to ensure the commercial success of the proposed development and to prevent complaints from the end users regarding existing noise sources within the area'</i>. EH has stated that conditions are not necessary and in this regard, the proposal is considered compliant with Policy ENV1.</p>

7.15	<p>Flood risk and drainage</p> <p>Policy ENV4 states that planning applications in flood risk areas must be accompanied by an assessment of the flood risk in the form of a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). The council will have regard to guidance publications produced by other authorities and prospective developers/applicants are advised to liaise early in the formulation of their proposals with DfI Rivers to clarify flooding or flood plain issues that may affect particular sites. In all circumstances, the council will adopt a precautionary approach in assessing development proposals in areas that may be subject to flood risk presently or in the future as a result of environmental change predictions.</p> <p>DfI Rivers has reviewed the submitted Drainage Assessment which indicates that flood risk to and from the development will be appropriately managed subject to condition.</p>
7.16	<p>NI Water has objected to the proposal on grounds insufficient network capacity within Combined Storm Overflows (CSOs). It advises that existing public waste-water infrastructure cannot currently support the proposal without significant risk of environmental harm, potential pollution, flood risk and harm to local amenity. However, no clear evidence has been provided to demonstrate specific harm resulting from the development. Moreover, NI Water has a duty to connect committed development across the city to its waste-water infrastructure. Such development, which includes significant levels of residential and commercial floor space across the city, will not all come forward at once and some may not come forward at all. For these reasons, it would be unreasonable for the Council to refuse planning permission on these grounds and the proposal is acceptable having regard to Policy SP1A of the Plan Strategy.</p>
7.17	<p>DAERA has been consulted and is concerned that the sewage loading associated with the proposal has the potential to cause adverse environmental impact. As the proposal would result in clear intensification of the use of the land, consultation has been undertaken with Shared Environmental Services (SES) to assist the consideration of the Habitats Regulations. Belfast City Council in its role as the Competent Authority under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended), and in accordance with its duty under Regulation 43, has adopted the HRA report, and conclusions therein, prepared by Shared Environmental Service, dated 21/07/2025. This found that the project would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site. Having regard to this advice, it is considered necessary to impose a condition to mitigate any likely significant effects on Belfast Lough. Having regard to all relevant material considerations, the proposal is considered compliant with Policy NH1 of the of the Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035 and paragraphs 6.176 and 6.177 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement.</p>
7.18	<p>Natural Heritage</p> <p>Policy ENV1 (Environmental quality) requires new development to protect communities from materially harmful development and must not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment.</p> <p>NIEA: Natural Environment Division and Shared Environmental Services were consulted and consider that there would be no negative impact on priority habitats or priority species as detailed under the Floodrisk and Drainage section. The proposal therefore accords with Policy NH1.</p>

7.19	<p>Waste Management</p> <p>A Service and Waste Management plan has been submitted. Belfast City Council Waste Management Team have been consulted and are requesting further information. Delegated authority is sought to resolve this matter.</p>
8.0	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>8.1 Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, 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, Waste Management Plan and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.</p> <p>8.2 All representations and associated issues have been fully considered in the assessment of the proposal.</p> <p>8.3 The proposal complies with policies HOU13 and DES1 of the Belfast Local Development Plan. Where it strengthens and diversifies short term let accommodation, is located close to public transport, within walking distance from a tourist attraction, appropriate management arrangements and is not located within an HMA.</p>
9.0	<p>Conditions</p> <p>9.1 The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission.</p> <p>Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.</p> <p>9.2 Notwithstanding the Planning (Use Classes) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 and Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 (or any order revoking and/or re-enacting those orders with or without modification), the bed spaces shall not be used other than short-term let units. The maximum stay by the same occupant shall be no more than 90 days in any 12-month period, in accordance with written records which shall be made available to the Council at all reasonable times.</p> <p>Reason: Residential use of the building would require further consideration by the Council having regard to the Local Development Plan and relevant material considerations.</p> <p>9.3 The short-term let accommodation hereby permitted shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved Accommodation Management Plan, uploaded to the planning portal on 01/05/25 at all times.</p> <p>Reason: In the interest of residential amenity.</p>

9.4	<p>The development hereby approved shall not be occupied unless the climate change measures have been implemented in accordance with the supporting climate change statement. The climate change measures shall be retained in accordance with the approved details at all times.</p> <p>Reason: To mitigate and/or adapt to climate change.</p>
9.5	<p>All external facing and roofing materials shall be carried out as specified on the approved plans.</p> <p>Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area</p>
9.6	<p>Prior to the construction of the drainage network, the Applicant shall submit a Drainage Assessment, compliant with 4.8 and Appendix E of SPG, to be agreed with the Council which demonstrates the safe management of any out of sewer flooding emanating from the surface water drainage network, agreed under Article 161, in a 1 in 100 year event, including an allowance for climate change (10%) and urban creep (10%).</p> <p>Reason: In order to safeguard against surface water flood risk.</p>
9.7	<p>The development hereby permitted shall not become operational unless weather protected cycle parking has been fully provided in accordance with the approved plans.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure acceptable cycle parking facilities on the site and to encourage alternative modes of transport to the private car.</p>
9.8	<p>If during the carrying out of the development, new contamination is encountered that has not previously been identified, all related works shall cease immediately, and the Council shall be notified immediately in writing. No further development shall proceed until this new contamination has been fully investigated in accordance with current industry recognised best practice. In the event of unacceptable human health risks being identified, a Remediation Strategy and subsequent Verification Report shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Council, prior to the development being occupied or operated. The Verification Report shall be completed by competent persons in accordance with best practice and must demonstrate that the remediation measures have been implemented and that the site is now fit for end-use.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that any contamination within the site is appropriately dealt with, in the interests of human health.</p>
9.9	<p>Prior to the installation of any centralised combustion sources (boilers, CHP, biomass or generators) at the hereby approved development, where there is a risk of impact at relevant receptor locations as per the criteria detailed within the Environmental Protection UK and Institute of Air Quality Management document - Land-use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Quality (January 2017), an Air Quality Impact Assessment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority prior to installation of the plant. Any submitted assessment shall include details of the combustion plant to be installed, emission rates and flue termination heights of the proposed combustion systems and must</p>

9.10	<p>demonstrate that there will be no exceedances of the Air Quality Strategy objectives at relevant human receptor locations associated with the operation of the proposed combustion plant and with the overall development.</p> <p>Reason: Protection of human health</p> <p>Notwithstanding the submitted details, no development shall commence on site (other than site clearance, site preparation, demolition and the formation of foundations and trenches) unless details of foul and surface water drainage, including a programme for implementation of these works, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details, which shall be retained as such thereafter.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure appropriate foul and surface water drainage of the site. Approval is required upfront because the design of the drainage is an integral part of the development and its acceptability.</p>
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Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

Summary	
Committee Meeting Date: 20 th January 2026	
Application Ref: LA04/2025/1695/F	
Proposal: Extension to existing spectator fencing on site, new ball stop system along with pedestrian and vehicular access gates. New kerb line and drainage along car park boundary.	Location: Existing soccer pitch at Dixon Playing Fields (approx. 50m north-east of No. 100 Orby Road), Grand Parade, 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: 22/10/2025	
Target Date: 04/02/2026	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe (Principal Planning Officer)	
Executive Summary: <p>The application seeks planning permission for the installation of 1 no (30m (width) x 6m (height) ball stop fences.</p> <p>The site is located within Dixon Playing Fields, off Grand Parade. The playing fields are a Council operated site which offers sport pitches and associated parking. The site comprises of two soccer pitches. There are also two single-storey buildings located close to the site entrance. 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 and car park. The Knock River is located at the north of the park.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The site is partly located within the Orangefield / Dixon Local Landscape Policy Area and the dBMAP policy designation for Community Greenways for Odyssey/ Tullycarnet Park/ Ormeau Park. The site is situated within the development limit as designated under both versions of dBMAP (2004 & 2014).</p> <p>The Key Issues relevant to consideration of the application are:</p>	

- 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.

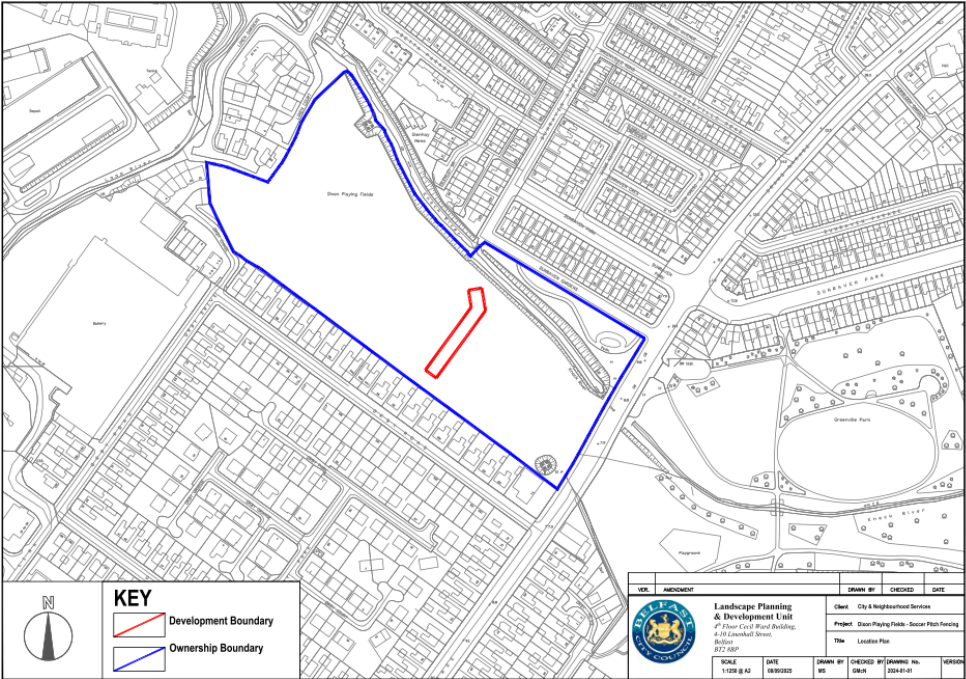
Recommendation

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

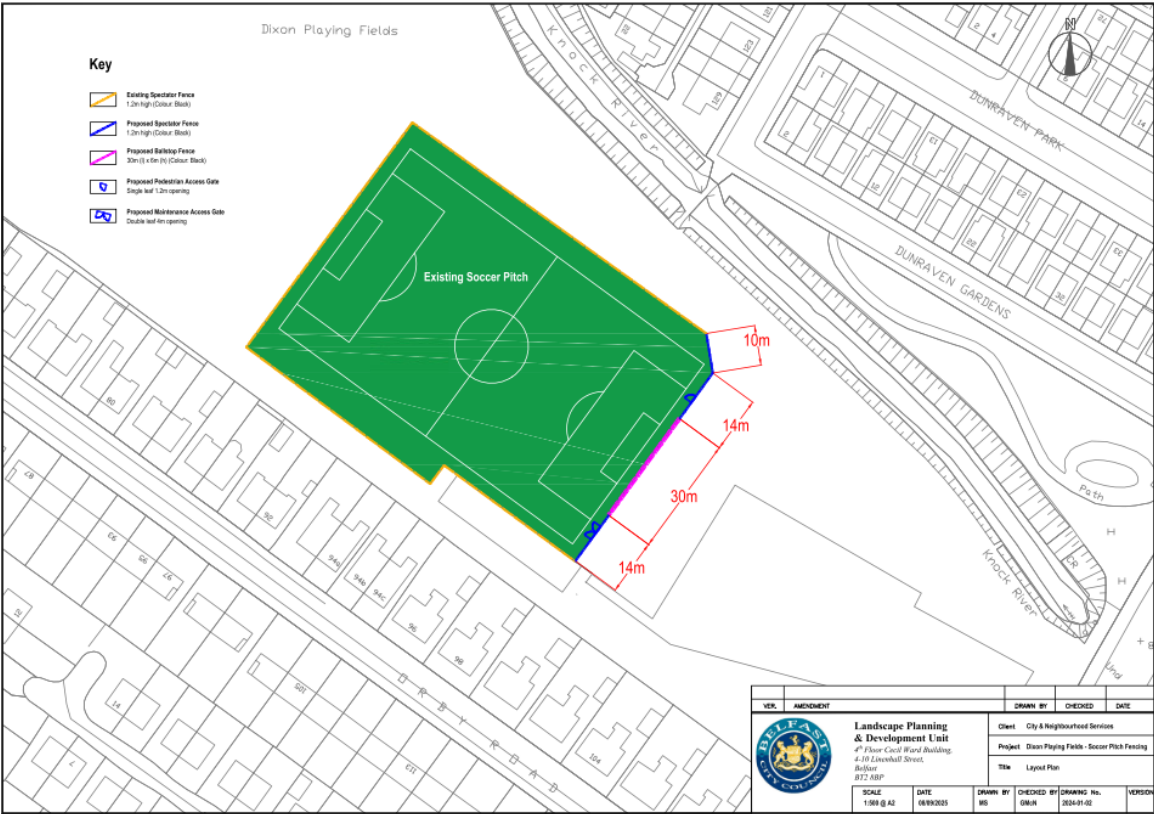
It is recommended that planning permission is approved. Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the approval reasons and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive

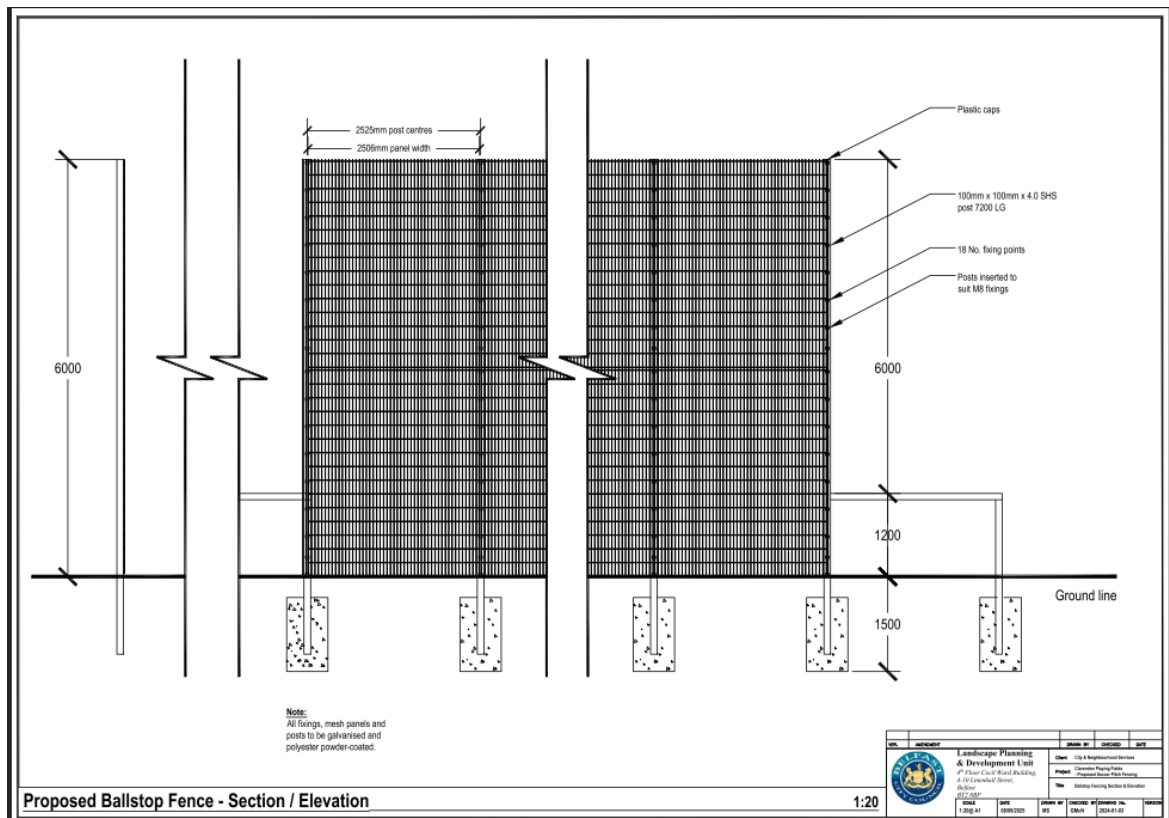
Officer Report

1.0 Drawings
1.1 Site Location



Block Plan



Proposed Elevations**2.0****Characteristics of the Site and Area****2.1**

The site is located within Dixon Playing Fields, off Grand Parade. The playing fields are a council operated site which offers sport pitches and associated parking. The site comprises of two soccer pitches. There are also two single storey buildings located close to the site entrance. 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 and car park. The Knock River is located at the North side of the park.

3.0**Description of Proposal****3.1**

The planning application is seeking permission for an extension to existing spectator fencing on site, new ball stop system along with pedestrian and vehicular access gates. New kerb line and drainage along car park boundary.

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:

- Policy GB1 -Green and Blue Infrastructure network.
- Policy HC1 – Promoting Healthy Communities
- Policy CI1 – Community Infrastructure
- Policy DCI3 – Other Proposed Development in the Countryside
- Policy TRE1 – Trees
- Policy OS1 – Protection of Open Space
- 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 Z/2010/0430/f - Proposed building upgrade for intermediate football provisions including additional fencing with gate and provision of disabled toilet with ramped access. Address: Dixon Park playing fields, Grand Parade, Belfast, BT5 5HP. Decision Approval Date: 24/08/2010. Z/2013/0207/F- Proposed changing pavilion with associated perimeter fencing. Address: Dixon Park, Grand Parade, Belfast. Decision 24/06/2013.
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 ballstop 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 east end of the first pitch, which is closest in proximity to the car park. These structures are 6m in height and 30m 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	<p>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.</p>
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 Somerdale Park Road. 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.</p>

8.0	Recommendation
8.1	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.
8.2	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>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. If during the carrying out of the development, new contamination is encountered that has not previously been identified, all related development works shall cease, and the Council shall be notified immediately in writing. No further related development works shall proceed until this new contamination has been fully investigated in accordance with current Environment Agency and CIRIA guidance and British Standards. In the event of unacceptable human health risks being identified, a Remediation Strategy shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Council. The Remediation Strategy shall be implemented and subsequently a Verification Report shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Council prior to the development being occupied or operated. The Verification Report shall be completed by competent persons and demonstrate the successful completion of the remediation works and that the site is now fit for end-use. The Verification Report shall be in accordance with current Environment Agency and CIRIA guidance and British standards. Reason: To ensure that any contamination within the site is appropriately dealt with, in the interests of human health. 	

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Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

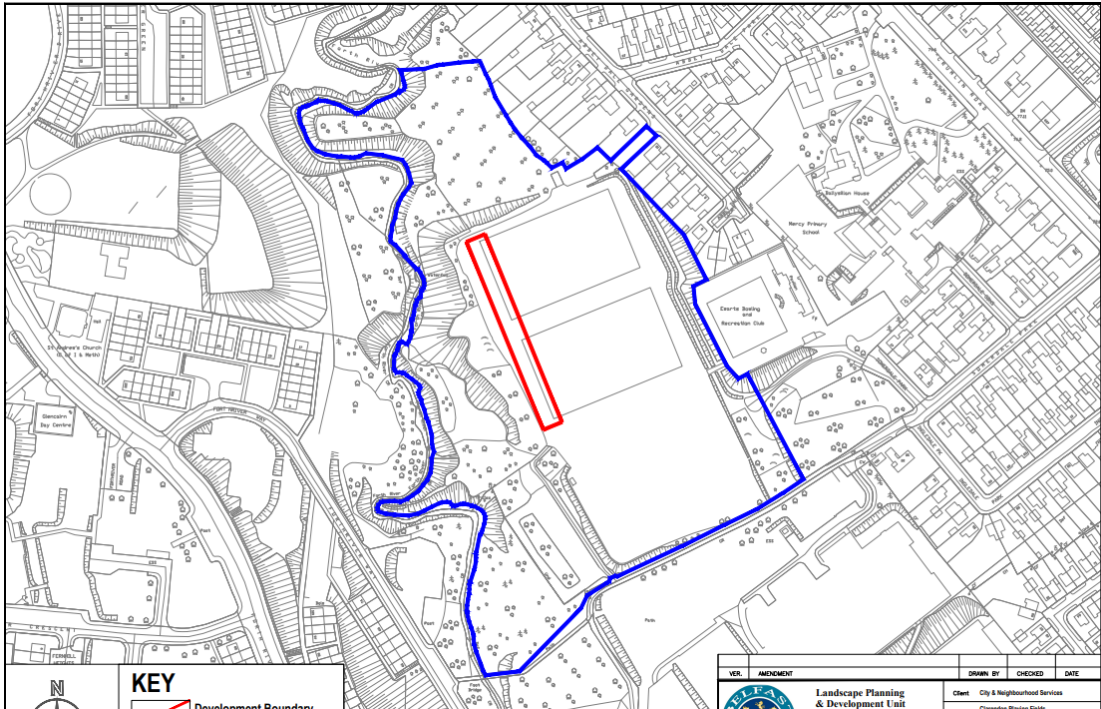
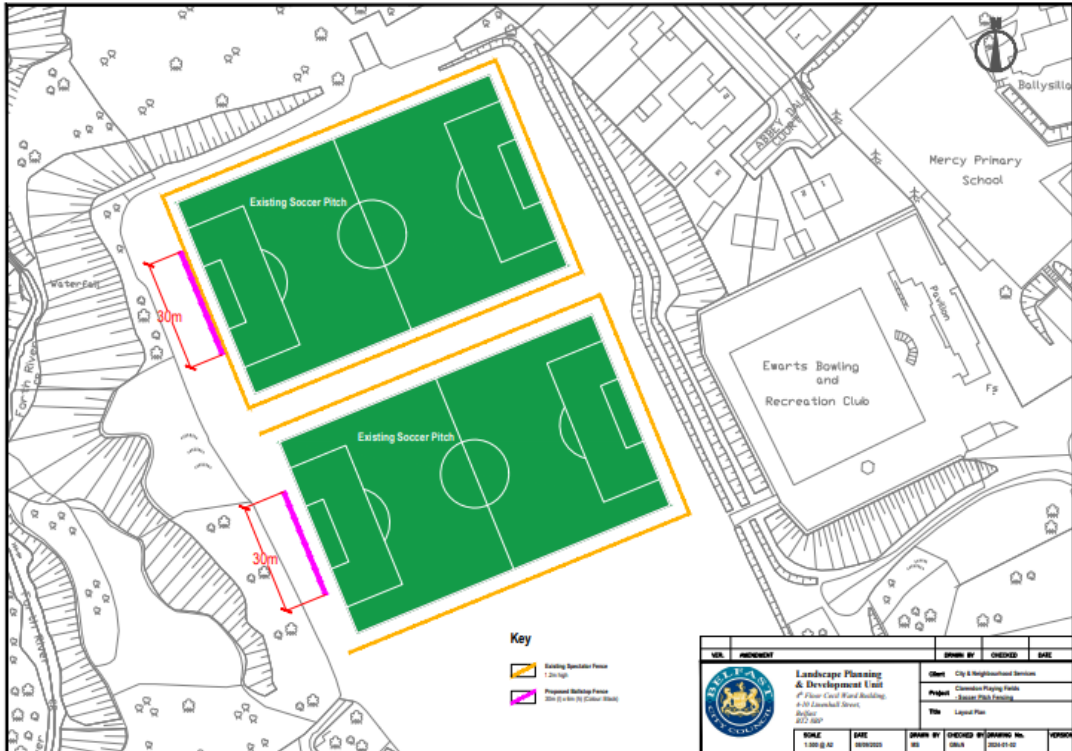
Summary	
Committee Meeting Date: 20 th January 2026	
Application Ref: LA04/2025/1696/F	
Proposal: Installation of 2 No. ball stop systems at 30m x 6m (high).	Location: Existing soccer pitches at Clarendon Playing Fields (approx. 130m south-west of No. 5 Abbeydale Court), Abbeydale Gardens, Belfast.
Referral 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
Date Valid: 22/10/2025	
Target Date: 04/02/2026	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe (Principal Planning Officer)	
Executive Summary: <p>The application seeks planning permission for the installation of 2 no (30m (width) x 6m (height) ball stop fences.</p> <p>The site is located at Clarendon playing fields, Somerdale Park, off the Crumlin Road, North Belfast. The playing fields are a Council operated site which offers sport pitches and associated parking. The site comprises of two soccer pitches and a 3G synthetic pitch. There are also several single-storey buildings located close to the site entrance. The topography of the site is broadly level with areas of trees outside the site boundary.</p> <p>The proposed works are due to take place to the west and north of the site, which is isolated from the neighbouring properties to the east. The red line of the site is adjacent to the Forthriver / Wolfhill / Ligoniel Local Landscape Policy Area and the dBMAP policy designation for sites of local conservation importance (SLNCI), Upper Forth River. The site is situated within the development limit as designated under both versions of dBMAP (2004 & 2014).</p> <p>The Key Issues relevant to consideration of the application are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Principle of Development - Impact on amenity - Impact on the character and appearance of the area - Other considerations 	

Due to the minor nature of the application, consultations were deemed unnecessary. No representations have been received.

Recommendation

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

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 the approval reasons and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive

Officer Report											
1.0	Drawings										
1.1	Site Location										
<div><p>The map shows a residential area with a large rectangular site outlined in red. The site is bordered by a blue line representing the development boundary. Surrounding features include a river, a school (Mercy Primary School), a bowling and recreation club (Ewerts Bowling and Recreation Club), and various residential streets. A key indicates the development boundary. A table at the bottom right contains project details.</p><table><tr><th>VER.</th><th>REVISION</th><th>DRAWN BY</th><th>CHECKED</th><th>DATE</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table><p>Landscape Planning & Development Unit</p><p>Client: City & Neighbourhood Services</p><p>Project: Clonsilla Playing Fields</p><p>Site: Clonsilla Playing Fields</p></div>		VER.	REVISION	DRAWN BY	CHECKED	DATE					
VER.	REVISION	DRAWN BY	CHECKED	DATE							
Block Plan											
<div><p>The map shows two existing soccer pitches outlined in orange. The pitches are separated by a 30m distance, indicated by a pink double-headed arrow. The pitches are located next to a river (Waterfall River) and a school (Mercy Primary School). A key indicates the existing soccer pitch and the proposed building footprint. A table at the bottom right contains project details.</p><table><tr><th>VER.</th><th>REVISION</th><th>DRAWN BY</th><th>CHECKED</th><th>DATE</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table><p>Landscape Planning & Development Unit</p><p>Client: City & Neighbourhood Services</p><p>Project: Clonsilla Playing Fields</p><p>Site: Clonsilla Playing Fields</p></div>		VER.	REVISION	DRAWN BY	CHECKED	DATE					
VER.	REVISION	DRAWN BY	CHECKED	DATE							

2.0	Characteristics of the Site and Area
2.1	The site is located at Clarendon playing fields, Somerdale Park, off the Crumlin Road, North Belfast. The playing fields are a council operated site which offers sport pitches and associated parking. The site comprises of two soccer pitches and a 3G synthetic pitch. There are also several single storey buildings located close to the site entrance. The topography of the site is broadly level with areas of trees outside the site boundary.
3.0	Description of Proposal
3.1	The application seeks planning permission for the installation of 2 no (30m (width) x 6m (height) ball stop fences
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 HC1 – Promoting Healthy Communities - Policy CI1 – Community Infrastructure - Policy DCI3 – Other Proposed Development in the Countryside - Policy TRE1 – Trees - Policy OS1 – Protection of Open Space - Policy OS5- Intensive Sports Facilities
4.3	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)
4.4	Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)
4.5	Relevant Planning History LA04/2015/1356/F - Modular building for training facilities and associated services (Retrospective). Address: Clarendon Park (Playing Fields) Somerdale Park, Belfast, BT14 7HD. Decision Approval Date: 14/03/2017. LA04/2021/2772/F - Upgrading of sports facilities to include construction of new clubhouse changing room block, new floodlighting, fencing and ball stops, 2 no spectator grandstands (206 persons per stand), 3G goalkeeper training area, dug-outs, turnstiles, associated maintenance infrastructure, landscaping, and parking facilities (revised description and additional info). Address: Clarendon Playing Fields, 29 Somerdale Park, Belfast BT14 7HD. Decision: Approval: 02/10/2023
5.0	Consultations and Representations
5.1	Due to the minor nature of the application, consultations were deemed unnecessary.
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	Key Issues The key issues to be considered as part of this assessment are the following: <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	Principle of Development 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 ballstop 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.
6.4	<p>Impact on Amenity</p> <p>The proposed ball stop net fencing is to the west/north end of both existing pitches. These structures are 6m in height and 30m in length. It is considered that the separation distances to existing residential properties will assist in mitigating noise impacts. The proposed works are not overly different from the existing ball stop net fencing previously approved under planning application LA04/2021/2772/F. Officers consider that noise levels will not increase from the existing situation.</p>
6.5	<p>Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area</p> <p>The proposed ball stop net fencing is considered appropriate for the operation of both pitches. 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 Somerdale Park Road. It is also considered that the existing trees around the site periphery would also filter views of structures and on balance, the proposal would not result in detrimental visual impacts.</p>
6.6	<p>Other Considerations</p> <p>The proposal would not cause any loss of existing trees.</p>
8.0	Recommendation
8.1	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.
8.2	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>DRAFT CONDITIONS:</p> <p>1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission.</p> <p>Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.</p>	