

Planning Committee

Tuesday, 21st April, 2026

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

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

Also attended: Councillor Verner.

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

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported for Councillor Hanvey.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 10th March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st April, 2026.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors D. Douglas and S. Douglas declared an interest in relation to the item under the heading "LA04/2025/2138/F - A blitz memorial sculpture, made from glass fibre reinforced concrete, set on a concrete plinth within the grounds of Westbourne Presbyterian Church - Westbourne Presbyterian Church 149a Newtownards Road" in that they were members of the Church and they left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

Committee Site Visits

The Committee noted the site visits.

**Notifications from Statutory Bodies-
Abandonment and Extinguishment**

**Abandonment at Bankmore Street and
proposed extinguishment of a Public Right
of Way at Ratcliffe Street**

The Committee noted the proposed abandonment.

Planning Appeals Notified

The Committee noted the appeals decisions.

Planning Decisions Issued

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

Live Applications for Major Development

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

Committee Decisions that have yet to issue

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

Miscellaneous Reports

Local Applications subject to NI Water Objections

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

Planning Applications previously considered

**LA04/2025/1350/F - Change of Use from 3
bed Dwelling (Class C1) to 5-bed, 5-person
HMO (sui generis) - 29 Glencairn Street**

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

- The principle of an HMO at the location;
- Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
- Impact on residential amenity;
- Traffic, parking and access; and
- Waste and refuse collection.

She reported that 69 third party objections had been received in relation to the application and the concerns raised included proliferation, house values, requirement

for family homes, parking, amenity, noise, refuse, antisocial behaviour, sewage and emergency vehicle access.

She explained that the proposal was compliant with Policy HOU10 in that the 10% HMO threshold on Glencairn Street had not yet been reached and that it was considered that the proposal would not be harmful in terms of traffic, parking, impact on residential amenity or the amenity of the surrounding area.

She reported that DfI Roads, NIEA and SES had offered no objections to the application and that NI Water had recommended refusal, based on network capacity.

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

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Verner to the meeting, who attended to speak in objection to the application.

Councillor Verner explained that she was attending the meeting to seek a refusal of the application and stated that 71 objections had been received in relation to the application citing that it would cause unacceptable harm to residential amenity and parking.

She stated that Waste Management had clearly outlined the current issues with constrained access and that additional bins would further impact on the local residents. She added that the issues would impact house prices and only serve to erode the residential character of a settled community.

She stated that Glencairn Street already had extreme parking issues that caused access challenges for essential services that included ambulance and fire service. She explained that she had been working with a local constituent over the previous year to secure a disabled parking space as, due to the high volume of parked cars, she was having to park over a third of a mile from her property, and she added that she had letters of support from the Council, PSNI and local clergy which acknowledged the current lack of amenity.

She concluded by stating that, if the application was approved, it would contribute to further over intensification of a narrow residential street, increase parking stress and the erosion of a settled community, and she asked the Committee to reject the application.

The Chairperson thanked Councillor Verner for her representation and welcomed Mr. Crockard, CBD Architecture, to the meeting, who was speaking on behalf of the applicant.

Mr. Crockard explained that the applicant was a local landlord who already owned two properties on Glencairn Street, both of which were uninhabitable when he purchased them, and that he fully refurbished them to a high standard and had been well maintained homes which were rented to local families.

He stated that the applicant had recently purchased 29 Glencairn Street at auction with the intention of bringing what was currently an uninhabitable property back into use and he explained that the applicant understood that many of the concerns

raised by residents had been when the property was previously owned by a large HMO developer that operated across Belfast. He added that, after those objections had been raised, the property was placed on the market and was purchased by the applicant.

He stated that the property was in poor condition, was not contributing positively to the street and that the proposal was to fully renovate the house and convert it into a five-bedroom shared property, finished to the same high standard as the other homes that he had already refurbished on Glencairn Street.

He explained that the intended occupants would be nurses working in the local hospital and that the applicant had been working with a nursing agency that recruited nurses from England and travelled to Northern Ireland to help relieve pressure on the health service. He added that the applicant already provided accommodation for key workers through the agency and could provide a letter of recommendation, if required.

Mr. Crockard stated that both the parking survey and the road services assessment had confirmed that there was sufficient parking available in the area even at peak times.

He stated that due to the applicant owning properties either side of the application site, he had a very strong personal interest in ensuring that the property was managed properly.

He concluded by stating that the applicant aimed to continue improving older properties in the area and bringing homes that were uninhabitable back into good use while maintaining positive relationships with the local community and that he was content to comply with any reasonable conditions to ensure the property was managed to the highest standard for both tenants and surrounding residents.

In response to a question from a Member with regard to amenity, parking and the parking survey, Mr. Crockard stated that the parking survey had been carried out independently and within the required parameters, he added that the applicant intended for future tenants to not be car-owners and therefore would not contribute to parked cars within the area.

The Chairperson highlighted that each application needed to be considered on a case by case basis and pointed out that Glencairn Street was significantly narrower than previous applications which had been refused by the Committee and referred to the Planning Appeals Commission.

After a number of comments from Members, the Planning Manager explained that restricted bin collection was clearly material and the lack of amenity space to the rear of the property would be considered as reasonable grounds for refusal.

Proposal

Moved by Alderman McCullough,
Seconded by Alderman Lawlor,

“That the Committee refuses the application on the basis that the proposal would result in difficulties with refuse collection and a loss of amenity and insufficient amenity space for residents and delegates authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the reasons for refusal.”

On a vote, seventeen Members voted for the proposal and two against and it was declared carried.

Planning Applications

LA04/2024/1646/F - Demolition of existing dwelling (no. 50 Gilnahirk Road) to facilitate proposed extension and alterations to existing petrol filling station including extension of retail floor space, extension and realignment of carpark to provide 9 no. additional car parking spaces and pedestrian access, cycle parking, construction of retaining wall and associated landscaping - 46-50 Gilnahirk Road

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the application in order to undertake a site visit.

LA04/2025/2096/F - Variation of Condition 5 of Planning Permission LA04/2019/2387/F relating to Noise Impact Assessment. - Land adjacent to Quay Gate House 15 Scrabo Street Belfast BT5 4D: footpaths and public realm at Scrabo Street Station Street and Middlepath Street

The Principal Planning Officer summarised the application for the Committee which related to the submission of a Final Noise Impact Assessment prior to commencement of construction of the approved development.

She explained that the key areas for consideration were the acceptability of the revised trigger for the timing of the requirement to submit a Final Noise Impact Assessment which, if approved, would change from being required prior to the commencement of development to being required prior to the installation of windows and means of ventilation.

She reported that Environmental Health had offered no objection to the amended condition and that, having regard to the development plan, planning history on the site and other material considerations, the proposed variation to the condition was considered acceptable.

The Committee granted planning permission to vary Condition 5 and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions.

LA04/2025/2113/F - The construction of a new Sports Hall, Gymnasium and P.E Facility and footbridge connecting to existing GAA playing field - St. Marys Christian Brothers Grammar School St Marys Christian Brothers Grammar School 147a Glen Road, Andersonstown

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

- Principle of development;
- Layout, scale, massing and design and impact on the character and appearance of the area;
- Open space;
- Impact on natural heritage;
- Flood risk;
- Climate change; and
- Proposed access and car parking.

She stated that the proposal would be built on an existing all-weather pitch that provided limited value to the school with regard to amenity and recreation and that the proposed facility would enhance the overall sports and recreation facilities of the school and that the benefits would far outweigh the partial loss of open space within the school campus.

She reported that DfI Roads, DfI Rivers, Environmental Health, NIEA, NI Water and Shared Environmental Services (SES) had all been consulted and had offered no objection to the proposal, and that no letters of representation had been received following the advertising of the application in the local press.

She stated that, having regard to the development plan, planning history on the site, consultee responses and other material considerations, the proposed development for construction of a new Sports Hall, Gymnasium and P.E Facility and footbridge connecting to existing GAA playing field was considered acceptable and that it was recommended that planning permission be granted.

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

**LA04/2021/2839/F & LA04/2022/0071/LBC -
Proposed change of use from offices to
17no. 1 bedroom and 2no. 2 bedroom
apartments with alterations to rear facade
and dormers. - 29-32 College Gardens**

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

- Principle of Development;
- Affordable housing;
- Housing density;
- Housing mix;
- Adaptable and accessible accommodation;
- Design and placemaking;
- Impact on listed building;
- Climate change;
- Residential Quality and impact on amenity;
- Access and transport;
- Environmental protection;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Waste management;
- Natural heritage; and
- Section 76 planning agreement.

She reported that a Listed Building Consent had been submitted for the alterations required to the building to facilitate the change of use and that the principle of housing at the location was considered acceptable. She added that the proposed design was considered to enhance the Conservation Area and that the reuse of the Listed Building was welcomed.

She stated that no objections had been received from consultees and that one representation had been received which had been addressed within the case officer's report.

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

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

LA04/2023/3795/F & LA04/2023/3656/LBC - Proposed 360 rotating car parking bay with new access onto Wellington Park Lane and levels changes. Removal of boundary vegetation and wall to accommodate sliding gate (Amended) - 1 Wellington Park Terrace

The Principal Planning Officer summarised the application for the Committee and explained that the application site was a Grade B1 Listed Building situated in the Malone Conservation Area, she highlighted the following key areas for consideration:

- Impact on Listed Building;
- Impact on conservation area;
- Roads/access;
- Impact on trees;
- Impact on amenity;
- Other considerations; and
- Matters raised in representation.

She reported that there had been one objection from DfC Historic Environment Division and five third-party objections, all of which had been addressed within the case officer's report.

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

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

LA04/2024/0852/F - Retention of change of use from warehouse and offices to public house (Linked to adjacent public house) and entertainment venue/events space including street food market for on premises consumption - Common Market 16-20 Dunbar Street

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application and referred the Members to the following key issues to consider in assessment of the proposed development:

- Principle of public house and event space at this location;
- Impact on amenity;
- Impact on Conservation Area;
- Impact on Listed Building;
- Impact on traffic flow and parking; and
- Impact existing wastewater infrastructure.

She explained that the application site was located with the city centre boundary in unzoned whiteland within both the BUAP and dBMAP.

She reported that there had been two previous temporary permissions, that the current application was for permanent permission and that there had been no objections received from consultees that included Environmental Health, DfI Roads, Historic Environment Division and NI Water.

She stated that the proposal constituted an appropriate city centre use which proposed minimal external changes and would therefore preserve the character and appearance of the Cathedral Conservation Area.

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

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

LA04/2025/2138/F - A blitz memorial sculpture, made from glass fibre reinforced concrete, set on a concrete plinth within the grounds of Westbourne Presbyterian Church - Westbourne Presbyterian Church 149a Newtownards Road

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with a summary of the application and explained that the key areas for consideration were that the application site was within the grounds of a Listed Building, DfI Roads and the Historic Environment Division had offered no objections and no third-party representations had been received.

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

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

Restricted Item

Development Opportunity Sites (DOA) Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

The Development Planning and Policy Manager and the Urban Design Officer explained that the Council had developed two Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents for Development Opportunities Areas which had been identified within the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2035, which provided a comprehensive masterplan approach to the development of key areas of the city centre.

The Committee noted the SPG for DOA_01 Sailortown, Greater Clarendon and City Quays and DOA_07 Cathedral and NE Quarter, and the associated Consultation Reports and approved both for publication.

Chairperson