

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



**Belfast
City Council**

11th June, 2026

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in hybrid format, both in the Lavery Room, City Hall and remotely, via Microsoft Teams, on Tuesday, 16th June, 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:

1. **Routine Matters**
 - (a) Apologies
 - (b) Minutes
 - (c) Declarations of Interest
2. **Committee Site Visit**
3. **Planning Appeals Notified (Pages 1 - 2)**
4. **Planning Decisions Issued (Pages 3 - 24)**
5. **Live Applications for Major Development (Pages 25 - 28)**
6. **Committee Decisions that have yet to issue (Pages 29 - 34)**
7. **Miscellaneous Reports**
 - (a) NIAO Strategic Review of the Planning Appeals Commission (Pages 35 - 96)

- (b) Local Applications subject to NI Water Objections (Pages 97 - 102)

8. **Planning Applications previously considered**

- (a) LA04/2022/0809/F - Amendments to approved schemes ref. Z/2008/0993/F (erection of 53 No. dwellings) & ref. Z/2013/0120/F (erection of 46 No. dwellings); to reduce overall density from 99 No. dwellings to 92 No. dwellings and associated and ancillary works. - Lands to the south and west of Woodland Grange to the north of Blacks Gate and to the east of Moor Park Mews, Belfast (Pages 103 - 136)
- (b) LA04/2025/0288/F - Retrospective change of use from ground floor taxi passenger terminal, cafe, office and newsagent to a Homeless Centre, Category D1(B). The centre will provide meals, washing and changing facilities and an internal social amenity area for users. The centre will operate Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week from 4:00 pm up until 10:00 pm (Amended Description) - Existing taxi passenger terminal and former retail unit located within 35a King Street (Pages 137 - 148)

9. **Planning Applications**

- (a) LA04/2025/1991/F - Subdivision of the existing cash and carry building and the change of use of 4,750 sq,m gross floorspace for use as a Class A1 retail; erection of new loading bay in service yard; minor external alterations to building; reconfiguration of car park. - Makro, 97 Kingsway (Pages 149 - 162)
- (b) LA04/2025/2215/F - Proposed change of use from offices to nursing home comprising 156 no. bedrooms, ancillary scanning unit and all associated accommodation including dining/ café areas, day rooms and lounges, hairdressers, cinema rooms, treatment rooms and internal courtyard. The proposal also includes ancillary offices, landscaping, cycle parking, external alterations and all other site and associated works. - Halifax Building, 24 Cromac Place (Pages 163 - 178)
- (c) LA04/2024/0570/F - Change of use of an existing hotel, conference centre and offices (sui generis) to a 97-bed care home (Use Class C3(b)) and 1,559sqm diagnostic medical facility (Use Class D1(a)), associated access, car parking, landscaping and open space. - Stormont Hotel, 587 Upper Newtownards Road
- (d) LA04/2024/0569/O - Outline planning permission with all matter reserved for independent living (Use Class C1) units and up to 62no. assisted living units (Use Class C3), associated internal access roads, communal open space, revised access from Castleview Road, associated car parking, servicing, amenity space and landscaping and demolition of dwellings at Castleview Road (nos. 2, 4, 6, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 & 30) and Summerhill Parade (nos. 18, 20 & 22) (amended description). - Stormont Hotel, 587 Upper Newtownards Road BT4 3LP and adjacent properties at Castleview Road (nos. 2, 4, 6, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 & 30), Summerhill Parade (nos. 18, 20 & 22), and rear of 160 Barnetts Road

- (e) LA04/2025/2013/F & LA04/2025/2013/LBC - Change of use of Netherleigh House and existing office blocks (Class B1) to provide residential and nursing care facilities (Class C3 (a) and (b)). Extensions to existing office block including a fourth storey floor, eastern and western gable extension and two front projections from the northern elevation. Erection of 36 no. assisted living apartments over two four storey blocks. Site parking, landscaped amenity areas, woodland trails and all associated site works - Netherleigh House, 1 Massey Avenue (Pages 179 - 206)
- (f) LA04/2026/0021/F & LA04/2026/0022/LBC - Conversion of former convent to 28no. apartments (1, 2 & 3 bed) involving internal and external refurbishment/retention and re-configuration. Provision of ground floor extension with partial demolition and provision of new stairwell and lift. Provision of dormers, rooflights and extension to first, second floor and attic levels regarding new stairwell and lift. External layout reconfigurations to include construction of new access from Ormeau Road, amended parking layout, provision of cycle parking, bin stores, landscaping, substation and associated works. - Former Good Shepherd Centre at lands at Nos. 511 and 511a Ormeau Road (Pages 207 - 234)
- (g) LA04/2026/0340/F - Proposed change of use of 144 no. PBMSA units to short term let accommodation outside of term time only. - The Edge, 1 Frederick Street, Belfast, BT1 2LW (formally 48-52 York Street) (Pages 235 - 246)
- (h) LA04/2026/0716/F - Proposed change of use of 342 no. Student rooms to short term let accommodation outside of term time (July & August). - Alma Place, 16 Library Street (Pages 247 - 258)
- (i) LA04/2026/0306/F - Section 54 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 for non-compliance with planning conditions 15 and 16 of planning permission LA04/2021/0516/F (relating to junction improvements and provision of disabled parking spaces) - 140 Donegall Street (Pages 259 - 268)
- (j) LA04/2024/1195/F - Proposed residential development comprising 20 no dwelling units including 8 no semi-detached dwellings, 1 no detached dwelling, 2 no 3-bed apartments and 9 no 2-bed apartments with associated car parking, landscaping and associated works. Lands south of 7-14 Wolfhill Manor, east of No 42 Mill Avenue and west and north west of No 11 Mill Avenue, Ligoniel (Pages 269 - 292)
- (k) LA04/2025/1839/F & LA04/2025/1841/DCA - Change of use from fast food unit, restaurant, retail and office to hotel with associated restaurant/bar areas, lobby/reception area and other areas ancillary to hotel use at ground floor level, 76no. bedrooms on 1st to 4th floor level and ancillary rooftop store. Includes demolition of all internal walls and partitions at ground floor level and demolition of sections of building at the rear, replacement of windows, reconfiguration and replacement of shopfronts, creation of new openings for windows and removal of rooflights. - Lindsay House, 8 - 14 Callender Street
- (l) LA04/2026/0066/F - Erection of 2.4m high perimeter fencing around 1 No. existing soccer pitch and internal 1.2m high spectator rail. Additional tree planting (Amended proposal) - Existing soccer pitches at Wedderburn Park Playing Fields (approx. 20m east of Orpen Ave. and 10m west of Wedderburn Gdns) (Pages 293 - 302)

- (m) LA04/2026/0659/F & LA04/2026/0505/LBC - Fenestration changes to include insertion of new windows at first floor level on north facing elevation and creation of new access door and new windows at ground floor level on north elevation. - 2 Royal Avenue (Pages 303 - 312)
- (n) LA04/2026/0787/LBC - Proposed Remedial works to bandstand roof. - Bandstand, Ormeau Park, Ormeau Rd (Pages 313 - 320)
- (o) LA04/2025/1651/F - Retention, conversion, refurbishment and change of use of existing office building (Class A2) and 2 no. vacant retails units (Class A1) to hotel accommodation and associated facilities and café (sui generis) and extension of 5th floor (30no. hotel bedrooms in total). - 20 Rosemary Street (Pages 321 - 330)

10. **Restricted Items**

- (a) Building Control - Outstanding Accounts

Agenda Item 3

PLANNING COMMITTEE – 16 JUNE 2026

APPEALS NOTIFIED

COUNCIL: BELFAST

ITEM NO 1 PAC REF 2026/E0016

PLANNING REF: LA04/2025/0386/CA

APPLICANT: Mr Declan Carey

LOCATION: Land at 55 Cranmore Gardens, Belfast

PROPOSAL: Alleged unauthorised first floor extension balcony on the rear elevation and unauthorised side extension with planning permission

PROCEDURE:

ITEM NO 2 PAC REF 2026/E0008

PLANNING REF: LA04/2025/0393/CA

APPLICANT: Roland Stephen Black

LOCATION: Land at 91 Maryville Street, Malone Lower, Belfast, BT7 1AE

PROPOSAL: Alleged unauthorised change of use of 91 Maryville Street, Malone Lower, Belfast, BT7 1AE from a dwelling house to short term let accommodation without the benefit of planning permission

PROCEDURE:

ITEM NO 3 PAC REF 2026/E0021

PLANNING REF: LA04/2025/0121/CA

APPLICANT: Finbrook Investments Ltd

LOCATION: Land at Waterfront Plaza Building, 8 Laganbank Road, Belfast

PROPOSAL: Alleged unauthorised sub-division of an office building with ancillary car parking, to change the use of 2 floors (basement and lower ground floor) creating a commercial car park, without the benefit of planning permission

PROCEDURE:

APPEALS NOTIFIED (CONTINUED)

ITEM NO 4 PAC REF 2025/E0022
PLANNING REF: LA04/2025/0121/CA
APPLICANT: Peter Coakley and James Wright
LOCATION: Land at Waterfront Plaza Building, 8 Laganbank Road, Belfast
PROPOSAL: Alleged unauthorised sub-division of an office building with ancillary car parking, to change the use of 2 floors (basement and lower ground floor) creating a commercial car park, without the benefit of planning permission
PROCEDURE:

ITEM NO 5 PAC REF 2026/A0025
PLANNING REF: LA04/2026/0242/F
APPLICANT: Mr Conor Rooney
LOCATION: 8A Balmoral Park, Finaghy, Belfast, BT10 0QD
PROPOSAL: Perimeter fence and wall to boundary of site (part retrospective)
PROCEDURE: Non Determination

APPEAL DECISIONS NOTIFIED

ITEM NO 1 PAC REF: 2025/A0022
PLANNING REF: LA04/2023/4482/F
RESULT OF APPEAL: DISMISSED
APPLICANT: Mrs Jayne Hughes
LOCATION: Apartment 7, City Gate, 2 Sussex Place, Belfast, BT2 8LN
PROPOSAL: Retrospective change of use from apartment to short term let

ITEM NO 2 PAC REF: 2025/A0131
PLANNING REF: LA04/2024/0624/F
RESULT OF APPEAL: WITHDRAWN
APPLICANT: Mr Ashley Hunter
LOCATION: 107 Orangefield Road, Belfast, BT5 6DD
PROPOSAL: Retrospective erection of timber fence, stone gabion walls, including proposed planting, level changes and associated site works

Planning decisions issued May 2026

<u>Application number</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Decision</u>
LA04/2024/1571/F	LOC	Second Floor Flat at No. 8 Newington Street, Befast	Change of use from 1 no. residential flat (C1) to 1 no. flat (second floor) for short term letting accommodation (Sui Generis)	Permission Refused
LA04/2025/1026/F	LOC	51 Forthriver Drive, Belfast, BT13 3UJ	Extension of existing curtilage with new boundary treatment, two storey side extension and single storey rear extension to existing rear return and new single storey porch to front of dwelling.	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0100/F	LOC	Rosetta Primary School 21-23 Knockbreda Road, Belfast, BT6 0JA	Temporary toilet block and storage container located within the grounds of the existing Primary School	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0102/PAN	LOC	Nos 128, 128C, 130, 132, 134, 136-138, & 140-144 Kingsway, Dunmurry, Belfast, BT17 9NP	Demolition of existing commercial units, erection of discount foodstore, alterations to car parking layout, alterations to access on Dunmurry Lane, landscaping and associated site works	Proposal of Application Notice is Acceptable
LA04/2026/0156/F	LOC	15 Harberton Park Gardens, Belfast, BT9 6WJ	Single storey rear and side extension & associated works.	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0183/F	LOC	124 Cloona Park, Dunmurry, Belfast, BT17 0HF	Single storey rear extension	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0284/DC	LOC	Lands to the north of No. 33 and No. 35 Hampton Park, Galwally, Belfast, BT7 3JP and to the west of Lowry Court, 27 Hampton Park, Galwally, Belfast, BT7 3JY and to the south of 7 and 8 Mornington, Galwally, Belfast, BT7 3JS.	Discharge Condition 6 of planning permission Z/2007/1401/F relating to remediation works on site	Condition Not Discharged

LA04/2026/0406/PAN	MAJ	Lands at Clarence Court (10-18 Adelaide Street), to include part of building fronting Alfred Street, and Franklin Street, Belfast BT2 8GB.	Proposed part change of use of existing offices, to facilitate redevelopment for a c.180 bed hotel with reception, bar & lounge, restaurant and offices, car parking and all associated works	Proposal of Application Notice is Acceptable
LA04/2025/1454/F	LOC	The Lockhouse 13 River Terrace Belfast BT7 2EN	New community wellbeing centre and cafe extension to existing lockhouse building	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0075/F	LOC	42 Vauxhall Park, Belfast, BT9 5HB	Proposed single storey rear/side extension, internal alterations, raised rear patio space, associated hard landscaping and widening of existing vehicular access	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0154/F	LOC	338 Lisburn Road, Malone Lower, Belfast, BT9 6GH	Retention of retrospective works to Front Elevation including introduction of Takeaway Hatch, tiled cladding to ground floor facade and installation of crowd barriers to external entrance area.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1045/F	LOC	30 Piney Hills, Belfast, BT9 5NR	Proposed single storey rear extension and first floor extension to rear of dwelling, removal of ground floor carport and first floor conservatory to side of dwelling, and replacement with double storey side extension, double storey porch extension to front of dwelling, first floor juliet balcony, replacement doors and windows and external wall finishes. (Amended Description and Plans)	Permission Granted

LA04/2025/2144/F	LOC	9 Kingsway Park, Belfast, BT5 7EU	Single storey rear extension. Roof space conversion with rear dormer. 2 No. velux windows to front elevation. Replacing window with patio doors. New side window.	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0028/A	LOC	338 Lisburn Road, Malone Lower, Belfast, BT9 6GH	2no. advertisements, 1x fascia signage and 1x projecting sign	Consent Granted
LA04/2026/0134/F	LOC	40 Houston Drive, Belfast, BT5 6AZ	Single storey rear extension	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0530/F	LOC	9 Marina Park, Belfast, BT5 6BA	Single storey rear extension and patio	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0634/NMC	LOC	Mountainview Centre, Norglen Gardens, Belfast, BT11 8EL	Proposed Non-Material Change to LA04/2023/2324/F comprising fenestration and internal layout alterations to apartment blocks C and D	Non Material Change Granted
LA04/2025/1195/CLOPUD	LOC	Lands at the junction of North Street, Carrick Hill and Peters Hill; 1-3 Carrick Hill; 20-152 Peters Hill; 61 Boundary Street; 6-18 Shankill Terrace; 4-160 Shankill Road; and from 32 Townsend Street to the junction with the Shankill Road, Belfast	Confirmation that the Shankill Public Realm project (ref. LA04/2019/0200/F) has lawfully commenced and can be completed under its existing planning permission.	Application Withdrawn
LA04/2025/1814/F	LOC	3 Harberton Avenue, Belfast, BT9 6PH	Construction of new front porch and car port, new front bay window, alterations to window surrounds on ground floor front elevation, 2 storey rear extension, single storey rear extensions and patio areas, new roof covering to existing dwelling, new front boundary entrance pillars and gate with mesh wire fence.	Permission Granted

LA04/2025/1815/DCA	LOC	3 Harberton Avenue, Belfast, BT9 6PH	Partial demolition to front elevation ground floor window surrounds, partial demolition of rear elevations, demolition of front and rear bay windows, demolition of garage, removal of 2 chimneys, removal of existing roof, removal of front entrance gates and demolition of front boundary wall and entrance pillars.	Consent Granted
LA04/2026/0124/DC	LOC	1-5 Gaffikin Street, Belfast, BT12 5FH	Discharge of Condition 3 of planning approval LA04/2020/2105/F - Details of foul and surface water drainage	Condition Discharged
LA04/2026/0487/DC	LOC	3-19 Rydalmere Street, Belfast, BT12 6GF	Discharge conditions 9 of LA04/2020/1944/LBC & 30 of LA04/2020/1943/F - Brick Facade Survey report.	Condition Discharged
LA04/2026/0506/A	LOC	22 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast, BT2 8HS	2 low level signs; 1 fascia entrance sign and 1 wall logo. 2 high level signs; logo and letter signs.	Consent Granted
LA04/2026/0660/CLOPUD	LOC	An Dunan 210 Glen Road, Andersonstown, Belfast, BT11 8BW	Certificate of Lawfulness for a Proposed Use or Development (CLOPUD) for Residential Institution (Class C3 (a) of The Planning (Use Classes) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015) for the provision of residential accommodation and care to people in need of care.	Permitted Development
LA04/2025/1751/F	LOC	55 Newforge Lane, Belfast, BT9 5NW	Two storey side extension and single storey rear extension	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2061/F	LOC	8 Ashfield Drive, Belfast, BT15 3FT	Two storey side extension.	Application Withdrawn

LA04/2023/3656/LBC	LOC	1 Wellington Park Terrace, Belfast, BT9 6DR	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)	Consent Granted
LA04/2023/3795/F	LOC	1 Wellington Park Terrace, Belfast, BT9 6DR	Proposed 360 degree 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 Proposal)	Permission Granted
LA04/2024/1840/F	LOC	28 Laganvale Manor, Stranmillis, Belfast, BT9 5BE	Single storey side and rear extension with associated driveway and carparking space (Amended Description)	Permission Granted
LA04/2024/1882/F	LOC	Rooftop on the former Blackstaff Mill building 77-109 Springfield Road, Belfast, BT12 7AE.	Removal of the existing telecommunications base station on the chimney structure and; Proposed relocation of base station 30m southeast including 6No. antennas on yoke brackets, 3no. 0.3m dishes, 1no. 0.6m dish and 30no. RRU's. The existing electrical distribution board is to be relocated and mounted to an internal wall with 6no. proposed cabinets and 3no. air conditioning units to be installed in the internal equipment room with ancillary development thereto.	Permission Granted

LA04/2024/1884/LBC	LOC	Rooftop on the former Blackstaff Mill building 77-109 Springfield Road, Belfast, BT12 7AE.	Removal of the existing telecommunications base station on the chimney structure and; Proposed relocation of base station 30m southeast including 6No. antennas on yoke brackets, 3no. 0.3m dishes, 1no. 0.6m dish and 30no. RRU's. The existing electrical distribution board is to be relocated and mounted to an internal wall with 6no. proposed cabinets and 3no. air conditioning units to be installed in the internal equipment room with ancillary development thereto.	Consent Granted
LA04/2025/0243/F	LOC	38 Wynchurch Road, Belfast, BT6 0JH	Demolition of garage to side of existing property and replacement with single story extension. Dormer roof extension to rear of property.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/0341/A	LOC	240-242 Ormeau Road Belfast BT7 2FZ	Non-illuminated display board	Consent Refused
LA04/2025/1115/F	LOC	Tennents Tar Distillers Store 9 Airport Road West, Belfast, BT3 9ED	Proposed installation of PV panels.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1108/F	LOC	1 Hawthornden Grange Belfast, Belfast, BT4 3PN	Variation of condition 2 of planning permission LA04/2019/0830/F to amend the approved landscaping scheme (to include the removal of part of the Red Robin hedge along the north boundary of the site)	Permission Granted

LA04/2025/1220/F	LOC	Amazon Distribution Centre (DBT3) Titanic Quarter, Belfast, BT3 9DT	Provision of a Distribution Network Operator (DNO) Ring Main Unit (RMU) in a steel enclosure, an extensible High Voltage (HV) switchboard enclosed by security fencing, and a package Substation housed in a Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP) kiosk to facilitate EV charging points.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1219/F	LOC	Telephone Exchange, 294 Ormeau Road, Belfast, BT7 2GB	Removal of existing 5.5m tower on grillage, supporting 3no. Antennas. Replacement with a new 7.0m tower on grillage, supporting 12no. Antennas. The installation of 24no. ERS' onto replacement tower legs, the internal refreshment of existing ground-based cabin, and all ancillary works (Amended description and drawings)	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1436/MDPA	LOC	Premises at 41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 43a and 55, Tates Avenue, Belfast, BT9 7BY	Section 76 First Shedule Clause 2 Part 2.1- Travel Plan LA04/2021/2544/F	Condition Discharged
LA04/2025/1429/F	LOC	134 Skegoneill Avenue, Belfast, BT15 3JR	Two storey rear extension. Front & rear dormer	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1577/F	LOC	Unit 1, 142 Stewartstown Road, Belfast, BT17 0HW	Proposed Change of Use from Shop (Class A1) to Hot Food Take Away (Sui Generis)	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1867/F	LOC	19 Sandhurst Gardens, Belfast, BT9 5AW	Retention of change of use from dwelling to short term let	Permission Refused
LA04/2025/1925/F	LOC	348 - 350 Ormeau Road, Belfast, BT7 2HL	Temporary retention of boundary fence/hoarding for 3 years to the front and side of site boundary.	Permission Granted

LA04/2025/1960/F	LOC	121 Upper Dunmurry Lane, Dunmurry, Belfast, BT17 0EP	Proposed Extension to side and rear. Re-render and re-roof to portion of existing dwelling	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2066/F	LOC	3 Glengoland Avenue, Belfast, BT17 0HY	Retention of boundary fencing and vehicular access gates	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2075/F	LOC	54 Kirkliston Park, Belfast, BT5 6ED	Single storey rear/ side extensions. Creation of rear patio area and stove flue outlet. 2 No. roof lights to existing dwelling. Replacement of side door with window.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2085/DC	LOC	Royal Ulster Agricultural Society The Kings Hall 488-516 Lisburn Road, Malone Lower, Belfast, BT9 6GW	Discharge condition 6 of LA04/2020/0845/O - Waste Management Plan	Application Withdrawn
LA04/2025/2211/F	LOC	10 Kirkliston Park, Belfast, BT5 6EB	Single storey extension to rear. Rear dormer and loft conversion and patio. Partial demolition of rear wall and rear roof and removal of 3. No. rear windows and rear door.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2238/F	LOC	Flat 1 & 2 212 Antrim Road, Belfast, BT15 2AN	Proposed Change of Use from 2 No. Apartments to a Guest House (7 Bedrooms). Single storey rear extension and partial demolition to premises to facilitate a rear dormer window and alterations to elevations to create new openings.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2138/F	LOC	Westbourne Presbyterian Church 149a Newtownards Road Belfast BT4 1AB	A blitz memorial sculpture, made from glass fibre reinforced concrete, set on a concrete plinth within the grounds of Westbourne Presbyterian Church	Permission Granted

LA04/2025/2153/F	LOC	47 Deramore Park South, Malone Upper, Belfast, BT9 5JY	Single storey front and rear extension, additional velux rooflights, fenestration changes and garden room to rear garden. (Amended Description and Plans)	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2159/F	LOC	21 Ballysillan Road, Belfast, BT14 7QP	First floor rear extension over existing kitchen with new roof lights and associated works.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2189/F	LOC	47 Glengoland Park, Dunmurry, Belfast, BT17 0JB	Retrospective boundary fence and vehicular gates	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0024/F	LOC	7 Glensharragh Avenue, Belfast, BT6 9PD	Change of roof profile from hip to gable and rear dormer	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0081/F	LOC	19 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7EJ	Change of use of ground floor office space to a Private General Practice & Health Care Clinic and all associated site works	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0119/DC	LOC	Stranmillis University College Campus, Stranmillis Road, Belfast, BT9 5DY	Discharge of Condition 17 from LA04/2019/1614/F - Drainage Installation Verification Report	Condition Discharged
LA04/2026/0299/F	LOC	16 Tudor Dale, Belfast, BT4 1SQ	2-storey side extension	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0187/F	LOC	12 Ophir Gardens, Belfast, BT15 5EP	Proposed single storey extension to rear of dwelling and new ground floor window in existing rear return.	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0176/F	LOC	133 Malone Avenue, Belfast, BT9 6EQ	Demolition of existing single storey garage and partial demolition of existing rear and side return of dwelling to accommodate proposed two storey rear extension and single storey rear and side lean to extension	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0177/DCA	LOC	133 Malone Avenue, Belfast, BT9 6EQ	Demolition of existing single storey garage and partial demolition of existing rear and side return of dwelling	Consent Granted

LA04/2026/0182/DC	LOC	Lands north of 15 Mill Race and 15 Belfield Heights and south of 2-15 St Gerards Manor, Ballymurphy, Belfast, Co. Antrim	Discharge Condition 12 of LA04/2022/0129.	Condition Discharged
LA04/2026/0161/F	LOC	18 Hamel Court, Ballymaconaghy, Belfast, BT6 9HX	Installation of roof guard rails	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0180/F	LOC	Global House B & B 87 University Street, Belfast, BT7 1HP	Replace water damaged dormers to the front of the building with new and install an additional dormer to the front of the building.	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0222/F	LOC	11 Sunnyside Street, Belfast, BT7 3EX	Demolition of existing single-storey rear extension, construction of a new single-storey rear extension.	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0218/F	LOC	8 Piney Hills, Belfast, BT9 5NR	Amendment of housetype F1 on plots 8-9 from the previously approved (LA04/2021/0687/F), to include Minor internal amendments and fenestration amendments to eastern elevation.	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0213/CLOPUD	LOC	Diageo Global Supply, 3 Marshalls Road, Belfast, BT5 6SL	Creation of parts store.	Application Withdrawn
LA04/2026/0225/DC	LOC	1 Hospital Road, Belfast, BT8 8JP	Discharge of Condition 5 of LA04/2020/2607/F. Attached is the RSK Final Remedial Strategy.	Condition Discharged
LA04/2026/0244/F	LOC	29 Whitecliff Crescent, Belfast, BT12 7JR	Single-storey rear extension	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0247/F	LOC	58 Ballymurphy Road, Belfast, BT12 7JN	Single-storey rear extension.	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0318/F	LOC	Unit 4 306-310 Ormeau Road, BT7 3GB	Retractable canvas awning to shopfront	Permission Granted

LA04/2026/0328/MDPA	LOC	Lands at the Gasworks Northern Fringe site; bounded to the north by McAuley Street Stewart Street and Raphael Street; Cromac Street to the west; the River Lagan and Belfast-Newry railway line to the east; and the Gasworks Business Park to the south.	Clause 2.1 of the Section 76 Agreement associated with planning permission LA04/2021/1672/O requires a Car Club Strategy to be submitted to the Council prior to residential occupation of the development.	Condition Discharged
LA04/2026/0339/F	LOC	251 Orby Drive, Belfast, BT5 6BE	Demolition of timber/ concrete store and erection of a single storey extension to rear/side.	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0345/DC	LOC	171, 173 and 175 Albertbridge Road, Belfast BT5 4PS	Discharge of condition 3 - LA04/2025/0722/F - ventilation strategy	Condition Discharged
LA04/2026/0411/CLEUD	LOC	Flat 2, 27 Wolseley Street, Belfast, BT7 1LG	Existing House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)	Permitted Development
LA04/2026/0377/MDPA	LOC	57 Dublin Road, Belfast, BT2 7HE	Section 76 First Schedule, Clauses 1.1-1.3 LA04/2020/0761/F- Travel Plan	Condition Discharged
LA04/2026/0381/F	LOC	153 Colinmill, Dunmurry, Belfast, BT17 0AT	Proposed single storey extension to rear of dwelling & level access to rear of dwelling.	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0435/F	LOC	13 Hazel Close, Lagmore, Dunmurry BT17 0XW	Single storey rear extension	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0452/F	LOC	115 Marlborough Park South, Belfast, BT9 6HW	Retrospective two storey side extension with Internal & Façade Alterations	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0466/DC	LOC	Lands at the Gasworks Northern Fringe site; bounded to the north by McAuley Street Stewart Street and Raphael Street; Cromac Street to the west; the River Lagan and Belfast-Newry railway line to the east; and the Gasworks Business Park to the south.	Discharge of condition 6 & and partial discharge of condition 12 of planning approval LA04/2021/1672/O. Verification Report for Blocks 8, 10, 11 and 12 of Site D. Please see accompanying Cover Letter for further details.	Condition Partially Discharged

LA04/2026/0507/CLOPUD	LOC	Site between No's 2a and 4 Hampton Park, Belfast BT7 3JL	Lawful commencement and completion of two storey dwelling, new access & associated site works as per planning approval reference LA04/2018/1725/F.	Permitted Development
LA04/2026/0582/CLOPUD	LOC	The Suffolk Inn 12 Suffolk Road, Belfast, BT11 9RZ	Partial Change of Use from ground floor bar/restaurant (Sui Generis) to Off Licence (A1) and internal reconfiguration.	Permitted Development
LA04/2026/0618/DC	LOC	38-52 Lisburn Road, Malone Lower, Belfast, BT9 6AA	Discharge of condition 2 LA04/2023/3778/F- Written specification and sample panels	Condition Discharged
LA04/2026/0620/DC	LOC	Unit 1 East Belfast Network Centre 55 Templemore Avenue, Belfast, BT5 4FG	Discharge of conditions 2 & 3 of planning application LA04/2025/2086/LBC relating to PV panel details and method statement.	Condition Discharged
LA04/2026/0632/WPT	LOC	32 Myrtlefield Park, Belfast, BT9 6NF	<p>Multi-stem Lime tree to be section felled and removed to ground level or as close to. This tree is located to the right hand side of the property and identified with a red circle on the tree location map.</p> <p>Cherry tree full prune. This tree is located to the rear of the property and identified with a purple circle on the tree location map.</p> <p>Re-planting a heavy standard Silver Birch tree to replace the Lime tree.</p>	Works to Trees in CA Agreed
LA04/2026/0652/F	LOC	47 Old Colin Road, Dunmurry, Belfast, BT17 0NS	1 no. dormer on rear elevation, 1 no. dormer roof window on front elevation and associated internal alterations	Permission Granted

LA04/2026/0703/CLEUD	LOC	15 Elaine Street, Belfast, BT9 5AR	Existing 4 bedroom House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)	Permitted Development
LA04/2026/0684/WPT	LOC	1 Hawthornden Grange, Belfast, BT4 3PN	<p>Client: Paul Simpson Location: 1 Hawthornden Grange Date: 09/04/2026 Prepared by RPatterson PTI.</p> <p>Species: Fagus Sylvatica</p> <p>Height (m): 19</p> <p>Age/Class: Mature</p> <p>Condition: Situated in well drained soil, in the corner of garden beside shed and paved bin store area. Healthy crown. Slight imbalance in crown to Northeast. Multi stemmed to 2 stems from a height of 11m. Slight lean of main trunk towards Northeast (13+14 Hawthornden Lodge) Two major limbs protruding from lower trunk towards Northeast. Occluded wounds from previous work. Summary - Moderate</p> <p>Recommendations: Remove two lowest limbs overhanging properties to NE. Complete prune by 2m.</p> <p>Work Priority: 6 Months</p>	Works to TPO Granted

LA04/2026/0679/DC	LOC	57 Dublin Road, Belfast, BT2 7HE	Discharge Condition 25 of Planning Application LA04/2020/0761/F cladding specification	Condition Partially Discharged
LA04/2026/0763/DC	LOC	140 Donegall Street, Belfast, BT1 2FJ	Verification Report Discharge of condition 7 - LA04/2021/0516/F - Remediation Verification	Condition Discharged
LA04/2026/0817/CLEUD	LOC	18 Collingwood Avenue, Belfast, BT7 1QT	House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)	Permitted Development
LA04/2026/0795/CLEUD	LOC	57 Carmel Street, Belfast, BT7 1QE	Existing 3 bedroom HMO (House in multiple occupation)	Permitted Development
LA04/2024/0593/F	LOC	681 Springfield Road Belfast BT12 7JD	Demolition of existing Clonard Credit Union building and construction of mixed use development consisting of 2No. ground floor retail units, ground floor parking, circulation and bin stores, 3No. first floor apartments, 3No. second floor apartments and communal amenity space at roof level	Permission Granted
LA04/2024/0852/F	LOC	Common Market 16-20 Dunbar Street, Belfast, BT1 2LH	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	Permission Granted
LA04/2024/1503/F	LOC	16 Gilnahirk Park, Belfast, BT5 7DX	Single storey rear and side extension & two storey side extension. Rooflight to front. Canopy area to rear and associated hard & soft landscaping works.	Permission Refused

LA04/2024/1568/DC	LOC	87-91 Botanic Avenue, Belfast, BT7 1JN	Discharge of condition 5 LA04/2016/0737/F - Submission of Methodology Statement detailing all procedures for any demolition works hereby permitted and subsequent repair and rebuild.	Condition Not Discharged
LA04/2024/1741/F	LOC	Cregagh Surgery, 36 Montgomery Road, Belfast, BT6 9HL	Two storey extension to an existing GP surgery. Additional GP and healthcare services, staff facilities, associated site works, boundary treatment and a below ground water treatment works. (Amended Proposal Description) (Additional Information)	Permission Granted
LA04/2024/1917/F	LOC	520a Shore Road, Belfast, BT15 4HF	Erection of a new ground floor entrance & canopy including stepped and ramp approach to the front facade, closure of roller shutter door to the side facade, & re-surfacing of part of existing car parking area. (Retrospective)	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/0328/F	LOC	1 Bapaume Avenue, Belfast, BT6 9JE	Part demolition of rear and side single storey external wall of dwelling and provision of single storey extension to rear and side (AMENDED DRAWINGS).	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/0369/DC	LOC	87-91 Botanic Avenue Belfast, Belfast, BT7 1JN	Discharge of Condition 4 LA04/2016/0758/DCA - Methodology Statement	Condition Not Discharged

LA04/2025/0770/F	LOC	Nos. 14-18 High Street, Belfast BT1 2BD and Nos. 2-4 Winecellar Entry, Belfast BT1 1QN	Proposed change of use with associated external alterations and extensions to provide 36 no. bed hotel with bar/restaurant facilities. Development includes extensions and reconfiguration of upper floor levels to facilitate change of use from Class B1a offices to hotel accommodation and new ground floor frontage to existing bars onto High Street and Winecellar Entry, and all other associated works.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/0772/DCA	LOC	Nos. 14-18 High Street, Belfast BT1 2BD and Nos. 2-4 Winecellar Entry, Belfast BT1 1QN	Proposed change of use with partial demolition to roof and ground floor and extensions to provide 36 no. bed hotel with bar/restaurant facilities. Change of use from Class B1a offices to hotel accommodation and new ground floor frontage to existing bars onto High Street and Winecellar Entry, and all other associated works.	Consent Granted
LA04/2025/0943/F	LOC	26 Innisfayle Road, Belfast, BT15 4ES	Demolition of existing adjoined single storey garage and replacement with proposed 2 storey side extension. (Reduced Scheme)	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1124/F	LOC	23 Kingsberry Park, Belfast, BT6 0HT	Demolition of rear extension and reduction in size of existing garage. Addition of single and two storey rear/side extension and dormer window to the rear.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1131/F	LOC	11-13 Templemore Avenue, Belfast, BT5 4FP	Change of use from betting office (Sui Generis) to coffee shop and bakery (Sui Generis).	Permission Granted

LA04/2025/1210/F	LOC	Unit 5, Donegall Arcade, 5-7 Castle Place, Belfast, BT1 1GA	Proposed change of use at ground and first floor level from retail (Class A1) to fast food restaurant and takeaway including inside seating, external alterations and associated external plant	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1358/F	LOC	2a Ventry Street, Belfast, BT2 7JP	Section 54 to vary condition 6 to planning approval LA04/2023/4469/F to allow amplified sound or live music that does not exceed 80.1dBA (98.5dB, linear) as measured at 1 metre from the source	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1821/F	LOC	124-126 Kingsway, Belfast, BT17 9NP	Change of Use of Existing Petrol Filling Station Kiosk for the Sale of Food and Drink including Consumption on the Premises (Sui Generis)	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1866/DC	LOC	51 Silverstream Gardens ,Belfast, BT14BGS	Discharge of condition 2 of LA04/2023/4460/F- Short term let Management Plan.	Condition Discharged
LA04/2025/1895/F	LOC	35 Wynchurch Avenue, Belfast, BT6 0JP	Single storey rear extension, two storey side and rear extension. (Reduced Scheme)	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1959/F	LOC	Lands at Colin Glen Golf Centre, to the north, east and south of no. 59 Kilwee Lane and south of nos. 5-59 (odds) Kilwee Lane, Dunmurry, Belfast	Proposed extension of existing ball stop fences with overall height ranging from 6-45 metres with associated site works	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/1973/F	LOC	Capital House 1-3 Upper Queen Street and, 34-48 Wellington Place, Belfast, BT1 6FB	Extensions to front and rear of existing building, two storey rooftop extension, refurbishment of existing façade, internal alterations and partial demolition, and all associated site works	Permission Granted

LA04/2025/1974/DCA	LOC	1-3 Upper Queen Street and 34-48 Wellington Place, Belfast, Belfast, BT1 6GF	Partial demolition involving removal of two storey front extension to existing building and associated site works	Consent Granted
LA04/2025/1997/F	LOC	55 Wynchurch Avenue, Belfast, BT6 0JP	Change of roof profile from hipped roof to a pitched roof with new rear dormer and rooflights.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2025/F	LOC	On lands within the roundabout at Sydenham Road and Queens Quay, c.200m south west of the SSE Arena, 2 Queens Quay, Belfast, BT3 9QQ.	Proposed erection of 1no. seahorse sculpture including hard and soft landscaping and all other associated site works.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2024/F	LOC	1 Sperrin Drive, Belfast, BT5 7RY	One and a half storey side extension with dormer windows front and rear. External changes including existing rear dormer extended. Landscaping works with driveway widened.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2081/F	LOC	2 Fortwilliam Demesne, Belfast, BT15 4FD	Single storey side extension. Replacement Patio doors.	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2099/F	LOC	Apartment 1 427 Woodstock Road, Belfast, BT6 8PW	Change of use from existing 1 bedroom ground floor residential apartment (Use Class C1) to short term holiday let accommodation (Sui Generis).	Application Withdrawn
LA04/2025/2113/F	MAJ	St. Marys Christian Brothers Grammar School St Marys Christian Brothers Grammar School 147a Glen Road, Andersonstown, Belfast, BT11 8NR	The construction of a new Sports Hall, Gymnasium and P.E Facility and footbridge connecting to existing GAA playing field	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2200/F	LOC	Community Restorative Justice Ireland (CRJI), 3 Jasmine Way, Belfast, BT17 0FA	Single storey rear extension (Amended description)	Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2241/F	LOC	56a Kings Road, Belfast, BT5 6JL	Construction of two new off-street car parking spaces (amended plans)	Permission Granted

LA04/2026/0080/F	LOC	300 Whitewell Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 7NN	Proposed extension to dwelling and roofspace conversion	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0073/DC	LOC	3-19 (Former Warehouse) Rydalmere Street Rydalmere Street, Belfast, BT12 6GF	Discharge Conditions 20 & 31 of Planning Approval LA04/2020/1943/F - Drainage Assessment Report	Condition Partially Discharged
LA04/2026/0122/F	LOC	12 Riverdale Park Drive, Belfast, BT11 9DN	Single storey rear extension and ramped access to front	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0133/F	LOC	Chestnut Grove 59-61 Somerton Road, Belfast, BT15 4DD	Reconfiguration of residential care facility within existing footprint with changes to external fenestrations to modify/provide new windows and door.	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0179/F	LOC	34 Riverdale Gardens, Belfast, BT11 9DG	Two-storey side and single storey rear extension.	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0354/DCA	LOC	Chestnut Grove, 59-61 Somerton Road, Belfast, BT15 4DD	Partial demolition of internal and external walls to accommodate the reconfiguration of residential care facility within existing footprint with changes to external fenestrations to modify/provide new windows and door.	Consent Granted
LA04/2026/0385/A	LOC	419 - 421 Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 1AQ	New fascia signage	Consent Granted
LA04/2026/0372/CLOPUD	LOC	17a Shanlieve Park, Belfast, BT14 8JE	Creation of shed to rear garden.	Permitted Development
LA04/2026/0373/F	LOC	50 Hillsborough Drive, Belfast, BT6 9DS	Single storey rear extension.	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0392/DC	LOC	Shorts Sports & Recreation Club 366a Holywood Road, Belfast, BT4 1SL	Discharge Condition 11 of planning approval LA04/2025/0624/F - Drainage Assessment	Condition Not Discharged

LA04/2026/0426/F	LOC	45 Bawnmore Road, Belfast, BT9 6LB	Retrospective permission for raised wallplate and replacement roof to existing attached single storey garage.	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0427/DCA	LOC	45 Bawnmore Road, Belfast, BT9 6LB	Retrospective permission for external demolitions to facilitate raised wallplate and replacement roof to existing attached single storey garage.	Consent Granted
LA04/2026/0450/F	LOC	44 Martinez Avenue, Belfast, BT5 5LY	single storey rear extension	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0463/F	LOC	178 Orby Drive, Belfast, BT5 6BB	single storey side extension	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0517/F	LOC	12 Glenfearna Gardens, Belfast, BT17 0YB	Proposed Single Storey Extension to rear of dwelling with internal/ external alterations and level access ramp.	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0605/F	LOC	16a Maryville Park, Belfast, BT9 6LN	Proposed solar slates to front and rear elevation on roof, alterations to windows and rainwater goods. Replacement of front entrance gate with a new iron gate (Amended description and drawings)	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0622/DCA	LOC	16a Maryville Park, Belfast, BT9 6LN	Demolition of windows, window frames, rainwater goods and entrance gate for replacements	Consent Granted
LA04/2026/0606/F	LOC	39 Locksley Park, Belfast, BT10 0AR	Erection of single storey garage to rear to replace existing shed and roof space conversion and fenestration changes	Permission Granted
LA04/2026/0669/DC	LOC	Lands adjacent to and south east of the River Lagan, west of Olympic Way off Queen's Road, Queen's Island, Belfast, BT2 9EQ	Discharge of conditions 13 & 36 of planning application LA04/2021/2280/F - Verification Reports	Condition Discharged

LA04/2026/0677/DC	LOC	Lands to NE of 265 Whiterock Road, Ballymurphy, Belfast, BT12 7FZ	Discharge of Condition 10 of Planning Application Ref. LA04/2021/1447/F - Final Drainage Assessment	Condition Partially Discharged
LA04/2026/0720/DC	LOC	155 Albertbridge Road, Ballymacarret, Belfast, BT5 4PS	Discharge of condition 3 - LA04/2023/2877/F - Drainage Plan	Condition Not Discharged
LA04/2026/0728/DCA	LOC	2 Fortwilliam Demesne, Belfast, BT15 4FD	Removal of existing rear/side windows and patio doors. Partial demolition of rear wall.	Consent Granted
LA04/2026/0799/DC	LOC	Lands at no's 10-22 Ann Street Belfast (including 8-10 Crown Entry and 12 Crown Entry)	Archaeological Programme of Works Discharge of condition no.9 - LA04/2025/0556/F	Condition Not Discharged
LA04/2026/0801/DC	LOC	53 Castlereagh Place, Belfast, BT5 4NN	Discharge of condition no.3 - LA04/2023/3007/F Service Management Plan	Condition Partially Discharged
LA04/2026/0833/DC	LOC	Lands to the rear of 18 The Cottages, Belfast, BT17 0NB	Submission of hard and soft landscaping plan (condition 9 of LA04/2020/2075/F)	Condition Discharged
LA04/2026/0919/CLEUD	LOC	19 Donnybrook Street, Belfast, BT9 7DB	Existing House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)	Permitted Development
LA04/2026/0973/CLEUD	LOC	21 Donnybrook Street, Belfast, BT9 7DB	Existing House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)	Permitted Development
LA04/2026/0915/CLEUD	LOC	76 Tates Avenue, Belfast, BT9 7BZ	Existing House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)	Permitted Development
				Total Decisions

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Live Major Applications not previously considered by Committee @ 09.06.26

Number	Application No.	Category	Location	Proposal	Date Valid	Target Date	Status
1	LA04/2023/3799/F	Major	Vacant lands (partial site of the former Wolfhill Flax Spinning Mill) located to the south, of Wolfhill Manor, north of Wolfhill Grove and west of Mill Avenue, Ligoniel Road, Belfast, BT14 8NR	New single storey 10-class based primary school, separate nursery school accommodation and school meals accommodation to facilitate the relocation of St. Vincent De Paul Primary School and Nursery from existing site on Ligoniel Road, Belfast. Proposal includes new pedestrian and vehicular accesses onto Mill Avenue, car parking, covered cycle storage area and hard play areas. Hard and soft landscaping including wildlife walkway, fencing, retaining walls, underground drainage system to include the reinstatement of underground storm sewer and headwall into adjacent DFI River wayleave. Includes temporary contractors compound and all associated site works.	09-Oct-23	06-May-24	Under Consideration
2	LA04/2023/4181/F	Major	Lands comprising the existing Sydenham Wastewater Pumping Station west of Park Avenue, Connswater River and King George V Playing Fields, to the south of the Sydenham By-Pass, east of The Oval football stadium, north and east of Parkgate Gardens and north of Parkgate Crescent, Parkgate Parade and Mersey Street, Belfast	Demolition of existing Wastewater Pumping Station (WwPS) with reinstatement of site as a landscaped area. Construction of a replacement WwPS including associated control building and hardstanding, the raising of site levels, in-channel works, provision of new rising main, other ancillary buildings, the creation of an access road on lands within the King George V Playing Fields to serve the facility, landscaping and other ancillary works. Provision of a temporary working area on lands within the King George V Playing Fields, the creation of a temporary access road from Mersey Street to facilitate construction traffic on lands to the rear of 1-35 Parkgate Gardens, the creation of a temporary footway adjacent to 88 Park Avenue and other ancillary development and landscaping restoration works.	14-Nov-23	11-Jun-24	Under Consideration
3	LA04/2024/0570/F	Major	Stormont Hotel, 587 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 3LP	Change of use of an existing hotel, conference centre and offices (sui generis) to a 97-bed care home (Use Class C3(b)) and 1,559sqm diagnostic medical facility (Use Class D1(a)), associated access, car parking, landscaping and open space.	04-Apr-24	31-Oct-24	Under Consideration
4	LA04/2024/0569/O	Major	Stormont Hotel, 587 Upper Newtownards Road BT4 3LP and adjacent properties at Castlevue Road (nos. 2, 4, 6, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 & 30), Summerhill Parade (nos. 18, 20 & 22), and rear of 160 Barnetts Road, Belfast (amended address)	Outline planning permission with all matter reserved for independent living (Use Class C1) units and up to 62no. assisted living units (Use Class C3), associated internal access roads, communal open space, revised access from Castlevue Road, associated car parking, servicing, amenity space and landscaping and demolition of dwellings at Castlevue Road (nos. 2, 4, 6, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 & 30) and Summerhill Parade (nos. 18, 20 & 22) (amended description).	04-Apr-24	31-Oct-24	Under Consideration
5	LA04/2024/0910/F	Major	70 Whitewell Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 7ES Site at Hazelwood Integrated College	Redevelopment of Hazelwood Integrated College to include demolition of existing building and development of new school campus, new sports pitch, outdoor play areas, car parking, hard and soft landscaping and retention and refurbishment of the Listed Building (Graymount House) and other associated site works including a temporary mobile village during the construction process.	23-May-24	19-Dec-24	Under Consideration
6	LA04/2024/2024/RM	Major	Royal Ulster Agricultural Society, the Kings Hall, 488-516 Lisburn Road, Belfast, BT9 6GW	41no. retirement living apartments at Plot 6, parking and landscaping in accordance with outline planning permission LA04/2020/0845/O, seeking approval of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping details	18-Dec-24	16-Jul-25	Under Consideration

7	LA04/2025/0012/F	Major	Lands at the Waterworks Park, located off the Cavehill Road; and lands at Alexandra Park, located between Castleton Gardens and Deacon Street; extending along Castleton Gardens and Camberwell Terrace to the road junction approximately 30 metres to the north west of 347 Antrim Road, Belfast, BT15 2HF	<p>Refurbishment and safety work to the Waterworks upper and lower reservoirs, and Alexandra Park Lake reservoir, to be complemented with wider environmental, landscape and connectivity improvements.</p> <p>The reservoir works comprise of a new overflow structure with reinforcement and protection of the return embankment parallel to the by-wash channel at Waterworks Upper reservoir. Repairs to the upstream face of Waterworks Lower reservoir with the addition of wetland planting to reduce the overall capacity of the reservoir. Removal of an existing parapet wall and embankment reinforcement at the Alexandra Park Lake reservoir.</p> <p>Improvements at Waterworks Park comprise the demolition of the existing Waterworks Bothy and replacement with a new building to include public toilets, Changing facilities, multi-purpose community room and kitchenette. Extension to existing Cavehill Road gatehouse building. Entrance improvements, new events space including multipurpose decking; resurfacing of footways; new pedestrian lighting along key routes; a dog park; replacement platforms and viewing area. New 3-on-3 basketball court; replacement surface to existing small sided 3G pitch; and upgrades to existing Queen Mary's playground.</p> <p>Improvements at Alexandra Park include the resurfacing of footways; new pedestrian lighting along key routes; new reinforced grass event space; new lake viewing area; new public toilets and changing places; entrance improvements. 2no existing bridges replaced; new pedestrian entrance; reimagined peace wall; new multi-sport synthetic surface with cover; and upgrades to existing play parks.</p> <p>Streetscape improvements along Camberwell Terrace and Castleton Gardens include resurfacing of footways with new kerbs; resurfaced carriageways and new tactile paving at pedestrian crossings; and all associated works.</p>	20-Dec-24	18-Jul-25	Under Consideration
8	LA04/2024/2134/F	Major	Site of the former Dunmurry Cricket Club, Ashley Park, Dunmurry, Belfast BT17 0QQ, located north of 1-10 Ashley Park and south of 1-20 Areema Grove and Areema Drive, Dunmurry.	Mixed use scheme for new community recreational facilities, including basketball court, parkland and residential development comprising 37no social/affordable housing units with landscaping and associated works.	21-Dec-24	19-Jul-25	Under Consideration
9	LA04/2024/2145/F	Major	Lands at North Foreshore / Giant's Park Dargan Road, Belfast, BT3 9LZ	Creation of a new Adventure Park comprising a community / visitor hub building including café, creche, flexible exhibition / community space, ancillary office space and maintenance yard. Development includes community gardens, bmx track, crazy golf, dog park, walking/running/cycle paths, outdoor amphitheatre, bio diversity zones, and recreational facilities. Associated landscaping and infrastructure (drainage, lighting, car / coach parking, WC block etc).	15-Jan-25	13-Aug-25	Under Consideration
10	LA04/2025/0184/O	Major	38-52 Lisburn Road, Malone Lower, Belfast, BT9 6AA	Seven storey building (39.3m AOD) mixed use development comprising of Use Class B1 (c): Business, Research & Development and Use Class, D1: Community and Cultural Uses, including landscaping, and servicing (Amended Description).	10-Feb-25	08-Sep-25	Under Consideration
11	LA04/2025/0088/F	Major	Lands adjacent and south west of Monagh By-pass, north west of Nos. 17, 19 and 22 Black Ridge Gardens and c.150 metres south east of Nos. 38 to 70 (evens) Black Ridge View (part of the wider Glenmona mixed-use development), Belfast	Proposed mixed use development (in lieu of the previously approved employment zone under LA04/2020/0804/F) comprising a three storey building of 36 no. Category 1 (over 55's) social housing apartments and 7 no. single storey Class B1/B2 Business/Light Industrial Units. Development includes 2 no. access points, car parking, landscaping and all associated site works	17-Feb-25	15-Sep-25	Under Consideration

12	LA04/2025/0974/F	Major	Site to the south of the former Knockbreda High School. Lands bounded by the A55 Upper Knockbreda Road to the south and south-east, Wynchurch Road to the north-east, Knockbreda Primary School to the north and Knockbreda Park to the west.	Development of a new primary school building for Forge Integrated Primary School. including development of a nursery unit, hard and soft play areas, landscaping, car parking, internal drop-off areas and new access arrangements onto the A55 Knockbreda Road via a new signalised junction; demolition of no. 138a Knockbreda Park and associated site works	04-Jun-25	31-Dec-25	Under Consideration
13	LA04/2025/2013/F	Major	Netherleigh House, 1 Massey Avenue, Belfast, BT4 2JP	Change of use of Netherleigh House and existing office blocks (Class B1) to provide residential and nursing care facilities (Class C3 (a) and (b)). Extensions to existing office block including a fourth storey floor, eastern and western gable extension and two front projections from the northern elevation. Erection of 36 no. assisted living apartments over two four storey blocks. Site parking, landscaped amenity areas, woodland trails and all associated site works	18-Nov-25	16-Jun-26	Under Consideration
14	LA04/2025/2018/F	Major	Lands at Donegall Quay, Tomb St. to north of Albert Square, Gamble St. to south of Corporation Sq, Little Patrick St. to east of Nelson St. & under the M3 bridge at Donegall Quay and Corporation St., Belfast, BT1 1AA	Public realm and road improvements including development of urban recreation space below the M3 flyover at Corporation Street / Tomb Street and new public space below the M3 flyover at Donegall Quay.	19-Nov-25	17-Jun-26	Under Consideration
15	LA04/2025/1991/F	Major	Makro, 97 Kingsway, Belfast, BT17 9NS	Subdivision of the existing cash and carry building and the change of use of 4,750 sq,m gross floorspace for use as a Class A1 retail; erection of new loading bay in service yard; minor external alterations to building; reconfiguration of car park.	03-Dec-25	01-Jul-26	Under Consideration
Page 27	LA04/2026/0007/F	Major	Lands at Belfast YMCA, Knightsbridge Park, Stranmillis, Belfast. To the east of Nos. 15; 17; 19; 25; 27; 29; and 35 Knightsbridge Manor. South of Nos. 26 to 34 (evens) Knightsbridge Manor, Nos. 65; 66; and 68 Vauxhall Park, and Nos. 15 and 17 Marylebone Park. West of Nos. 35 and 38 Sharman Drive, and Nos. 39 and 42 Sharman Park, Belfast	Proposed mixed-use development comprising 3G playing pitch with floodlighting; Children's Play Area; Trim Trail; Car Parking; and 24 No. Dwelling Units including a mix of detached, semi-detached and apartment house types. The development also includes site access, internal roads, landscaping and pumping station and all other associated site and access works.	17-Dec-25	15-Jul-26	Under Consideration
17	LA04/2025/2215/F	Major	Halifax Building, 24 Cromac Place, Building, BT7 2JB	Proposed change of use from offices to nursing home comprising 156 no. bedrooms, ancillary scanning unit and all associated accommodation including dining/ café areas, day rooms and lounges, hairdressers, cinema rooms, treatment rooms and internal courtyard. The proposal also includes ancillary offices, landscaping, cycle parking, external alterations and all other site and associated works.	19-Dec-25	17-Jul-26	Under Consideration
18	LA04/2025/2210/O	Major	Lands to the east of Corporation Street, north of Donegall Quay, west and south of Clarendon Dock, south, east and south west of Pilot Street, and south and south east of Corry Road, Belfast (amended address)	Hybrid planning permission is being sought for the following development: Outline Planning Application (no matters reserved) for Plots A & B to provide 456No. residential units (apartments) and 1,600sqm of ground floor commercial uses including retail (Class A1), Financial and Professional (Class A2), Community and Cultural Uses (Class D1), Assembly and Leisure (Class D2), and café, bar and restaurant uses, landscaping, open space, play equipment, public realm improvements and all associated site and access works including servicing from Corporation Street. Outline Planning Application (all matters reserved) for Plots C, D, E and F for a mixed use development comprising residential (apartments and dwellings), a Hotel/Apart Hotel, ground floor commercial uses including retail (Class A1), Financial and Professional (Class A2), Community and Cultural Uses (Class D1), Assembly and Leisure (Class D2), and café, bar and restaurant uses, the change of use (principle only) to the listed Clarendon Building, Furnace House and Pump House (to include cafe and restaurant uses), re-purposing of Clarendon Dock for leisure uses and all associated site, access and infrastructure works.	27-Jan-26	25-Aug-26	Under Consideration

19	LA04/2026/0282/F	Major	29-33 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7EJ	Renewal of application reference LA04/2020/0659/F - Refurbishment of existing four storey terrace including alteration, extension to rear, partial demolition and reinstatement. Part change of use from art galleries to two cafes at ground floor. Retention of offices within existing building at second, third and fourth floor. Erection of new 13 storey aparthotel building to rear and associated works including public realm improvements	13-Feb-26	11-Sep-26	Under Consideration
20	LA04/2026/0291/F	Major	Lands to the north of No. 33 and No. 35 Hampton Park, Galwally, Belfast, BT7 3JP and to the west of Lowry Court, 27 Hampton Park, Galwally, Belfast, BT7 3JY and to the south of 7 and 8 Mornington, Galwally, Belfast, BT7 3JS.	Application to Vary Condition 6 of Z/2007/1401/F (Contamination)	17-Feb-26	15-Sep-26	Under Consideration
21	LA04/2026/0306/F	Major	140 Donegall Street, Belfast, BT1 2FJ	Section 54 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 for non-compliance with planning conditions 15 and 16 of planning permission LA04/2021/0516/F (relating to junction improvements and provision of disabled parking spaces)	19-Feb-26	17-Sep-26	Under Consideration
22	LA04/2026/0496/F	Major	Lands at 3-9 Dalton Street, (bordered by Middlepath Street and Bridge End), Belfast, BT5 4BA	Proposed construction of 325no. apartments, residents' gym and 4no. retail units with associated car parking and landscaping (amendment to previously approved application LA04/2018/2649/F).	19-Mar-26	15-Oct-26	Under Consideration
23	LA04/2026/0515/F	Major	All Saints College Glen Road, Belfast and lands to the rear of Hamill Park and Nos 151 to 165A Glen Road (former Cross & Passion school site).	Proposed construction of a new post-primary school campus on the former Cross & Passion site, with associated landscaping, play areas, new access road, parking and all other associated works. The proposal also includes the demolition of the existing All Saints Glen Road Campus buildings and redevelopment of the site to include new playing fields, changing pavilion and associated parking.	20-Mar-26	16-Oct-26	Under Consideration
Page 28	LA04/2026/0442/F	Major	Land at D3 adjacent to the RSPB Reserve Airport Road West, Belfast, BT3 9DY	Revisions to terrestrial elements of Planning Permission ref. LA04/2016/0421/F (Construction of a new multi-purpose berthing facility at D3) comprising upgrade of existing access track along northeastern boundary of site and installation of associated street lighting/parking area; additional security hut; relocation and extension of main cruise terminal building and associated parking/drop-off areas with covered walkways; additional baggage building; and other associated site works in respect of lighting, landscaping and ancillary infrastructure. Retention of approved cruise quay with minor relocation of mooring dolphins, 25m wide piled relieving slab along quay length, associated hardstanding on hinterland, tower lights (with one to be relocated), security hut, access road adjacent to RSPB lands and other ancillary works.	24-Mar-26	20-Oct-26	Under Consideration
25	LA04/2025/2140/F	Major	Harberton North Special School 29a Fortwilliam Park, Belfast, BT15 4AP	Partial demolition of existing school buildings. Refurbishment of existing building and part single, part two storey extension to front and rear. New parking and drop off areas, play areas and landscaping.	28-Apr-26	24-Nov-26	Under Consideration
26	LA04/2026/0814/F	Major	Nos 128, 128C, 130, 132, 134, 136-138, & 140-144 Kingsway, Dunmurry, Belfast, BT17 9NP	Demolition of existing commercial units, erection of discount foodstore, alterations to car parking layout, alterations to access on Dunmurry Lane, landscaping and associated site works	01-May-26	27-Nov-26	Under Consideration
27	LA04/2026/0701/F	Major	Land adjacent to and south of the junction of London Road and Lismore Street, Belfast	Residential development of 24no. apartments in 8no. blocks, 44no. semi-detached houses and 1no. detached house (69no. units in total) and associated ancillary works	07-May-26	03-Dec-26	Under Consideration

Planning Applications Discussed at Committee Between 01 Apr 2019 and 09 Jun 2026

Decision Description	Totals
	22
Application Withdrawn	
Consent Granted	1
Consent Refused	
Permission Granted	7
Permission Refused	
Total	30

Application No.	Location	Proposal	Category	Date Valid	Statutory Target Date	Statutory Target Weeks	Current number of Weeks	Committee Date	Weeks between Valid date and Comm date	Weeks Since Committee	Previous New Non-statutory Target Date	New Non-statutory Target Date	Reason decision not issued
LA04/2022/2059/F	Lands south of 56 Highcairn Drive Belfast BT13 3RU Site located at junction between Highcairn Drive and Dunboyne Park Belfast.	Social Housing Development comprising of 12 no. 3p/2b semi-detached dwelling houses with incurtilage parking and associated site works. (amended description and site location plan)	LOC	04-Nov-22	17-Feb-23	15	188	29/06/2023	33	153	31/05/2026	Unknown	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement - land ownership issue resolved but now issue with status of the applicant
Page 29 LA04/2023/4543/F	885 Shore Road, Belfast, BT36 7DH	Proposed new changing pavilion, enhancing grounds entrances including turnstiles, ancillary facilities and upgrade to existing car park. Proposed 3G surfacing to existing grass pitch with flood lighting.	LOC	01-Feb-24	16-May-24	15	123	17/06/2025	71	51			Permission Granted
LA04/2024/1036/F	Lands to the east of the River Lagan located between Lagan Gateway Phase 1 and Belvoir Park Forest, running adjacent to the west of Belvoir Park Golf Club and approximately 120 metres to the east of Newtownbreda Water Treatment Plant, Galwally Ave, Belfast BT8 7YA.	Lagan Gateway Phase 2 – Proposed greenway connection extending between Lagan Gateway Phase 1 at Annadale Embankment to Belvoir Forest Park. Comprising compacted gravel paths; a new elevated (4-5 meter high) timber boardwalk (approximately 85m long); landscaping works, new cycle stands, bollards, seats and bins; and all associated works	LOC	10-May-24	23-Aug-24	15	109	17/06/2025	57	51	Unknown	Unknown	Further information received from applicant following request from DAERA NIEA and NIEA reconulted

LA04/2025/0535/F	Lands West of Monagh By-Pass South of Upper Springfield Road & 30-34 Upper Springfield Road & West of Aitnamona Crescent & St Theresa's Primary School. North and East of 2-22 Old Brewery Lane, Glanaulin, 137-143a Glen Road & Airfield Heights & St Mary's CBG School Belfast	Variation of conditions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 14, 17, 18, 19, 36, 37 and 41 of approval LA04/2023/2390/F and LA04/2020/0804/F to facilitate removal of 31 previously approved dwellings and retaining structure along northern boundary of site adjacent to Upper Springfield Road. Retention of existing sloping ground levels and landscaping at this location.	MAJ	27-May-25	23-Dec-25	30	54	17/06/2025	3	51	30/06/2026	31/07/2026	Awaiting conclusion of S77 agreement (amendment to S76 agreement). Further information submitted following request from DfI Roads and DfI Roads reconsulted
LA04/2024/1865/O	Land between No 22 Squires View and Nos 57 & 59 Squires Hill Road, Belfast.	3no. detached dwellings part 2 storey part 3 storey (amended plans)	LOC	28-Oct-24	10-Feb-25	15	84	12/08/2025	41	43	30/06/2026	31/08/2026	Late objections received. Additional information received from applicant regarding land stability issue. New objection from Shared Environmental Services being considered. To be reported back to Committee
LA04/2025/1454/F	The Lockhouse 13 River Terrace Belfast BT7 2EN	New community wellbeing centre and cafe extension to existing lockhouse building	LOC	17-Sep-25	31-Dec-25	15	38	09/12/2025	11	26			Permission Granted
LA04/2025/0605/F	341-345 Albertbridge Road, Ballymacarret, Belfast, BT5 4PY	Erection of a four storey building to create 29no. short-term let accommodation units with ancillary roof-mounted solar panels	LOC	09-Apr-25	23-Jul-25	15	61	17/02/2026	44	16	TBC	TBC	Application considered at February 2026 Committee following site visit

LA04/2025/0288/F	Existing taxi passenger terminal and former retail unit located within 35a King Street, Belfast, BT1 1HU.	Retrospective change of use from ground floor taxi passenger terminal, cafe, office and newsagent to a Homeless Centre, Category D1(B). The centre will provide meals, washing and changing facilities and an internal social amenity area for users. The centre will operate Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week from 4:00 pm up until 10:00 pm (Amended Description)	LOC	11-Mar-25	24-Jun-25	15	65	17/02/2026	49	16	30/06/2026	30/06/2026	Application to be reported back to Committee at June meeting following consultation with BCC Environmental Health
LA04/2022/0809/F Page 31	Lands to the south and west of Woodland Grange to the north of Blacks Gate and to the east of Moor Park Mews Belfast.	Amendments to approved schemes ref. Z/2008/0993/F (erection of 53 No. dwellings) & ref. Z/2013/0120/F (erection of 46 No. dwellings); to reduce overall density from 99 No. dwellings to 92 No. dwellings and associated and ancillary works.	MAJ	21-Apr-22	17-Nov-22	30	216	17/02/2026	199	16	30/06/2026	30/06/2026	Amended road layout (PSD) drawings submitted by applicant following comments from DfI Roads. DfI Roads reconsulted
LA04/2025/0463/F	Decco Ltd 1-5 Redcar Street, Belfast, BT6 9BP	Proposed change of use of Vacant Warehouse to indoor Padel Court Facility to include, Cafe, Changing rooms, Gym, Picklecourts and ancillary site development works	LOC	26-Mar-25	09-Jul-25	15	63	10/03/2026	49	13	31/05/2026	Unknown	Delegated authority sought to resolve final response from NIW. Discussions ongoing
LA04/2025/0574/F	Surface level car park at lands to east of Lanyon Place Station Mays Meadow, Belfast, BT1 3NR	Erection of eight storey building comprising seven floors of grade A office accommodation, ground floor retail / business units together with car parking (15 no. spaces), cycle parking and plant areas: and public realm improvements including dedicated drop-off area to front of building	MAJ	17-Apr-25	13-Nov-25	30	60	10/03/2026	46	13	31/05/2026	30/06/2026	Applicant to address issues raised by DfI Roads

LA04/2025/0594/F	163 Ballygomartin Road, Belfast, BT13 3NA	Change of use from 4 bedroom residential property (C1) with to 5 bed HMO with occupancy of 5 (Sui Generis)	LOC	30-Apr-25	13-Aug-25	15	58	10/03/2026	44	13	N/A	To be reconsidered	Deferred for Site Visit. Consulting NIW
LA04/2025/1002/F	24 Rutherglen Street, Belfast, BT13 3LS	Change of use from 4 bed residential dwelling (C1) to 5 bedroom HMO (suis generis) with occupancy for 5 people	LOC	17-Jul-25	30-Oct-25	15	47	10/03/2026	33	13	N/A	To be reconsidered	Deferred for Site Visit. Consulting NIW
LA04/2025/1003/F	81-107 York Street, Belfast, BT15 1AT	Proposed use of 300 No. Student Bedrooms/Studios as Short Term Let Accommodation outside of term time.	LOC	16-Jun-25	29-Sep-25	15	51	10/03/2026	38	13	N/A	31/05/2026	S76 being signed, then to issue
LA04/2023/3795/F	1 Wellington Park Terrace, Belfast, BT9 6DR	Proposed 360 degree 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 Proposal)	LOC	13-Jul-23	26-Oct-23	15	152	17/04/2026	144	7			Permission Granted
Page 32 LA04/2023/3656/LBC	1 Wellington Park Terrace, Belfast, BT9 6DR	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)	LOC	16-May-24	29-Aug-24	15	108	21/04/2026	100	7			Consent Granted
LA04/2024/0852/F	Common Market 16-20 Dunbar Street, Belfast, BT1 2LH	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	LOC	03-Jun-24	16-Sep-24	15	105	21/04/2026	98	7			Permission Granted
LA04/2021/2839/F	29-32 College Gardens Belfast BT9 6BT	Proposed change of use from offices to 17no. 1 bedroom and 2no. 2 bedroom apartments with alterations to rear facade and dormers.	LOC	13-Dec-21	28-Mar-22	15	234	21/04/2026	227	7	N/A	30/06/2026	Decision notice being drafted for issue
LA04/2025/1350/F	29 GLENCAIRN STREET EDENDERRY BELFAST BT13 3LT	Change of Use from 3 bed Dwelling (Class C1) to 5-bed, 5-person HMO (sui generis)	LOC	24-Jul-25	06-Nov-25	15	46	21/04/2026	38	7	N/A	30/06/2026	Drafting refusal reasons

LA04/2025/2096/F	Land adjacent to Quay Gate House 15 Scrabo Street Belfast BT5 4D: footpaths and public realm at Scrabo Street Station Street and Middlepath Street.	Variation of Condition 5 of Planning Permission LA04/2019/2387/F relating to Noise Impact Assessment.	MAJ	04-Dec-25	02-Jul-26	30	27	21/04/2026	19	7	N/A	30/06/2026	Decision notice being drafted for issue
LA04/2025/2113/F	St. Marys Christian Brothers Grammar School St Marys Christian Brothers Grammar School 147a Glen Road, Andersonstown, Belfast, BT11 8NR	The construction of a new Sports Hall, Gymnasium and P.E Facility and footbridge connecting to existing GAA playing field	MAJ	09-Dec-25	07-Jul-26	30	26	21/04/2026	19	7			Permission Granted
LA04/2025/2138/F	Westbourne Presbyterian Church 149a Newtownards Road Belfast BT4 1AB	A blitz memorial sculpture, made from glass fibre reinforced concrete, set on a concrete plinth within the grounds of Westbourne Presbyterian Church	LOC	03-Feb-26	19-May-26	15	18	21/04/2026	11	7			Permission Granted
LA04/2022/0071/LBC	29-32 College Gardens Belfast BT9 6BT	Proposed change of use from offices to 17no. 1 bedroom and 2no. 2 bedroom apartments with alterations to rear facade and dormers.	LOC	14-Dec-21	29-Mar-22	15	234	21/04/2026	227	7	N/A	30/06/2026	Decision notice being drafted for issue
Page 33 LA04/2026/0393/F	Lands at the Titanic Quarter, between Hamilton Road, Queens Road and Sydenham Road. Immediately NE, E and SE of Belfast Metropolitan College, approximately 150m SE of Titanic Hotel, 8 Queens Road, Belfast, BT3 9DT.	Temporary planning approval for a caravan / campervan / motorhome site, with ancillary facilities including communal recreational spaces, toilets, showers, waste disposal points, food and drink area, site office, waste collection, lights, storage areas and all associated temporary structures and works	MAJ	06-Mar-26	02-Oct-26	30	14	19/05/2026	10	3	N/A	30/06/2026	Decision notice being drafted for issue
LA04/2025/1661/F	River bank approximately 150m north east of Shaws Bridge Car Park, Belfast, BT9 5YN	Installation of a new floating pontoon to replace the existing wooden jetty.	LOC	27-Oct-25	09-Feb-26	15	32	19/05/2026	29	3	N/A	30/06/2026	DfC HED requested further information regarding materials
LA04/2025/2033/F	The Maynard Sinclair Pavilion Stormont Estate, Belfast, BT4 3TA	Variation of conditions, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 24, 25 and 27 of planning approval LA04/2023/2459/F to allow for phasing of the development.	MAJ	12-Dec-25	10-Jul-26	30	26	19/05/2026	22	3			Permission Granted

LA04/2025/2090/F	38 Hillhead Avenue, Belfast, BT11 9GD	Creation of hardstanding and widening of vehicular access to front of dwelling. (Retrospective)	LOC	04-Dec-25	19-Mar-26	15	27	19/05/2026	23	3	N/A	30/06/2026	Decision notice being drafted for issue
LA04/2024/1646/F	46-50 Gilnahirk Road, Belfast, BT5 7DG	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	LOC	01-Oct-24	14-Jan-25	15	88	19/05/2026	85	3	N/A	30/06/2026	Refusal reason being drafted

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Subject:	Northern Ireland Audit Office – Strategic Review of the Planning Appeals Commission
Date:	16 June 2026
Reporting Officer(s):	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
Contact Officer(s):	Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management) Dermot O’Kane, Acting Planning Manager (Development Plan and Policy)

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	This report provides an update and summary of the Northern Ireland Audit Office’s Strategic review of the Planning Appeals Commission report which was published in May 2026.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	Members are asked to note the contents of the report
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) conducted a strategic review of the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC), the independent body responsible for handling examinations of Local Development Plan documents, planning appeals and providing recommendations on major planning decisions in Northern Ireland.

3.2	<p>The review assessed the PAC's performance, governance, and impact on the wider planning system. The final report was published on the 21 May 2026 and is included at Appendix 1.</p>
3.3	<p>Key Findings</p> <p>The report identified a number of key findings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Significant delays and backlogs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PAC has experienced substantial delays across its workstreams, particularly in complex “Hear and Report” cases involving regionally significant developments. • Many major cases have taken several years to progress, with none of those referred since 2021 completed at the time of review. • Planning appeal decision times increased significantly (from 23 weeks in 2016–17 to 73 weeks in 2024–25), though recent improvements have reduced this for newer cases. • These delays have contributed to wider inefficiencies across the planning system and can extend overall decision timelines to many years. 2. Economic and environmental impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delays are discouraging investment, reducing confidence among developers and stakeholders, and slowing delivery of major infrastructure and renewable energy projects. • Prolonged timelines risk undermining climate targets and mean Local Development Plans may be outdated before adoption. 3. Resource constraints and organisational challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PAC has faced significant staffing challenges, including loss of experienced commissioners and reliance on newly appointed staff requiring training. • Resource limitations have constrained its ability to manage complex cases, contributing directly to backlogs. • Funding is limited, with minimal cost recovery (less than 3% of expenditure from fees), and no charges applied to major referred cases. 4. Weak governance, accountability and oversight <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PAC operates as a Tribunal Non-Departmental Public Body and is fully independent in its decision-making. However, it has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No statutory performance targets ○ Limited accountability to government or the Assembly ○ Weak performance monitoring arrangements • Compared to other jurisdictions (e.g. England and Ireland), Northern Ireland lacks clear targets, accountability structures, and performance incentives. 5. Poor coordination across the planning system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ineffective communication and engagement between the PAC, Department for Infrastructure (Dfi), and other stakeholders has contributed to delays. • Lack of shared planning, prioritisation, and information exchange exacerbates inefficiencies.
3.4	<p>Overall Conclusion</p> <p>The report concludes that the PAC plays a critical role in ensuring independent planning decisions and access to justice. However, due to delays, resourcing issues, and weak governance arrangements, it is currently seen as a barrier to timely development. The NIAO concludes that the PAC is not delivering value for money and that significant reform is required. The report therefore makes a number of key recommendations:</p>

	<p>1. Fundamental review The Department of Justice should urgently arrange to carry out a fundamental review of the PAC including its status, statutory structure and associated governance, oversight and accountability arrangements. In doing so it should liaise closely with key stakeholders.</p> <p>2. Improved performance management More certainty and confidence around the timescales for delivery of PAC caseloads is essential. Pending the outcome of a fundamental review, we recommend that the PAC should develop and publish detailed plans to clear the long-standing cases in each workstream. These plans should include timelines for clearing backlogs and regular monitoring by NICTS.</p> <p>3. Reform funding and cost recovery Pending the outcome of a fundamental review, we recommend that the PAC, working with the Department and DfI as appropriate, should carry out a review of the current appeal fees and charging regime, alongside performance reporting and monitoring, with a view to improving cost recovery.</p> <p>4. Enhanced collaboration While it is important that the PAC retains its independence in decision-making, it is a key part of the planning process and a shared commitment to improving delivery is urgently required. Pending the outcome of a fundamental review, we recommend that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PAC, the Department and DfI should work together to ensure the operational delivery of new work allocated to the PAC is assessed and adequately resourced ahead of its introduction. • The PAC and DfI should agree processes to ensure that administrative issues with the potential to delay or frustrate a public local inquiry or hearing are fully understood and resolved before the inquiry or hearing commences. • The PAC should put in place a process of regular engagement with other parts of the planning system, including DfI and councils, to provide it with an early indication of issues in the planning system so that workloads and prioritisation can be properly planned. <p>5. Stronger oversight The Department must immediately strengthen its oversight and governance of the PAC so far as the current statutory structure allows. Pending the outcome of a fundamental review, we recommend that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department should immediately undertake a review of the existing governance arrangements for the PAC, with a view to identifying additional accountability and oversight mechanisms that can be put in place within the current statutory structure. • The PAC should develop and publish specific, measurable key performance indicators and timelines for different workstreams and consult with the Department as to any additional financial or administrative support required to achieve these. The PAC's annual reporting should include a clear assessment of whether key metrics have been achieved and any remedial action which is required. • The Department and the PAC should work together to agree and publish new administrative performance standards in a revised Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) within the next six months and then continue to review the MoU on an ongoing basis.
4.0	Financial & Resource Implications

4.1	There are no financial or resource implications as a direct result of this report.
5.0	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
5.1	There are no equality or good relations implications as a result of the report or a need for a rural needs assessment at this time.
6.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Northern Ireland Audit Office - Strategic Review of the Planning Appeals Commission (May 2026)

DRAFT



A Strategic Review of the Planning Appeals Commission

**For further information about the
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Audit Office 2026

This report has been prepared under Article 8 of the Audit (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 for presentation to the Northern Ireland Assembly in accordance with Article 11 of the Order.

The Comptroller and Auditor General is the head of the Northern Ireland Audit Office. She and the Northern Ireland Audit Office are totally independent of Government.

She certifies the accounts of all Government Departments and a wide range of other public sector bodies; and she has statutory authority to report to the Northern Ireland Assembly on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which departments and other bodies have used their resources.

Dorinnia Carville *Northern Ireland Audit Office*
Comptroller and Auditor General 21 May 2026

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List of Abbreviations

ACP	An Coimisiún Pleanála (Republic of Ireland)
ABP	An Bord Pleanála (former Irish planning appeals body)
DfI	Department for Infrastructure
DoE	Department of the Environment (former)
DoJ	Department of Justice
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
IE	Independent Examination
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LDP	Local Development Plan
LPP	Local Policies Plan
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDPB	Non Departmental Public Body
NIAO	Northern Ireland Audit Office
NICTS	Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
OFMDFM	Office of the First and Deputy First Minister
PAC	Planning Appeals Commission
PINS	Planning Inspectorate (England)
PIP	Planning Improvement Programme
PS	Plan Strategy
TEO	The Executive Office
WAC	Water Appeals Commission

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Background

1. The Planning Act (NI) 2011 established the current two-tier planning system in Northern Ireland and, since April 2015, the responsibility for delivering most operational planning functions passed from central government to local councils. The Department for Infrastructure ('DfI') retained a central role under the two-tier system, with the responsibility for preparing regional planning policy and legislation, as well as monitoring and reporting on the performance of the councils in delivering their planning functions. DfI also retained responsibility for determining a small number of planning applications that are either Regionally Significant or that it calls-in, usually where the application raises issues of such importance that their impact is considered to extend to a sub-regional or regional level.
2. The Planning Appeals Commission ('the PAC') is an independent body which deals with a wide range of planning issues. The PAC hears and decides on all planning appeals made by applicants¹ against council planning refusals or non-determination cases (Hear and Decide). In these instances, the PAC is the final decision-maker, and its decisions on appeals can only be challenged on a point of law by way of a judicial review.
3. The PAC also makes recommendations on a range of cases referred to it by government departments or arising from proposed decisions of departments (Hear and Report). Many of these are Regionally Significant applications which have the potential to make a critical contribution to the economic and social success of Northern Ireland as a whole. These planning applications are processed by DfI and reach the PAC by one of two routes: DfI calls a public local inquiry; or DfI issues a notice of opinion to approve or refuse an application, and the applicant or local council requests an opportunity to appear before, and be heard before, the PAC or a person appointed by DfI for that purpose. Called-in applications are generally processed by the local council until DfI decides to call the application in for decision. In all instances, the PAC's report and recommendations are advisory. However, in making the final decision, DfI normally relies on the detailed recommendations of the PAC report.
4. Under the Hear and Report workstream the PAC also conducts Independent Examinations of councils' Local Development Plans ('LDPs'). Each council is required to prepare a plan which will guide future development, ensuring sufficient land is available for housing, employment and community facilities while protecting the environment. The PAC reports to DfI on each council's development plan, considering its contents and whether it has taken account of regional government policy and will advise DfI as to whether the plan is legally compliant and sound. It can also provide proposed amendments to make a development plan sound. DfI will consider the PAC report and based on this review it will issue a Direction as to whether the development plan should be adopted, modified, or withdrawn by the council.
5. The PAC is established in legislation and is classified as a Tribunal Non-Departmental Public Body ('NDPB'), a form of public body that has jurisdiction in a specialised area of law and operates independently of government ministers. The PAC is therefore operationally independent from any government department and the rest of the planning system. It operates under the supervisory jurisdiction of the courts, and its decisions are open to challenge on a point of law by application to the High Court for judicial review.

¹ Those seeking access to justice in appealing the decision made by the authority (council) are termed appellants, however this report uses the term 'applicants' in reference to Hear and Decide work, as only the applicant can appeal the council's decision in Northern Ireland.

6. The PAC receives financial and administrative support from its sponsor department, the Department of Justice ('the Department'), through the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service ('NICTS'). The PAC is wholly independent of NICTS in respect of its decision-making and the operation of the appeals and hearings, inquiries and examination processes, although it remains accountable to NICTS for the financial and administrative support it receives. In 2024-25, the PAC received £2.7 million of funding from NICTS. Despite this financial support, the PAC maintains complete autonomy over its operational performance and decision-making. It is not accountable for this to any part of government or the Assembly for its operational performance.

Key findings

There have been significant backlogs and delays within PAC workstreams

7. All elements of the planning system consistently struggle to meet performance targets, however the backlogs in respect of Regionally Significant applications are particularly serious. Many of these applications have been referred to the PAC for public local inquiry or hearing (Hear and Report) and are often the most complex and significant developments in Northern Ireland. They have encountered considerable delays with the PAC after having spent many years within the planning system prior to the PAC inquiry or hearing.
8. In August 2025, there were 20 'live' Hear and Report cases with the PAC which are listed in **Appendices 1 and 2**. The figure of 20 includes Regionally Significant applications, call-ins, water public inquiries and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) determination hearings, but excludes LDPs. On average these cases had been referred to the PAC over two years ago, however almost half had been referred to the PAC more than three years previously. We note that six of these cases relate to the Curriginalt project (Dalradian). None of the cases that DfI had referred to the PAC since 2021 were completed at the time of our review, some four years later. In relation to this the PAC had told DfI for a number of years that it did not have the capacity to deal with new cases but that cases had continued to be referred to it. We note that no new Hear and Report cases have been passed to PAC from DfI since September 2024.
9. DfI provided us with a list of Hear and Report cases that had been passed to PAC since 2016 on which decisions subsequently had been reached. Based on these figures, on average there were 107 weeks, or around two years, between DfI's initial referral and the PAC issuing its report and recommendations. However, it is important to note that when cases are passed by DfI to PAC, in some cases it can be several weeks or months before all information is actually received by PAC. The PAC told us that when this is taken into account the period between referral and the PAC report being published was actually 75 weeks.
10. Timescales for conducting Independent Examinations of LDPs are also significant, with examinations regularly taking several years to progress between councils, DfI and the PAC. Currently, six of the eleven local councils' plans have been through the process to produce and adopt their Plan Strategies. Total timescales for this ranged from 22 to 43 months, with a significant proportion of this time spent on the PAC independent examination process (between 16 and 28 months). The full LDP process, which involves councils, PAC and DfI, is unlikely to conclude until the mid-2030s, almost two decades after it started. We note that there is currently no LDP work with the PAC for consideration.

- 11.** Following a period of upheaval, including significant resourcing issues and the impact of the pandemic, considerable backlogs and delays accumulated in the Hear and Decide (appeals) workstream. Between 2016-17 and 2024-25, the number of appeals received by the PAC reduced from around 300 per year to just over 200. However, over the same period, decision-making timeframes increased substantially from an average of 23 weeks in 2016-17 to 73 weeks in 2024-25. At the peak, in 2022-23, 379 cases were in hand with the PAC at the year end. Actions taken by NICTS and the PAC to support improved delivery have resulted in improvements in this workstream and cases that were submitted in 2024 took an average of 25 weeks to be decided.
- 12.** Delays in decision-making are having major economic and environmental impacts. The planning system has the potential to make an important contribution to much needed development in Northern Ireland. We undertook a range of engagement with representatives from the business, renewable energy and local government sectors, all of whom raised significant concerns about the impact of delays on the regionally significant and called-in projects that are being held up in the PAC, as well as more generally across the planning system in Northern Ireland. Long delays and a lack of certainty around timescales make Northern Ireland a less attractive place for investment and development.

There is an urgent need to review and reform the PAC's governance and accountability arrangements

- 13.** The statutory structure of the PAC as a Tribunal NDPB means that it is the only part of the planning system that has no statutory or formal targets for processing times. NICTS told us that this significantly constrains its oversight of the performance of the PAC. Instead, the PAC appraises its own performance against self-determined priorities and objectives. None of the PAC's Corporate Plan objectives are specific and there are no targets for either the volume or timeliness of decision-making, so it is difficult to see how the performance of the PAC can be robustly assessed.
- 14.** We analysed Northern Ireland's planning appeal, public inquiry and hearing arrangements alongside those in both England and the Republic of Ireland, and while direct comparisons are difficult due to the different mechanisms, statutory structures and processes involved, we consider that lessons can be learned from how other jurisdictions structure and perform their work. Northern Ireland is the only jurisdiction where the body responsible for planning appeals, public inquiries and hearings is not an Executive Agency and therefore not accountable to either a Minister or the Assembly. Whilst we fully understand the need for the PAC's work to be conducted independently, the absence of meaningful, time-bound targets and adequate accountability mechanisms arising from its current statutory structure is not acceptable and needs to be resolved.
- 15.** In the context of the backlogs and delays, oversight of the PAC needs to be significantly strengthened. The Department has a key role as the sponsor department, through NICTS, in providing funding to the PAC. As the sponsor department it is responsible for ensuring that the PAC is delivering value for money in the same way as any other publicly funded body within its departmental boundary, while allowing the PAC to retain its independence in its operational decision-making.

16. NICTS pointed to the work it had undertaken with PAC, including the implementation of a new case management system, relocating the PAC to new premises, new recruitment processes for Commissioners and regular engagement with the Chief Commissioner as evidence of oversight. However, it also recognised that there have been issues with the PAC's delivery but considers that its oversight of the PAC's performance is constrained by the existing statutory structure and by the need to respect constitutional boundaries, given the PAC's status as a Tribunal NDPB.

A range of factors have contributed to backlogs and delays, but the PAC's resourcing has been a particular problem

17. The PAC has experienced a considerable period of upheaval, including the loss of a significant number of experienced Commissioners through retirement. Since 2017-18, eleven Commissioners have left the PAC, at all levels from Commissioner to Deputy Chief Commissioner.
18. Since 2021, there have been 17 new appointments to the PAC, including 14 new Commissioners. The PAC told us that it was difficult to expect people with limited or no background in a quasi-judicial role to undertake the work of Senior Commissioner from appointment, which has had implications for performance. This meant that significant delays built up in the Hear and Report workstream which could only be taken forward by experienced Senior Commissioners whilst new recruits had built up the capacity to undertake such work. In this context, the more complex work continues to be delayed, and the PAC told us it is likely to be 2026-27 before it expects to be fully operational.
19. Cost recovery is also a contributing factor. Fees are charged for appeals received by the PAC (under the Hear and Decide route) and are set by the Planning Fees (Deemed Planning Applications and Appeals) Regulations 2015. These regulations prescribe the fees to be charged for planning appeals and deemed planning applications, with both sets of fees having been uplifted once since 2015. The planning appeals fee is £150 per appeal, regardless of the scope and scale of the development. DfI is responsible for setting planning fees. Both the Department for Justice fees for appeals and deemed applications and DfI's planning fees have been uplifted by 19 per cent since 2019. DfI recently announced a further inflationary uplift of 2.1 per cent for 2025 and the Department has prepared a draft statutory instrument with a view to mirroring this increase, subject to the outcome of consultation.
20. There are no charges for any aspect of the Hear and Report work (including Regionally Significant, called-in and LDP independent examinations) referred to the PAC by DfI. DfI receives the planning fee for Regionally Significant applications, which can be considerable, but none of this is passed on to the PAC under the current arrangements. DfI does not receive a fee for work when an application is called-in from councils. The PAC told us that additional income from cost recovery would allow it to increase its Commissioner cohort and therefore lead to improved performance.

Poor relationships and a lack of effective engagement with other parts of the planning system are contributing to delays

- 21.** The relationship between DfI and the PAC is an important one, as the majority of Regionally Significant Hear and Report work comes from DfI, and the PAC relies on the quality and completeness of information to be able to conduct its hearings and inquiries efficiently and effectively.
- 22.** We found instances where a lack of communication and effective engagement between the PAC and DfI has contributed to public local inquiry and hearing delays and postponements. We also heard criticisms that the PAC has little engagement with other elements of the planning system, in particular local councils.
- 23.** Throughout our review and subsequent clearance process, the PAC has emphasised its independent role and contended that this requires it to have limited engagement with other parts of the planning system. While it is important that the PAC retains independence in its decision-making, it is a key part of the planning process and independence does not prevent structured engagement, information exchange, or clear governance arrangements. It is essential that the PAC better engages with and informs other stakeholders, especially in relation to Hear and Report work.

There have been recent improvements in some aspects of delivery, but challenges lie ahead

- 24.** The PAC acknowledges that its delivery has not been at the required level for the last number of years but has implemented a range of changes aimed at improving delivery. Cumulatively, these changes are beginning to make an impact, particularly on Hear and Decide caseloads. In the PAC's view, its issues have only been due to resourcing, and it considers that it has taken all relevant action to progress cases, however we have identified a range of other issues which have contributed to poor delivery, including our concerns with communication, effective engagement, governance and statutory structure arrangements.
- 25.** Due to the ongoing performance and resourcing issues of the PAC, there have been repeated calls, including from the PAC itself, for DfI to use its powers under the Planning Act 2011 to appoint individuals outside of the PAC to conduct inquiries and hearings to help clear the backlog of cases referred by DfI. In March 2025, the Infrastructure Minister announced £3 million funding from the Transformation Programme which will be used to help address pressures within the planning system. This funding will allow DfI to appoint its own independent inspectors to undertake major Hear and Report work as an alternative option to the PAC. This project is in the early stages, and it is not yet clear what impact the appointment of these new inspectors will have on the work of the PAC.
- 26.** While progress has been made on the appeals backlog recently, significant challenges remain, especially on the Hear and Report workstream. The PAC told us that it has planned and profiled this work to commence in early 2026-27, however a range of issues may impact its ability to progress this work, the majority of which are outside of its control. These include the implementation of new workstreams with no associated resources and the increasing complexity of cases, particularly in relation to environmental issues. Processes need to be put in place to deal with these issues to ensure that the improved delivery on appeals is maintained and that Hear and Report caseloads progress as planned. This may include the need for legislative changes which would also be outside of the Commission's control.

Disagreement with the Planning Appeals Commission

27. The Chief Commissioner of the Planning Appeals Commission has challenged our report conclusions on the basis of Article 8 of the Audit (Northern Ireland) Order 1987. We are satisfied that the issues we have identified and reported on relate to the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission in accordance with the statutory remit of the C&AG.

Conclusions and recommendations

28. A well-functioning planning system is vital to facilitating economic growth and instilling confidence in potential investors. The PAC is a key part of the planning process in Northern Ireland, providing access to justice and independent expert advice and recommendations to decision-makers including DfI. However, due to a range of factors, the PAC is now seen as another key barrier to the development and progression of significant projects which could encourage investment, create jobs and improve local communities in Northern Ireland. The PAC has not been delivering value for money. In its current form, the governance, accountability and resourcing arrangements are not sufficient to ensure the PAC can consistently meet the needs of the planning system.



Recommendation 1

The Department of Justice should urgently arrange to carry out a fundamental review of the PAC including its status, statutory structure and associated governance, oversight and accountability arrangements. In doing so it should liaise closely with key stakeholders.

-
29. We recognise that a fundamental review of the PAC is likely to take some time to complete and deliver change. In the interim, a range of actions to drive improvements in delivery, communication and accountability should be implemented.



Recommendation 2

More certainty and confidence around the timescales for delivery of PAC caseloads is essential. Pending the outcome of a fundamental review, we recommend that the PAC should develop and publish detailed plans to clear the long-standing cases in each workstream. These plans should include timelines for clearing backlogs and regular monitoring by NICTS.



Recommendation 3

Pending the outcome of a fundamental review, we recommend that the PAC, working with the Department and Dfl as appropriate, should carry out a review of the current appeal fees and charging regime, alongside performance reporting and monitoring, with a view to improving cost recovery.



Recommendation 4

While it is important that the PAC retains its independence in decision-making, it is a key part of the planning process and a shared commitment to improving delivery is urgently required. Pending the outcome of a fundamental review, we recommend that:

- The PAC, the Department and Dfl should work together to ensure the operational delivery of new work allocated to the PAC is assessed and adequately resourced ahead of its introduction.
- The PAC and Dfl should agree processes to ensure that administrative issues with the potential to delay or frustrate a public local inquiry or hearing are fully understood and resolved before the inquiry or hearing commences.
- The PAC should put in place a process of regular engagement with other parts of the planning system, including Dfl and councils, to provide it with an early indication of issues in the planning system so that workloads and prioritisation can be properly planned.



Recommendation 5

The Department must immediately strengthen its oversight and governance of the PAC so far as the current statutory structure allows. Pending the outcome of a fundamental review, we recommend that:

- The Department should immediately undertake a review of the existing governance arrangements for the PAC, with a view to identifying additional accountability and oversight mechanisms that can be put in place within the current statutory structure.
- The PAC should develop and publish specific, measurable key performance indicators and timelines for different workstreams and consult with the Department as to any additional financial or administrative support required to achieve these. The PAC's annual reporting should include a clear assessment of whether key metrics have been achieved and any remedial action which is required.
- The Department and the PAC should work together to agree and publish new administrative performance standards in a revised Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) within the next six months and then continue to review the MoU on an ongoing basis.

Part One:

Introduction and background

Introduction and background

Since 2015, planning in Northern Ireland has been a two-tier system

- 1.1 An effective planning system is a key enabler to drive economic growth through investment and sustainable development, job creation, social regeneration, and wellbeing. It can make a difference to local communities, but it can also act to support social and economic development in Northern Ireland as a whole. It is therefore vital that it is operating in an efficient, effective, and financially sustainable way.
- 1.2 The Planning Act (NI) 2011 established the current two-tier system for the delivery of planning functions in Northern Ireland and, since April 2015, the responsibility for delivering most operational planning functions passed from central government to local councils. Since 2015, between 9,000 and 13,000 planning applications have been processed each year.
- 1.3 The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) retained a central role under the two-tier system, with the responsibility for preparing regional planning policy and legislation, as well as monitoring and reporting on the performance of the councils in delivering their planning functions. DfI also retained responsibility for determining a small number of planning applications that are either Regionally Significant and or that it calls-in where the application raises issues of such importance that their impact is considered to extend to a sub-regional or regional level. In addition, DfI has routine oversight responsibilities for council Local Development Plans (LDPs). DfI also has a specific oversight role in relation to causing an Independent Examination (IE), and consideration of an IE report before issuing direction to council.

The Planning Appeals Commission provides an appeals process for applicants and plays a key role in informing decision-making on significant projects

- 1.4 The Planning Appeals Commission (the PAC) is an independent body which deals with a wide range of planning issues. While the work undertaken by the PAC is varied, it has two main functions:
 - i. **Hear and Decide (planning appeals work)**

The PAC hears and decides on all planning appeals made by applicants against council planning refusals. Appeals can focus on a wide range of planning and environmental matters. In these instances, the PAC is the final decision-maker, and its decisions can only be challenged on a point of law by way of a judicial review. This workstream provides the PAC with its largest volume of work in terms of number of cases received and decisions issued each year.
 - ii. **Hear and Report (referred and advisory work)**

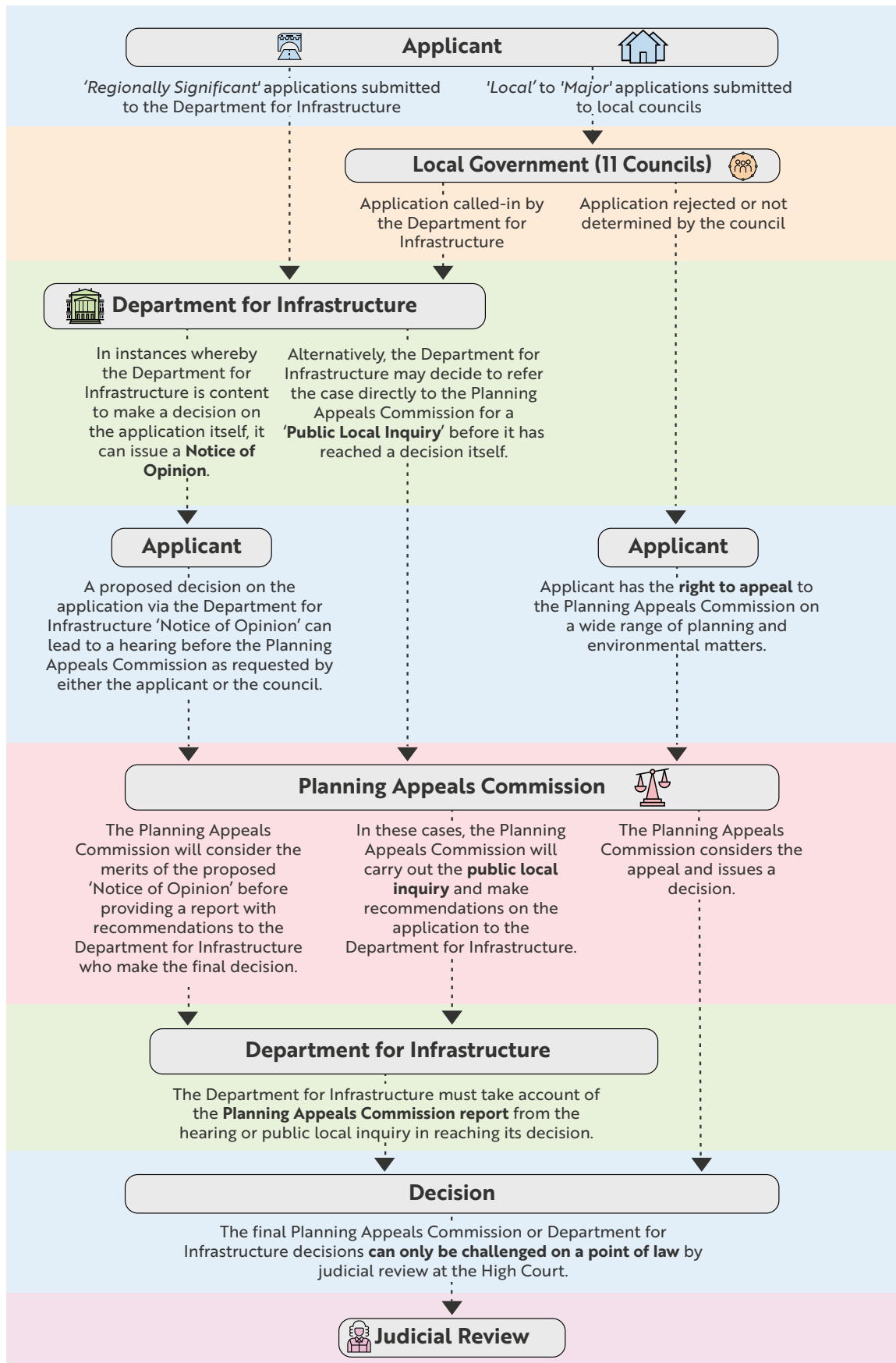
The PAC also makes recommendations on a range of cases referred to it by government departments or arising from proposed decisions of departments. Regionally Significant applications are those applications with the potential to make a critical contribution to the economic and social success of Northern Ireland as a whole, or a substantial part of the region. These planning applications are processed by DfI and in most cases its officials complete a planning report and make recommendations to the Minister. At this point, two main options are open to DfI in determining the application:

- **Public local inquiry** – Having completed a period of public and statutory consultation, DfI may determine that a public local inquiry, held by the PAC, is required. At a public local inquiry hearing, DfI, those who have made representations in respect of the planning application and other interested parties may present their views both orally and in writing.
- **Notice of Opinion** – When a public local inquiry is not called, DfI issues a Notice of Opinion which outlines its reasons for proposing to approve or refuse a planning application. In this instance the applicant or the relevant council can then request an opportunity to appear before and be heard by the PAC concerning DfI's proposed decision.

1.5 DfI also has the power to call-in planning applications from councils. Such applications follow the same process route as Regionally Significant applications and therefore may result in a PAC public local inquiry or hearing. In all Hear and Report work, the PAC's role whilst advisory, is important. The presiding Commissioner(s) will issue a detailed report with recommendations, which the Minister can either accept or reject, therefore the final planning decision remains with the DfI Minister.

1.6 The PAC also conducts IEs of councils' LDPs. Under the two-tier planning system, each council is required to prepare an LDP which will guide future development, ensuring sufficient land is available for housing, employment and community facilities while protecting the environment. The LDPs will also guide decision-making in local councils, forming the basis of planning decisions for many years to come. The LDPs comprise two parts: a Plan Strategy (PS) and a Local Policies Plan (LPP). Councils are required to submit their plans to DfI for IE, which to date have always been conducted by the PAC. The PAC reports back to DfI as to the 'soundness' of each council's development plan document, including their contents, whether it has taken account of regional planning policy and legal compliance. It can also provide proposed amendments to make a development plan sound. The IE is required at both stages of plan development, therefore based on 11 councils there will be 22 in total.

Figure 1: The process for the determination of planning applications in Northern Ireland

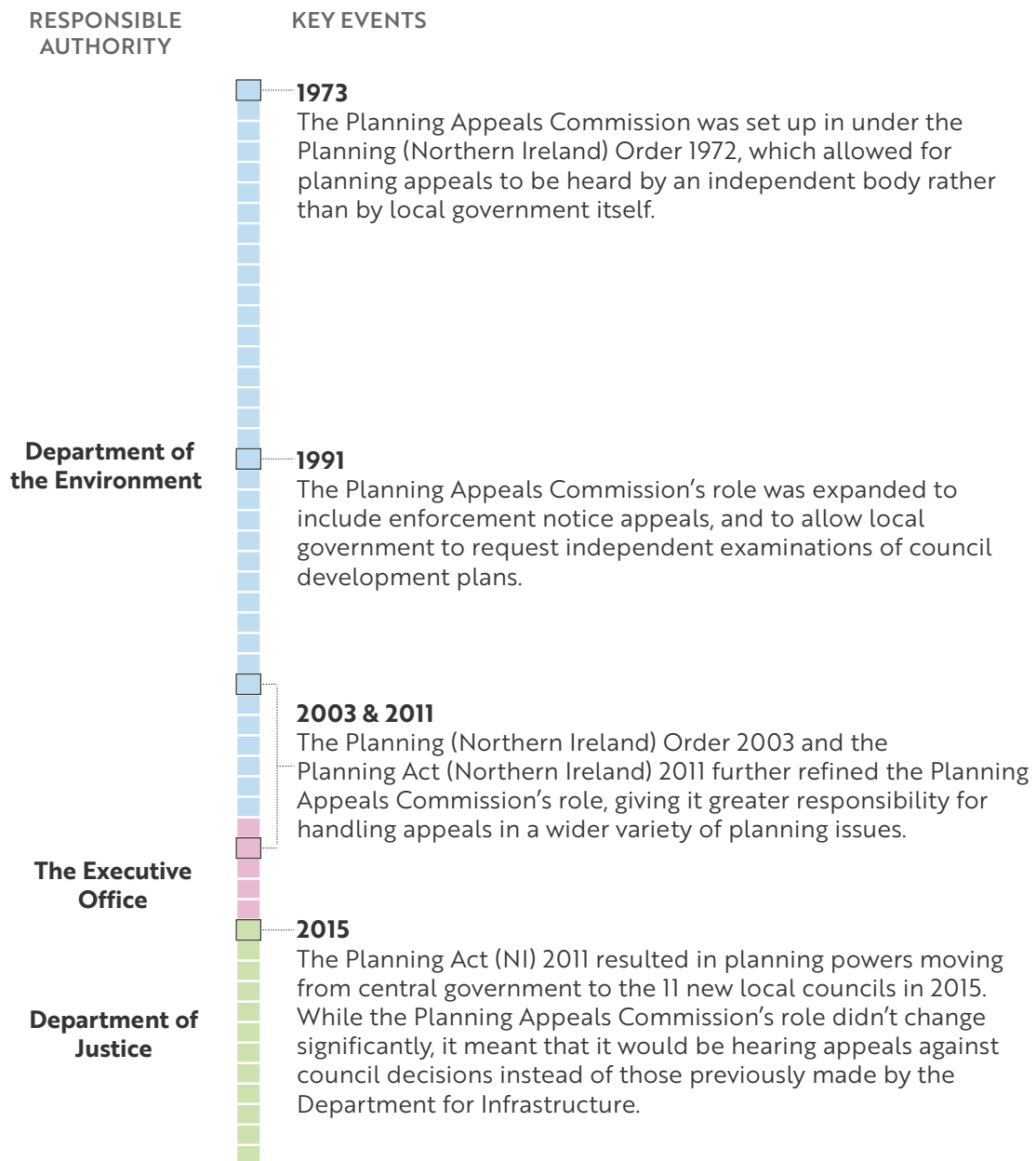


Note: The process outlined above excludes IEs, EIA hearings and appeals against enforcement notices.

As a Tribunal NDPB, the PAC's decisions and recommendations are made independently from any government department and the rest of the planning system

- 1.7** The PAC sits within the departmental boundary of the Department of Justice (the Department) and receives financial and administrative support from its sponsor body, the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS). The Department is responsible for appointing Commissioners and, in consultation with the PAC, can make rules for regulating its proceedings. Despite these sponsorship arrangements, the PAC currently maintains complete autonomy in its decision-making, and NICTS told us that its oversight of the PAC's performance is constrained by the statutory structure and the need to respect constitutional boundaries given the PAC's status as a Tribunal NDPB. We examine this issue in detail in **Part Four** of this report.
- 1.8** The PAC is made up of Commissioners appointed by NICTS on behalf of the Department. Commissioners are not civil servants but are appointed following open public competition as Office Holders and are independent of government. At August 2025, the PAC had 19.4 full-time equivalent Commissioners. The decisions of the Commissioners are quasi-judicial, in that they are administrative in nature but made in a judicial context.
- 1.9** In 2024-25, the PAC received £2.7 million of funding from NICTS, £2.3 million of which covered both Commissioner and administrative salary costs. The PAC also receives a small amount of income from fees attributable to its appeals work. In 2024-25, this equated to around £78,000.
- 1.10** The departmental sponsorship arrangements rested with the then Department of the Environment (DoE) until 2010. In subsequent years, the PAC has been sponsored by the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) (subsequently the Executive Office (TEO)) and since 2016 it has fallen under NICTS which is part of the Department. The statutory role of the PAC and associated accountability arrangements since its creation can be summarised in the timeline in **Figure 2** below.

Figure 2: The History of the Planning Appeals Commission



All elements of the planning system have struggled to meet performance targets but poor delivery from the PAC has contributed significantly to backlogs

1.11 In February 2022, the NIAO published a report ‘Planning in Northern Ireland’, which considered how the planning system had operated since April 2015. The report found a planning system that had struggled to “achieve efficient and timely processing of major development applications...a consistent failure to process the most important development applications in line with the timeliness targets set...”. It concluded that the planning system was not operating efficiently and not delivering for the economy, communities, or the environment. The 2022 report focused on the role of local councils, DfI and statutory consultees and was very critical of the significant delays arising at that time. However, the report did not consider the PAC’s role within the overall planning process.

- 1.12** Since 2022, all elements of the planning system have continued to struggle to meet performance targets. Between 2020-21 and 2024-25, DfI's annual planning statistics, which are accredited official statistics assessed by the Office for Statistics Regulation, show that average processing times for Regionally Significant applications have ranged from 215 to 362 weeks. A proportion of these applications are referred to the PAC, either by DfI, or by way of a hearing. The PAC have advised us that they believe DfI's statistics may not be completely correct as they exclude applications of regional significance previously made under Article 31 of the 1991 Planning Order. It considers that, if these were included, then the range should be 216 to 717 weeks. However, as these figures are not official statistics DfI could not agree their accuracy. Timescales for conducting public local inquiries, hearings and IEs of LDPs are also excessive, with cases regularly taking several years to progress. As discussed in **Part Two** of this report, the considerable backlogs in PAC work on Regionally Significant projects over several years have contributed in large part to these long processing times. Given the economic significance of these projects, these delays are likely to have a very significant impact on investment in Northern Ireland.
- 1.13** Whilst the PAC has no statutory targets for processing appeals (Hear and Decide), considerable backlogs and delays have also accumulated in this workstream. Between 2020-21 and 2024-25, there have been an average of 270 'live' appeal cases with the PAC. At its peak, there were 379 'live' cases. Following efforts to increase resources and improve decision-making timelines, by 31 March 2025 this had reduced to 149 cases.

Scope and methods

- 1.14** This strategic review sets out the important role of the PAC, highlighting the challenges it has faced in recent years, the impact these have had on its performance and planning outcomes and identifying where improvements should be made for the future.
- Part Two considers the PAC's delivery in recent years and the impact of this on the planning system and the wider economy.
 - Part Three summarises the main internal and external challenges facing the PAC and looks at how the PAC has been addressing these issues.
 - Part Four outlines the accountability and governance issues and considers opportunities to improve delivery and learn lessons from other jurisdictions.
- 1.15** The report does not assess the role of the Water Appeals Commission (WAC). The WAC is a separate appellate body and exercises a wide range of functions under Water, Fisheries, Drainage and other similar legislation. The WAC consists of the same Chief Commissioner, Deputy Chief Commissioner and other Commissioners of the PAC. In the last twelve months, only four appeals were received by the WAC, all of which were withdrawn.
- 1.16** While this report is a strategic review of the PAC, the structure of the planning system in Northern Ireland means it is almost impossible to consider a single element of the system in isolation. We have therefore also examined how the PAC interacts with other elements of the two-tier planning system, as well as its interaction with the Department, through the NICTS, as its sponsor department. We previously reported on the wider planning system ('Planning in Northern Ireland' published February 2022) focusing on the roles of both DfI and local councils but this did not include any consideration of the PAC. Therefore, while we recognise that delays occur in other parts of the planning system, those issues have already been considered in our earlier report. Consequently, this report focuses primarily on the work of the PAC.

1.17 Our methodology included:

- Engagement with the PAC, NICTS and DfI throughout the fieldwork process.
- Review of internal delivery data provided by the PAC as well as planning statistics published by DfI and the PAC.
- Review of corporate governance documents from both the PAC and NICTS.
- Meeting with representatives from local government, including senior planning officials from all councils.
- Interviews with a number of current and ex-PAC Commissioners.
- Discussions with interested third-party stakeholders including the NI Chamber of Commerce and representatives from the renewable energy and town planning sectors.
- Meeting with planning appeals officials from other jurisdictions and review of publicly available information on their performance and governance arrangements.

Part Two:

Backlogs and delay

Backlogs and delay

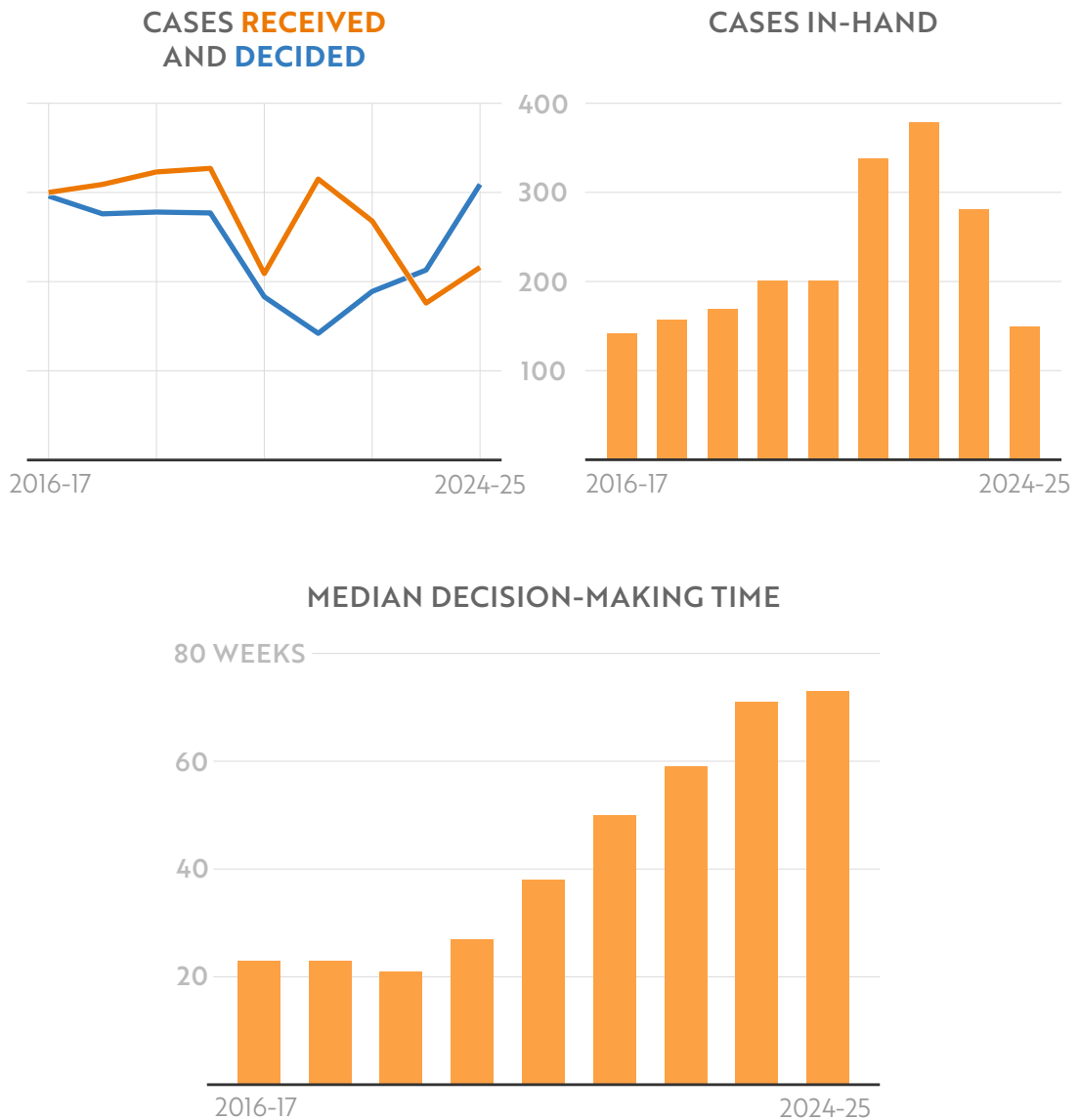
A small proportion of planning applications are subject to PAC review

- 2.1** As noted in **Part One**, the PAC's work is divided into two main workstreams – Hear and Decide, which is appeal work, and Hear and Report, which is both referred and advisory work including Regionally Significant, called-in and the IE of Local Development Plans.
- 2.2** Although the PAC only deals with a relatively small proportion of overall planning applications and appeals in Northern Ireland, over recent years a significant backlog of work built up across all workstreams. On average, around 270 Hear and Decide appeals are received by the PAC each year, a figure equivalent to around two per cent of overall planning applications, received across Northern Ireland. The majority of these appeals relate to the refusal of planning permission, but also include appeals against non-determination of planning applications, and appeals against conditions attached to planning approvals.
- 2.3** The Hear and Report caseload is also very small in number; typically fewer than 20 cases sit with the PAC at any given time (excluding LDPs). However, these cases are the most complex and significant developments in Northern Ireland and take up a very considerable amount of time for the PAC. The last case referred to the PAC by DfI was in July 2024, and there were 19 live cases with the PAC at the end of the 2024-25 year.

Timeframes for appeals have increased by an average of 50 weeks, causing delays to planning appeal decisions

- 2.4** Since 2016-17, the number of appeals received by the PAC has reduced from around 300 per year to just over 200. However, over the same period, the PAC's annual reporting shows that decision-making timeframes have increased substantially from an average of 23 weeks to 73 weeks in 2024-25. The PAC told us that the reduction in output was due to a combination of factors including the impact of the pandemic preventing physical hearings which only recommenced in June 2021, diversion of resources to assist on a new IT system, as well as the Commissioner resource issues which are covered in more detail in **Part Three**.

Figure 3: A significant backlog of Hear and Decide cases built up between 2020 and 2022, with decision times becoming slower



Source: PAC Annual Reports

2.5

Timeframes on appeals have been considerably slower than in England, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland. A review of the latest publicly available statistics on each region shows that the PAC took up to nine months longer to process appeals than these other jurisdictions. Whilst direct comparison is difficult, due to the different processes and systems involved in each jurisdiction, this is likely to make Northern Ireland a much less attractive proposition for inward investment.

Figure 4: Other jurisdictions' performance on appeals* has been faster

	Median time/range in 2024-25**
Northern Ireland	73 weeks
Republic of Ireland	41 weeks
Scotland	12-41 weeks
England	25-27 weeks

* The appeals process in other jurisdictions are different to those of the PAC

** In England and Scotland, a range of median times is reported, depending on the procedure i.e. written representations only, hearing etc.

- 2.6** The PAC has implemented action plans to improve decision-making timelines, and this has led to an improvement in delivery timescales in recent months. Hear and Decide cases that were submitted in 2024 took an average of 25 weeks to be decided and cases in hand at the year-end reduced from 281 in 2023-24 to 149 in 2024-25.

Regionally Significant, called-in and EIA cases can take several years to progress

- 2.7** The PAC publishes a list of 'live' Hear and Report cases on its website. These are cases where the public local inquiry or hearing has not yet commenced. In August 2025, there were 20 live cases, all of which were subject to lengthy delays (**Appendices 1 and 2**):

- eight cases related to the Curraghinalt Project (Dalradian);
- three wind farms;
- five requests for environmental impact assessment hearing determinations;
- one case relating to the Lough Neagh sand extraction; and
- three 'other' cases.

On average, these cases had been with the PAC for around two and a half years, however nine cases had been with it for more than three years.

- 2.8** DfI provided us with a list of the nine Hear and Report reports and recommendations received on applications which had been referred to the PAC since 2016 up until the date of our review. Our analysis shows that on average there were 107 weeks, or around two years, between DfI's referral and the PAC issuing its report and recommendations. However, it is important to note that when cases are passed by DfI to PAC, in some cases it can be several weeks or months before all information is actually received by PAC. The PAC told us that when this is taken into account the period between referral and the PAC report being published was actually 75 weeks.

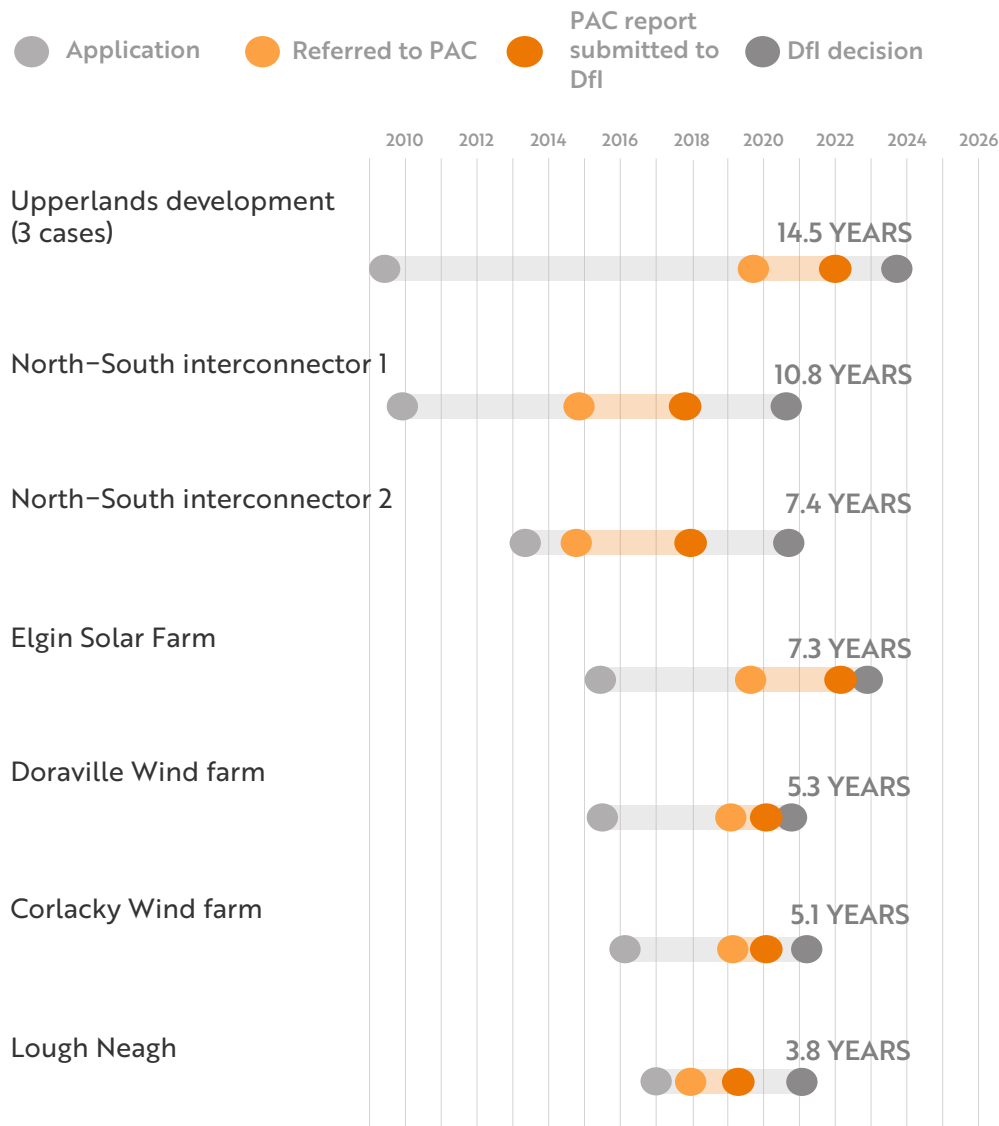
2.9 The PAC also told us that resourcing issues have been the main cause of delay on the Hear and Report workstream as it has been building capacity internally amongst the Senior Commissioner cohort to undertake this type of work. All but one of the cases have been allocated to a Senior Commissioner pending the outcome of a judicial review on a linked appeal case. However, as at August 2025, none of these had been able to progress, for a number of reasons including:

- after a long period of delay, the need to update environmental information; and
- four cases which have reverted to DfI due to the need to undertake statutory procedures which are beyond the remit of the PAC, again partly due to long delays with the PAC.

Delays are also encountered in the planning process both before cases are referred to PAC and after the PAC issues its report and recommendations

2.10 While the PAC provides a report and recommendations on Hear and Report cases, DfI remains the final decision-maker in these cases. DfI provided us with a list of the decisions it has issued in the last five years on Regionally Significant and called-in cases (**Appendix 3**). There were only nine decisions in total, and our analysis shows that the applications were with both the PAC and DfI for significant periods of time (**Figure 5**). On average, Hear and Report (excluding LDPs) cases were with the PAC for 107 weeks, or two years (based on the date the case was initially passed to PAC), before a report and recommendations were issued to DfI. On average, DfI took a further 86 weeks, or just over a year and a half, to issue a final decision to the applicant. DfI told us that a range of reasons, including the potential for judicial review and other legal challenges, can cause delays once a report has been received from the PAC.

Figure 5: Decisions on Regionally Significant and called-in cases referred to the PAC



Source: DfI Planning Portal and DfI internal data

At the time of our review, none¹ of the Hear and Report cases that DfI had referred to the PAC since 2021 had been completed

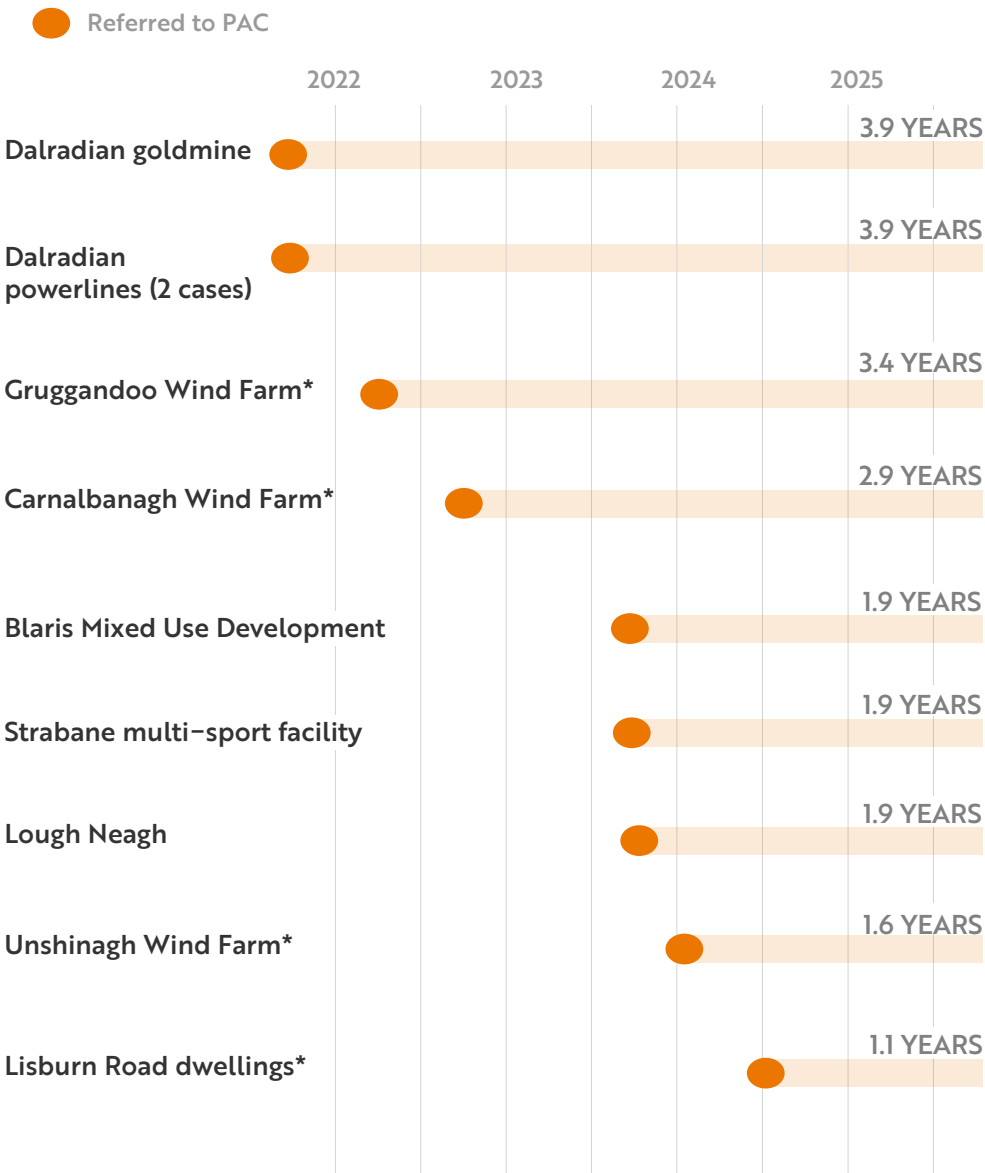
2.11 Since 2021, a further ten Regionally Significant or called-in cases have been referred to the PAC, with only one report and recommendations received to date (**Appendix 1**). Of these, five were public local inquiries and five were the subject of Notices of Opinion where hearings have been requested by either the applicant, council or both. These cases are included in **Figure 6**.

2.12 These referrals took place despite the PAC advising DfI that it did not have the resources at that time to progress the cases. Due to the delays in scheduling a public local inquiry or hearing, four of these cases (which are included in **Figure 6** below) have reverted to DfI to undertake updated statutory processes which the PAC does not have the power to undertake.

¹ Our review concluded in August 2025. Since then, one of the Hear and Report cases referred by DfI to the PAC has been completed.

Figure 6: Outstanding Regionally Significant and called-in cases

Cases still outstanding up to the end of August 2025



Source: DfI Planning Portal and DfI internal data

*At August 2025, these four cases had reverted back to DfI (paragraph 2.9).

2.13 Whilst there have been serious issues with the PAC’s delivery and timeliness of decision-making in recent years, delays are experienced across the whole system and a collaborative approach to improving performance is urgently required, including prioritisation of the most significant projects. We discuss this issue in more detail in **Part Three**.

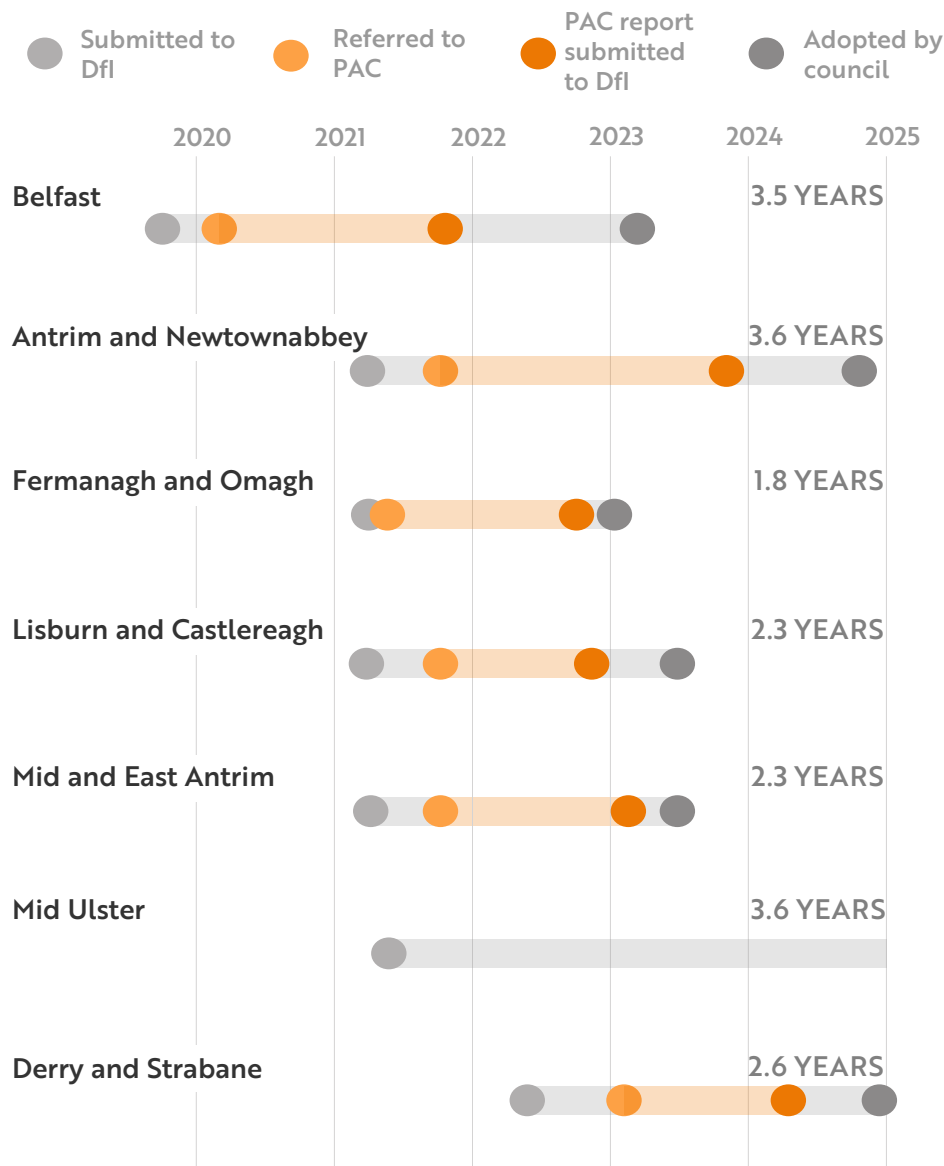
Independent examination of Local Development Plans has been slow to progress

2.14 Councils in Northern Ireland are required to prepare an LDP, which provides a 15-year framework to direct and control the scale and type of development in that council area. They are fundamentally important in planning as they should underpin all future planning decisions taken.

2.15 There are two parts to the completion of the LDP process, which are prescribed in legislation. Firstly, a PS is completed by the council. It will include the vision, objectives, growth strategy and strategic policies for the council area. The second stage is an LPP which will include policy and proposals, such as settlement limits and zones, which are more local and detailed. Both stages require a Soundness Based IE, which to date have been completed by the PAC. DfI will consider the PAC report before directing the council to adopt, modify or withdraw the development plan document.

2.16 Currently, six of the eleven local councils’ plans have been through the IE process for the first stage of their LDP. Our analysis (**Figure 7**) shows that this process took between 22 and 43 months to complete (**Appendix 4**), with a significant proportion of this time spent at PAC (between 16 and 28 months). The PAC told us that the extended timescales in four of the cases resulted from them being received within a four-month period, requiring hearings to be staggered to accommodate the parties involved. As yet, no council has completed the second stage of the process.

Figure 7: Local Development Plan timelines



Source: DfI

- 2.17** Whilst issues with the volume and complexity of the work required by councils have undoubtedly played a fundamental role in delays, the PAC has also contributed to delays. The PAC received additional funding from the Department in 2020 to appoint three new Senior Commissioners to progress LDP work, however it told us that those new Commissioners needed to gain experience. The PAC also stated that the legislative framework within which it operates has contributed to delays across the LDP process. It disagrees that it has itself caused delays, maintaining that all referred LDP work was prioritised and allocated to a Commissioner within three to five months of receipt, which it considers to be a standard lead-in time. It also stated that one of the more recently appointed Commissioners has now presided over an IE.
- 2.18** There is only one LDP awaiting referral to the PAC from DfI and therefore Commissioners have reverted to other workstreams but will be reallocated to LDPs when plans are ready for examination. The PAC anticipates that Commissioners will resume work on LDPs in 2026-27. Timetables prepared by councils indicate that all plans will be approved and in place by 2032-33, some 17 years after planning powers transferred to local councils. Six councils have adopted their Plan Strategies and are working towards publication of a Local Policies Plan, with a number due to publish draft documents in 2026 and therefore move to the IE stage in 2027. The remaining four councils have yet to submit draft Plan Strategies to DfI. It therefore appears that the provisional timetable is ambitious for all councils to achieve.
- 2.19** Our 2022 report on the planning system identified the need for DfI to review the LDP process and to consider whether it was proportionate and provided value for all stakeholders. Subsequently, the Public Accounts Committee recommended that DfI consider ways to streamline the remaining LDP processes. DfI told the Public Accounts Committee that "streamlining LDP processes is a significant element of the Planning Improvement Programme, with several actions being taken forward jointly by DfI and local government covering all areas of the existing process, including legislation, guidance, procedures and the role of key stakeholders, including the Planning Appeals Commission." With the first stage of the LDP review process taking an average of two and a half years to complete, there is little evidence that the actions outlined above have been effective.
- 2.20** There have been suggestions that the LDP process could be streamlined in several ways – for example removing the need for councils to submit their plans to DfI in the first instance as these are regularly passed on to the PAC without commentary. Another suggestion is that the PAC's report should be binding and similarly made directly to the council rather than going back through DfI. These changes would require a change to primary legislation, which would take a number of years to implement.

Delays in decision-making are likely to have major economic and environmental impacts

- 2.21** The planning system has the potential to make an important contribution to much needed development in Northern Ireland. When it works effectively, it can have a key role in encouraging investment and supporting the economy, creating places that people want to work, live and invest in. Our 2022 report concluded that *"the planning system is not operating efficiently. Crucially, in many aspects, the system doesn't deliver for the economy, communities, or the environment."*

2.22 For this report, we undertook a range of engagement with representatives from the business, renewable energy and local government sectors, all of whom raised significant concerns about the impact of delays on the regionally significant and called-in projects that are being held up in the PAC process, as well as more generally across the planning system in Northern Ireland. These concerns can be grouped into three broad themes.

A lack of certainty is discouraging investment in Northern Ireland

2.23 Significant development projects have the potential to encourage investment, create jobs, and improve infrastructure for local communities. However, a poorly performing planning system is widely seen as a barrier to investment in Northern Ireland. A report produced by the NI Chamber of Commerce and Industry highlighted the importance of a well-functioning planning system in facilitating economic growth and instilling confidence in potential investors. In particular, the report stated that, *"the absence of certainty around timescales is a major disincentive for investment in Northern Ireland."*

2.24 This contrasts with the arrangements in the Republic of Ireland where An Coimisiun Pleanála (ACP), the appeals body in the Republic of Ireland, has specific targets for processing strategic infrastructure projects and incurs financial penalties if these are missed, creating more certainty for investors (see **Part Four**). However, unlike the PAC, the ACP deals with these cases as the planning authority of first instance meaning that, if similar arrangements were in place in Northern Ireland, such financial penalties would be incurred by DfI. The implementation of changes, such as introduction of financial penalties, would require legislative change which could be considered within a fundamental review of the status and structure of the PAC.

Delays on renewable energy applications such as windfarms put climate change targets at risk

2.25 Northern Ireland's Energy Strategy and the Climate Change (Northern Ireland) Act 2022 set a renewable electricity consumption target of 80 per cent by 2030. Statistics from the Department for the Economy show that in the period from April 2024 to March 2025, 43 per cent of electricity consumption in Northern Ireland was from renewable sources and that this figure has decreased for the last two years. Meeting renewable energy targets will require a significant increase in renewable generating capacity and the planning system has a vital role to play.

2.26 Of the 20 Hear and Report cases with the PAC in August 2025, three are proposals for wind farms, which were initially submitted to the PAC between 19 and 40 months previously. A report published by Renewables NI in September 2023 (Accelerating Renewables in Northern Ireland) cited planning timetables in Northern Ireland as a "major barrier" to development and found that the lack of clarity is having a "material impact on development" meaning that Northern Ireland is now lagging behind Ireland and Great Britain in efforts to decarbonise.

2.27 It also stated that, given the current timelines to progress projects, unless a project was currently in the pipeline it was unlikely to contribute to the 2030 targets and therefore it is highly likely that these will be missed. We also heard anecdotal evidence that at one time developers were applying with smaller scale schemes, which can be decided at local council level, to avoid the delays with both DfI and the PAC. However, this limited the size and scope of renewable projects and will also have an impact on the ability to meet climate change targets.

Local Development Plans will be out of date by the time they are reviewed and adopted

2.28 Northern Ireland’s planning system is intended to be “plan-led” with each council preparing a LDP which will direct and control the scale and type of development which can be undertaken. In 2015, DfI originally estimated that each council would have a plan in place within 40 months of commencing the process. Our 2022 report on the Planning System found that this timetable was unrealistic, and we recommended that DfI should consider streamlining the remaining process. Since then, the process has experienced even more delays, with a significant proportion of time spent at the PAC and current estimates show that it is now likely to be the mid-2030s before all plans are adopted. Councils told us they were concerned that plans will be out of date by the time they have completed the process. DfI has advised that under the Planning Improvement Programme (PIP), improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the LDP process remains a key priority, and is being progressed in partnership with Local Government. The broad themes being taken forward are legislation, guidance and processes, and roles and responsibilities at independent examination. It is important that the PAC are part of this process.



Recommendation 1

The Department should urgently arrange to carry out a fundamental review of the PAC including its status, statutory structure and associated governance, oversight and accountability arrangements. In doing so it should liaise closely with key stakeholders.

We recognise that a fundamental review of the PAC is likely to take some time to complete and deliver change. In the interim, a range of actions to drive improvements in delivery, communication and accountability should be implemented.



Recommendation 2

More certainty and confidence around the timescales for delivery of PAC caseloads is essential. Pending the outcome of a fundamental review, we recommend that the PAC should develop and publish detailed plans to clear the long-standing cases in each workstream. These plans should include timelines for clearing backlogs and regular monitoring by NICTS.

Part Three:

Key challenges and issues

Key challenges and issues

The PAC has gone through a period of considerable resourcing issues

3.1 Since 2010, the resourcing of the PAC has changed significantly, with a reduction in the number of Commissioners and administrative staff. Previously there were around 20 permanent Commissioners, supported by an administrative team and, until 2013-14, a small number of Panel Commissioners who could be called upon in peak times to ease pressures. By 2016-17, the PAC's total complement had reduced by over 40 per cent and the Panel Commissioner role no longer exists.

3.2 Whilst there has been considerable natural attrition, mostly due to retirement since 2016-17, the PAC has also faced operational and personnel issues in the intervening period. We engaged with a number of current and ex-Commissioners during our fieldwork for this report and received a mix of feedback about organisational and performance issues over the last number of years. Issues raised with us included:

- a lack of succession planning;
- a change in working practices and culture in recent years;
- the loss of experienced Commissioners due to retirement, as well as to other parts of the planning system and other jurisdictions; and
- the appointment of new Commissioners with little tribunal experience.

They also pointed to other jurisdictions where Commissioners tend to come from a range of backgrounds and experience, such as engineering, architecture, and ecology, whereas PAC Commissioners are predominantly planners.

3.3 Regardless of the reasons behind the above issues in this period, they have had a major impact and contributed to the loss of a significant number of experienced Commissioners. Due to the number of departures, NICTS has had to undertake a series of Commissioner recruitment exercises. Since 2020-2021, there have been 17 new appointments to the PAC, including 14 new commissioners. It also operated below full complement of Commissioners for most of this period.

3.4 The 2024-25 financial year is the first time that the PAC has had a full complement of Commissioners since 2017. However, the PAC told us that some of these new appointees will require more experience in the role and therefore it considers that it is likely to be 2026-27 before the PAC is fully operational.

Resourcing has impacted on how the PAC has allocated its workloads

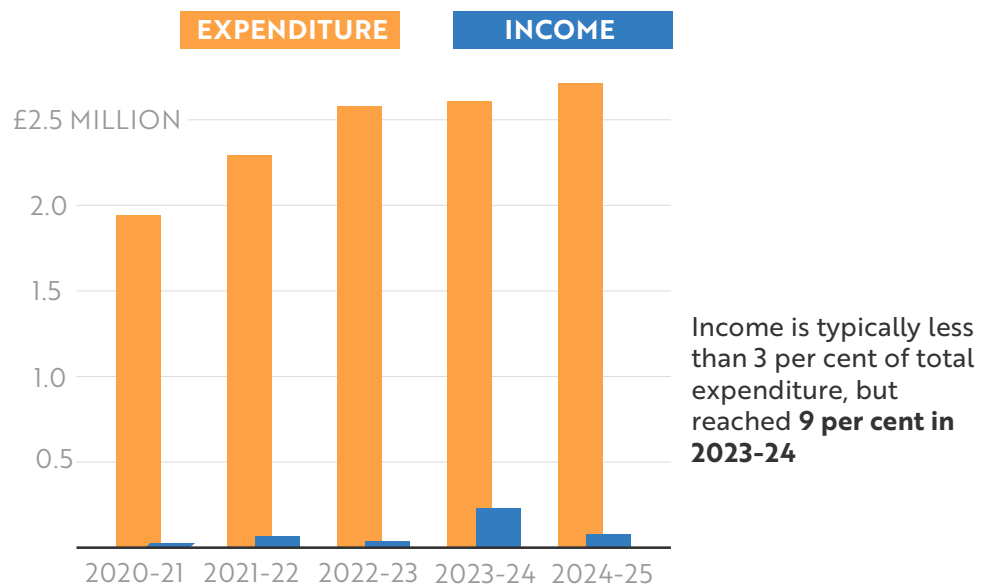
3.5 The vacancies at Senior Commissioner level, followed by a period of upskilling newly appointed Commissioners, have had a significant impact on the way the Chief Commissioner has chosen to allocate work in the last number of years. The PAC told us that the new Senior Commissioners, have mainly worked on Hear and Decide cases to gain experience, followed by working alongside more experienced Commissioners on the more complex Hear and Report work.

- 3.6 Whilst this has led to an improvement in the delivery timescales on Hear and Decide work since 2023-24, ultimately it has meant that the Hear and Report development (excluding IE of LDPs), which tends to be more complex, has not been progressed, leading to the long backlogs and delays outlined in **Part Two**. This is contrary to arrangements in other jurisdictions, where different legislative arrangements and governance structures allow nationally significant projects to be prioritised. The PAC told us that the more complex work was always factored into business planning and progressed at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.7 Referring authorities do not indicate any prioritisation of the cases sent to the PAC, therefore the Commission chooses to allocate these in order of their receipt, as it considers that this is the fairest means of progressing casework, regardless of their potential impact or complexity.

The PAC receives a small amount of income from fees for appeals work

3.8 Fees are charged for appeals received by the PAC (under the ‘Hear and Decide’ route) and are set by the Planning Fees (Deemed Planning Applications and Appeals) Regulations 2015. These regulations prescribe the fees to be charged for planning appeals and deemed planning applications, with both sets of fees having been uplifted once since 2015. The planning appeals fee is £150 per appeal, regardless of the scope and scale of the development. The PAC received income of £78,000 from the appeals workstream in 2024-25. Total PAC expenditure in 2024-25 was £2.7 million, meaning it recovered just under three per cent of its costs. Over the last five years, it has never recovered more than ten per cent of its costs as there is no mechanism for it to do so.

Figure 8: PAC income is consistently lower than expenditure



Source: NICTS

3.9 DfI is responsible for setting planning application fees. Both the Department’s fees for appeals and deemed applications and DfI’s planning fees have been uplifted by 19 per cent since 2019. DfI recently announced a further inflationary uplift of 2.1 per cent for 2025 and the Department has prepared a draft statutory instrument with a view to mirroring this increase, subject to the outcome of a consultation exercise.

- 3.10** Deemed application fees arise in enforcement appeal cases where the appellant argues that planning permission should be granted for unauthorised development (i.e. where no planning permission was sought). Fees received by the PAC to determine these deemed applications are lower than the planning application fee set by DfI in the first instance. The PAC told us that it had been liaising with the Department on this issue for six years, however the fees were only uplifted in August 2025 and are still less than those charged by DfI and local councils.

There is no charge to referring authorities when they refer cases to the PAC

- 3.11** No fees are charged for any aspect of the Hear and Report work referred to the PAC by statutory bodies, predominantly DfI. DfI receives the planning fee for Regionally Significant applications, which can be considerable, but none of this is passed on to the PAC under the current arrangements. This is contrary to arrangements in other jurisdictions as discussed further below.
- 3.12** We are concerned that the current arrangements could create an incentive for DfI to pass this work on to the PAC at no financial cost. DfI told us that decisions to request that the PAC hold a public local inquiry into a planning application would never be influenced by financial considerations. Rather, it told us that they are a matter of planning judgement in each individual case based on factors such as significant issues of public interest, conflict or policy importance that warrant being aired and tested through the independent inquiry process to allow for cross-examination, expert evidence and full public participation.
- 3.13** In the absence of specific cost-recovery mechanisms, the Department, through NICTS, has full responsibility for funding the PAC to deliver its services. For example, the Department provided over £300,000 of funding in October 2020 to appoint three Senior Commissioners, increasing the PAC's capacity for LDP work.

In other jurisdictions, a range of more substantial planning charges are applied

- 3.14** In other jurisdictions, whilst different structures, procedures and legal frameworks exist, a range of more substantial planning charges is applied. In England, the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) does not charge a fee for planning appeals, however it receives income for some services including local plan examinations and nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIP). The standard daily amount for an independent examiner is £993 and is paid by the referring authority. Where PINS processes and decides on a planning application under the NSIP regime, the planning application fee is paid directly to it. PINS received £16.7 million for NSIP work in 2024-25, £2.9 million from local plans and £1.7 million for other major specialist casework.
- 3.15** In the Republic of Ireland, ACP appeal fees are proportionate to the scale of the development, ranging from €220 to €4,500. For strategic infrastructure applications, where ACP processes and decides upon the planning application, a flat rate of €100,000 is applied, part of which is refunded to the applicant if costs do not reach this level.
- 3.16** In Scotland, planning appeal fees were introduced in June 2025 at a rate of 40 per cent of the original planning application fee. Fee income is ring-fenced for improvements to the appeals service and has allowed for recruitment across both reporters (the equivalent of Commissioners) and administrative staff. In Wales, a similar system is being considered, which would introduce planning appeal fees at 50 per cent of the original application fee.

- 3.17** We note that the PAC and NICTS do not collect detailed information on the costs of different workstreams, and only the costs of the ongoing, high-profile, Curraghinalt Project (Dalradian) public local inquiry are analysed separately in the financial reporting system. Therefore, the amount of public money being incurred on distinct types of work and what would be needed to achieve better cost-recovery is not currently scrutinised. Commissioners are allocated to specific work, for example Hear and Decide, LDPs, Hear and Report, and so it should be possible to analyse the time and costs incurred by the PAC on this basis. More robust information on the costs of different workstreams would allow the PAC and NICTS to make a stronger case for additional resources and demonstrate the time and effort required for each element of their work.
- 3.18** Whilst there is a compelling argument for the introduction of new or improved mechanisms for cost-recovery, this would have to be linked to improved performance outcomes. It is unlikely that users of the planning system and referring authorities would be willing to pay more for appeals or towards hearings and inquiries if decision-making timetables remain so unpredictable and protracted. This view was supported by the Chamber of Commerce during our period of engagement. The PAC told us that an increased financial resource could be reinvested in securing additional Commissioners and therefore ultimately lead to increased productivity. It is important that any future business cases for increased funding for additional posts make a clear case for the impact of such resources and that any increase in productivity is actively monitored and assessed by the NICTS.



Recommendation 3

Pending the outcome of a fundamental review, we recommend that the PAC, working with the Department and Dfl as appropriate, should carry out a review of the current appeal fees and charging regime, alongside performance reporting and monitoring, with a view to improving cost recovery.

Communication and engagement between the PAC and other key stakeholders could be improved to prevent unnecessary delays

- 3.19** The relationship between Dfl and the PAC is an important one as the majority of Hear and Report work comes from Dfl, and the PAC depends on the quality and completeness of information to be able to conduct inquiries and hearings efficiently and effectively. Both organisations indicated concerns regarding the adequacy and timing of information exchange, which has contributed to delays. The PAC indicated that when Dfl refers work to it, it considers that the supporting documentation can be poor quality or incomplete, that some referrals are made at too early a stage and the need for further information can cause more delays. However, Dfl told us that it completes and submits a vast amount of work and information before it calls for a public local inquiry, and that it considers that the PAC has a responsibility to liaise with it, provide regular updates on progress and ensure that information provided is satisfactory and meets its needs before commencing its inquiry. We note that the PAC takes the position that, once a case is live, all issues must be dealt with transparently, meaning in public.
- 3.20** We have seen examples of difficult working relationships and less than effective engagement and communication, with differing views on how independence should be maintained. The PAC told us that it must always act in an open, fair and transparent way and cannot be perceived as directing any party. However, our strong view is that a more co-operative approach between the PAC and Dfl as to the scheduling of work and the completeness of information is urgently needed to improve planning outcomes.

3.21 Hear and Report cases can come before the PAC in two ways:

- A public local inquiry is a formal process initiated at Dfl's discretion. It can be initiated before any view on refusing or approving the application has been taken, or after such a recommendation has been made to the Minister.
- Alternatively, Dfl may choose to perform its own assessment and make a Notice of Opinion to both the applicant and the relevant council. If either party, or both, requests an opportunity to appear before, and be heard by, the PAC, Dfl must afford to each of them that opportunity.

Five of the ten Hear and Report cases currently with the PAC were referred directly without a Notice of Opinion.

3.22 While Dfl is fully entitled to pass cases directly to the PAC to hold a public local inquiry, it should consider the capacity of the PAC to undertake the work at that time, including any impact on delivery timeframes. Dfl told us that it cannot make these judgements based on resourcing or capacity issues of the PAC, and that they will be based on the individual merits of the case.**3.23** The PAC also told us that Dfl had been unwilling to provide guidance on prioritisation of its casework. In recent months, Dfl has written to the PAC to inform it of the cases that are ready for a public local inquiry to commence, and those which require additional information due to the passage of time since they were submitted. However, a more structured mechanism for shared understanding of case urgency would help manage expectations, plan the Hear and Report casework and give more certainty to applicants as to when their cases are likely to come before the PAC, while respecting statutory independence.**3.24** The PAC told us that, given the nature of what each body does, the relationship between Dfl and the PAC has always been strained. From our review of written correspondence, minutes of meetings and engagement with stakeholders, we observed that the relationship between Dfl and the PAC appears to have become increasingly fractured in recent years. Despite the strategic issues facing the planning system, quarterly meetings between the Dfl's Chief Planner and the Chief Commissioner are no longer the norm and communication is largely in the form of written correspondence only. Dfl told us that it has made a number of attempts to recommence these meetings.**3.25** A key recommendation of the Public Accounts Committee report on Planning in Northern Ireland was that a Commission should be established to undertake a fundamental review of the planning system. Dfl established an independent interim Regional Planning Commission which first met in February 2023. It was tasked to constructively review, identify improvements, and promote further accountability in planning in Northern Ireland. Whilst Dfl and local councils are represented on the Commission, the PAC was not invited to participate, in order to maintain its independence. Instead, Dfl told us that it chose to liaise with the PAC separately on key elements of the PIP, with the Commission being established to represent the planning profession, including external representatives from the environment, economy and community. As a result, there is no apparent vehicle for all key statutory bodies to discuss and manage the ongoing backlogs, issues and risks facing the planning system.

3.26 We also heard criticisms that the PAC itself is isolated and has little engagement with other elements of the planning system, in particular local councils. Requests for meetings have been rejected, with the PAC's need to maintain independence cited. The PAC explained to us that it facilitates meetings when requested and where they are not related to live casework. It is possible, however, that more meaningful engagement with both DfI and local councils could give the PAC a better understanding of applications in the pipeline and inform its wider workforce planning, scheduling of work and risk management.

Changes implemented by NICTS and the PAC are beginning to make an impact on Hear and Decide cases

- 3.27** NICTS and the PAC acknowledge that delivery has not been at the required level for the last number of years but have implemented a number of changes aimed at improving delivery. These include:
- recruitment processes that are more tailored to the unique nature of the Commissioner role;
 - action plans to clear backlogs of Hear and Decide casework, including reallocation of work;
 - transition of the PAC to new premises designed to consolidate hearings centrally;
 - ongoing investment in training and development; and
 - investment in a new IT system which provides better management information and facilitates the Commissioners with digital working.
- 3.28** Cumulatively, the increase in the number of Commissioners and these changes are making an impact, particularly on Hear and Decide caseloads. We analysed the decisions issued between 2021-22 and 2024-25 and found that whilst overall timeframes have increased by 20 weeks, these have now started to decrease and that the number of decisions issued has increased.
- 3.29** The recent improvement in Hear and Decide delivery is welcome and it is important that the PAC focuses on building on this progress in future.

DfI has secured funding to help address pressures in the planning system

- 3.30** The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 provides DfI with powers to appoint persons other than the PAC to carry out Hear and Report work. However, despite the obvious issues with the PAC's capacity and delivery, this has not been invoked since the move to the two-tier planning system in 2015. Due to the ongoing performance and resourcing issues of the PAC, there have been repeated calls, including from the PAC itself, for DfI to use this legislation to appoint individuals outside of the PAC to conduct inquiries and help clear the backlog of Hear and Report cases, however funding has been a consistent barrier for DfI.
- 3.31** In March 2025, the Infrastructure Minister announced £3 million Public Sector Transformation funding from the Transformation Programme to enable DfI to exercise its powers under the Planning Act (NI) 2011 to appoint independent persons to deliver reports to the Department on the planning and environmental considerations relating to major Hear and Report work. This includes public local inquiries, hearings following a notice of opinion issued by DfI for Regionally Significant and called-in applications, and the independent examination of LDPs.

- 3.32** The project is in the early stages and the Dfl project team continues to progress the appointment process. It is anticipated that appointments will be made in Quarter 1 of 2026-27, with work allocated from Quarter 2 of 2026-27. Whilst the additional measures to improve the system are welcomed, it is important that these are introduced as soon as possible and that any potential impact on the PAC is considered.

Significant challenges remain on Hear and Report work

- 3.33** At August 2025, the PAC had planned and profiled Hear and Report casework into the 2026-27 year. All ten Regionally Significant and called-in cases are scheduled to commence in early 2026-27. The PAC told us that these timetables are provisional and that there are several cases which may not progress due to circumstances beyond its control. We note that this does not include provision for any LDP work or any new referrals from Dfl. At the time of this review, the PAC told us it was still not operating at full capacity with vacancies and as some Commissioners remained in training.

The PAC has taken responsibility for additional workstreams with limited extra resources

- 3.34** Dfl has recently amended planning legislation to include a new requirement for validation checklists to be submitted with planning applications. These validation checklists are intended to improve the quality of planning applications received by councils and therefore speed up decision-making. They include a role for the PAC where disputes arise from the checklists, in which cases applicants can appeal to the PAC. The PAC also cited the introduction of the costs regime and its role in conducting and reporting on independent examination of LDPs as additional workstreams which were not funded by the body who introduced them, and instead required NICTS to provide funding for three new Senior Commissioners.
- 3.35** The PAC has told us that it is concerned about the operational impact of these additional workstreams and that it should receive additional funding for any new work from the body introducing it. The accountability and funding arrangements for the PAC are from the Department, through NICTS, and requests for increased funding are considered alongside other departmental priorities. Dfl has told the PAC that resourcing is an issue for it and its sponsor department, and that in any case it expects that the volume of validation checklist appeals is likely to be low.

The increasing complexity of cases, particularly in relation to environmental issues, contributes to delays

- 3.36** The PAC and other stakeholders told us that the process for Regionally Significant applications can be unpredictable and resource intensive for all involved. Changes to proposed schemes, additional environmental information and issues with consultees' responses, as well as the impact of court action can all result in delays in decision-making.
- 3.37** Extended PAC timescales can themselves be a cause of further delay. The longer a public local inquiry or hearing is delayed, the more likely it is that new or updated considerations particularly in relation to environmental issues, will occur and further information will be required, prolonging the process even further. By example, there are currently four Hear and Report cases which have had to be returned to Dfl as the applicants had to update their environmental information and, in some cases, amend their scheme.

The Curraghinalt Project (Dalradian) public local inquiry will be particularly resource intensive now it has resumed

3.38 The Dalradian public local inquiry was postponed in January 2025. Since that time, Dfl has undertaken transboundary consultation. It reopened in April 2026. The scale and resources required for it are likely to put pressure on the PAC and may impact its ability to effectively deliver other work.



Recommendation 4

While it is important that the PAC retains its independence in decision-making, it is a key part of the planning process and a shared commitment to improving delivery is urgently required. Pending the outcome of a fundamental review we recommend that:

- The PAC, the Department and Dfl should work together to ensure the operational delivery of new work allocated to the PAC is assessed and adequately resourced ahead of its introduction.
 - The PAC and Dfl should agree processes to ensure that administrative issues with the potential to delay or frustrate a public local inquiry or hearing are fully understood and resolved before the inquiry or hearing commences.
 - The PAC should put in place a process of regular engagement with other parts of the planning system, including Dfl and councils, to provide it with an early indication of issues in the planning system so that workloads and prioritisation can be properly planned.
-

Part Four:

Accountability, oversight and governance

Accountability, oversight and governance

The PAC is wholly independent from any minister or department in terms of its decision-making

- 4.1** Since its inception, the PAC has retained an independent decision-making role, separate from any government department or political influence. Financial and administrative support is provided by the sponsoring department, the Department of Justice, through NICTS. The PAC is completely autonomous in its decision-making and the operation of the appeals, hearings, inquiries and examination processes. It is not answerable for its decisions to any government department, Minister or any other agency or public body. Decisions are, however, open to challenge on a point of law by application to the High Court for judicial review, reflecting the PAC's independent appellate roles in planning and environmental matters.
- 4.2** Throughout our review, the Chief Commissioner stressed the importance of the PAC's independence as it is a key democratic safeguard where citizens can access justice and challenge decisions in front of an independent body. However, the PAC sits within the Department's boundary and under the sponsorship of NICTS. NICTS is accountable for the PAC's use of public money, its governance, stewardship and performance, within the confines of its statutory independence and status as a Tribunal NDPB.

The PAC is the only part of the planning system that has no statutory targets

- 4.3** The PAC has no statutory targets in place for decision-making timelines and sets its own objectives and publishes information on performance in its Annual Report. NICTS told us that the statutory structure of the PAC means the Department and NICTS do not have a role in agreeing targets and objectives in the same way as they would for a standard NDPB. The PAC's 2024-27 Corporate Plan contains two priorities and eleven actions. However, none of the objectives are framed in SMART terms, there are no targets for either the volume or timeliness of decision-making and so it is difficult to see how the Department and the PAC will be able to assess performance.

Figure 9: The PAC sets its own objectives

Priority: Focus on performance	Priority: Looking forward
<p>Objective 1: To deliver a high-quality service that meets the demands of our customers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to reallocate cases as and when resources become available to ensure timely decision-making. • Actively review the remaining long-standing cases to ensure they are delivered as soon as practically possible. • Aim to ensure that new cases entering the system are issued in a timely fashion. • Continue to invest in the training and development of the workforce. • Continue to ensure that the quality of decisions is maintained. 	<p>Objective 2: To ensure that the organisation is placed in the best position to deal with future challenges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to be at full operational capacity by 2026-27. • Undertake customer engagement exercises. • Continue discussions with the sponsor body regarding funding and resourcing. • Respond to any recommendations arising from the publication of the Northern Ireland Audit Office report. • Engage in meaningful outreach work to ensure all interested parties understand PAC's role in the planning process. • Implement updates to the website including updating the keyword facility.

Source: PAC Corporate Plan 2024-27

4.4 The PAC's Annual Report also includes key performance indicators (KPIs) which are not included in the Corporate Plan. These set out targets for decision-making, split across the different workstreams.

4.5 The KPIs for Hear and Decide are to decide 80 per cent of appeals within the following timeframes, depending on the process followed:

- Informal hearings – 30 weeks
- Written representations with an accompanied site visit – 28 weeks
- Written representations with a Commissioner site visit – 26 weeks
- Enforcement related appeals – 34 weeks.

These targets have not been achieved for the last five years.

4.6 For Hear and Report cases, the KPI is to deliver all reports to the referring authority by the indicative date set by the end of public proceedings (i.e. when the public local inquiry or hearing has been completed). The focus is on the later stages of the process and there are no targets set in respect of the timeframes for commencing inquiries or hearings, nor for the overall timeframe. The PAC told us that in their view, it is not possible to set clear timelines for earlier stages of the process as these include factors that are largely outside of its control.

In other jurisdictions, planning bodies have different accountability arrangements

4.7 We compared Northern Ireland's planning appeal and public inquiry arrangements with other jurisdictions. We note that direct comparisons are difficult because of the different structures, procedures and legal frameworks in each jurisdiction. Nonetheless, other jurisdictions take different approaches to balancing independence and accountability. These may offer examples for consideration as part of our recommended fundamental review. Northern Ireland is the only jurisdiction where the body responsible for planning appeals, hearings and public local inquiries is not accountable to a Minister or the Assembly, due to its status as a Tribunal NDPB. Other jurisdictions also have a range of statutory targets, including timebound targets for different workstreams.

Figure 10: Comparison with other planning bodies

	PINS (England)	ACP (Republic of Ireland)	PAC (Northern Ireland)
Status	Executive Agency	Executive Agency	Tribunal NDPB
Sponsorship arrangement	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	NICTS, within the Department of Justice
Accountable to a Minister	✓	✓	✗
Statutory targets/ deadlines	✗	✓	✗
Appeal fees	✗	✓	✓
Strategic infrastructure/ Regionally Significant fees	✓	✓	✗

**While there are no statutory time limits for determining planning appeals in England, the government sets performance targets for PINS and has a policy called the 'planning guarantee' which states that no application should take more than a year in total to be decided, including the appeal stage.*

4.8 NICTS told us that while the functions of each appeal body are comparable, there are key differences that limit direct equivalence, in particular that the PAC is established in legislation as a Tribunal NDPB, a public body type which is no longer the default or preferred form of public body under Cabinet Office guidance. We also note that strategic infrastructure applications are made directly to PINS and ACP in England and Ireland respectively. This means applications are submitted directly to PINS and ACP for processing, followed by a decision from the relevant Secretary of State.

PINS – England

- 4.9** PINS had similar issues with levels of casework exceeding its capacity to deliver in the early 2020s. In dealing with this it focused on cases with the greatest individual potential for economic impact and community interest including local plans, energy generation and transport which did lead to a backlog of less high-profile planning appeal casework. The PAC has taken a different approach, focusing on appeals decisions as these provide access to justice, along with independent examinations of LDPs at the expense of other Hear and Report work. In the interest of fairness to appellants, it also encouraged Commissioners to issue decisions in date order of case receipt.
- 4.10** A further key difference is that for nationally significant infrastructure, PINS provides advice throughout the application period, identifying where projects need improvements or more evidence to support them. PINS then makes recommendations to the Secretary of State as to whether these applications should go ahead. PINS' annual report points to the need for certainty over the process and avoiding delays, stating that "our advice is aimed at making sure those applications are supported by the right information and address issues likely to be considered when they are examined." This is possible as PINS is a planning authority of first instance in respect of NSIP, rather than the tribunal body as is the case with the PAC. PINS also charges fees for considering NSIP applications and received £16.7 million in 2024-25.

ACP – Republic of Ireland

- 4.11** An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) replaced An Bord Pleanála (ABP), in 2024. ACP decisions are required within 18 weeks, with a target of 16 weeks for large-scale residential development (there are some cases where no statutory timeframe applies). The target for strategic infrastructure decisions is 48 weeks. The ACP incurs financial penalties if it fails to meet those timescales, for example repaying the applicant a fixed percentage of fees paid. The ACP also has to notify applicants of expected decision dates and provide reasons for delays. We note that ACP, like PINS, is a planning authority of first instance in the case of strategic infrastructure.
- 4.12** The ACP's organisational structure separates the decision-making function from corporate and organisational roles. A Governing Board, led by a chairperson, is responsible for approving and publishing written procedures for Planning Commissioners. Planning Commissioners are responsible for all decision-making and are overseen by a Chief Planning Commissioner. Corporate functions are overseen by a Chief Executive Officer, appointed by the Governing Board, who is responsible for the overall performance of the ACP including the allocation of resources and personnel.
- 4.13** Whilst we fully understand the need for hearings and inquiries to be conducted independently, the lack of proper timelines and adequate accountability to the Assembly for the performance of the PAC needs to be resolved. This view was shared by a range of stakeholders with whom we engaged.

Pending the outcome of a fundamental review, Departmental and NICTS oversight of the PAC should be strengthened

- 4.14** Despite the issues with the PAC's delivery, NICTS told us that its approach to oversight and challenging operational performance is constrained by the statutory structure of the PAC and the need to respect constitutional boundaries, given the PAC's status as a Tribunal NDPB. The Department has a clear responsibility for the governance and oversight of the PAC, and this role can be fulfilled without risking the independence of decision-making.
- 4.15** Any change to the governance and accountability arrangements for the PAC requires proper consideration and will take time. Pending a longer-term fundamental review there is an urgent need to address the existing oversight and governance arrangements, particularly the role of NICTS as the sponsor body.

A Memorandum of Understanding between NICTS and the PAC has recently been updated

- 4.16** Since 2019, NICS departments have been encouraged to use partnership agreements to manage relationships with the bodies they sponsor. These agreements establish a clear framework for accountability, objectives and governance arrangements. However, the current templates are not suitable for tribunal-type bodies and therefore a partnership agreement has not been developed between NICTS and the PAC. Instead, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) sets out the relationship between NICTS and the PAC, defining the financial and administrative framework within which the PAC operates. The last MoU between NICTS and the PAC was agreed in 2017. A revised MOU between NICTS and the PAC has now been agreed and signed off in December 2025.

The approach to Liaison Group meetings could be strengthened

- 4.17** A NICTS and PAC Liaison Group is in place to give the NICTS Accounting Officer assurance over the administration of public resources allocated to the PAC. A Liaison Officer has been appointed to seek assurance from the Chief Commissioner on performance monitoring, budgetary and finance matters, risk management, corporate governance and staffing. Liaison Group meetings are scheduled to take place quarterly. NICTS should provide both a support and challenge function to the PAC, however our review of meeting minutes shows that although resourcing and budget pressures are regular topics of discussion there is little in the way of challenge regarding the PAC's performance. We also noted that there are typically between two or three meetings per year, rather than the quarterly meetings set out in the group's Terms of Reference. NICTS told us, however, that there are regular informal meetings between the PAC and NICTS at a senior level, typically on a fortnightly basis.

Administrative performance standards could potentially enhance NICTS oversight

4.18 Although it would not be appropriate for NICTS to set targets for the PAC, given the constraints of its statutory structure, we note that there is a range of administrative performance standards for courts and other tribunal bodies within the departmental boundary. These include targets for the offering of hearing dates after all papers have been received and timeframes for decisions being issued following completion of tribunals. There are no equivalent standards and monitoring for the PAC; instead it sets its own performance indicators and reports on these via annual reports. As the sponsor body and as outlined in its MoU, NICTS is responsible for the stewardship of the public money allocated to the PAC. Robust performance monitoring is crucial for ensuring accountability, transparency and ultimately driving improvement.



Recommendation 5

The Department must immediately strengthen its oversight and governance of the PAC so far as the current statutory structure allows. Pending the outcome of a fundamental review, we recommend that:

- The Department should immediately undertake a review of the existing governance arrangements for the PAC, with a view to identifying additional accountability and oversight mechanisms that can be put in place within the current statutory structure.
- The PAC should develop and publish specific, measureable key performance indicators and timelines for different workstreams and consult with the Department as to any additional financial or administrative support required to achieve these. The PAC's annual reporting should include a clear assessment of whether these key metrics have been achieved and any remedial action which is required.
- The Department and the PAC should work together to agree and publish new administrative performance standards in a revised Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) within the next six months and then continue to review the MoU on an ongoing basis.

Appendices

Appendix 1 (paragraphs 2.7 and 2.11)

Regionally Significant and called-in cases with PAC – ongoing as at August 2025*

	PAC reference	Description	Procedure	Initial planning application	First referred to PAC**
1	2021/C005	Curraghinalt Project (Dalradian) – goldmine	Public local inquiry	27 November 2017	22 September 2021
2	2021/C006	Curraghinalt Project (Dalradian) – powerlines	Public local inquiry	22 November 2019	22 September 2021
3	2021/C007	Curraghinalt Project (Dalradian) – powerlines	Public local inquiry	22 November 2019	22 September 2021
4	2021/C010	Gruggandoo Wind Farm	Public local inquiry	16 March 2015	29 March 2022
5	2022/C002	Carnalbanagh Wind Farm	Public local inquiry	23 June 2017	26 September 2022
6	2023/C004	Blaris Mixed Use Development	Hearing	12 November 2018	29 September 2023
7	2023/C003	Lough Neagh (amending conditions)	Hearing	1 October 2021	19 October 2023
8	2023/C005	Strabane Multi-Sport Facility	Hearing	19 February 2018	3 October 2023***
9	2023/C006	Unshinagh Wind Farm	Hearing	22 December 2021	17 January 2024
10	2024/C001	Lisburn Road Dwellings	Hearing	19 May 2021	8 July 2024

* Due to the delays in scheduling a public local inquiry or hearing, four of these cases have now reverted to DfI to undertake updated statutory processes

** This refers to the date of first referral to the PAC, however the PAC told us that in some cases it was several months later before it received all information in relation to cases

*** The PAC issued its report on the Strabane multi-sport case in November 2025

Appendix 2 (paragraph 2.7)

Other live cases with PAC – ongoing at August 2025

PAC reference	Description	Procedure	First referred to PAC**
1 2021/WHR01	Curraghinalt Project (Dalradian) – water	Public local inquiry	5 November 2021
2 2021/WHR02	Curraghinalt Project (Dalradian) – water	Public local inquiry	5 November 2021
3 2021/DR001	Curraghinalt Project (Dalradian) – abandonment	Public local inquiry	17 February 2022
4 2022/C001	EIA determination	Hearing	14 April 2021
5 2023/EIA001	EIA determination	Hearing	17 May 2023*
6 2024/WHR01	Curraghinalt Project (Dalradian) – water	Public local inquiry	5 September 2024
7 2024/WHR02	Curraghinalt Project (Dalradian) – water	Public local inquiry	5 September 2024
8 2025/EIA001	EIA determination	Hearing	28 April 2025
9 2025/EIA002	EIA determination	Hearing	22 May 2025
10 2025/EIA003	EIA determination	Hearing	6 June 2025*

* The PAC issued reports on these cases in January 2026

** This refers to the date of first referral to the PAC, however the PAC told us that in some cases it was several months later before it received all information in relation to cases

Appendix 3 (paragraph 2.10)

PAC reports on Regionally Significant and called-in cases since 2020

PAC reference	Description	Initial planning application	First referred to PAC**	PAC report issued to DfI	Decision issued by DfI
1 2019/C006	Upperlands development	6 May 2009	18 November 2019	27 January 2022	19 October 2023
2 2019/C007	Upperlands development	6 May 2009	18 November 2019	27 January 2022	19 October 2023
3 2019/C008	Upperlands development	6 May 2009	18 November 2019	27 January 2022	19 October 2023
4 2018/C009	Corlacky Wind Farm	18 February 2016	21 March 2019	22 January 2020	16 March 2021
5 2018/C007	Dorville Wind Farm	30 June 2015	1 February 2019	20 February 2020	26 October 2020
6 2011/C001	North-South interconnector 1	1 December 2009	9 October 2014	20 November 2017	14 September 2020
7 2014/C004	North-South interconnector 2	30 April 2013	9 October 2014	20 November 2017	14 September 2020
8 2019/C004	Elgin Solar Farm	12 June 2015	19 September 2019	31 March 2022	6 October 2022
9 2017/C004	Lough Neagh	16 March 2017	14 February 2018	7 May 2019	6 January 2021

A number of these cases were delayed due to the impact of the Covid pandemic or experienced delays due to legal or jurisdiction issues.

** This refers to the date of first referral to the PAC, however the PAC told us that in some cases it was several months later before it received all information in relation to cases.

Appendix 4 (paragraph 2.16)

Local Development Plan Timelines

Council	Plan Strategy submitted to Dfl	Referred to PAC for Independent Examination	PAC report issued to Dfl	Dfl instructed Council to adopt Plan Strategy
Belfast	30 August 2019	5 December 2019	29 September 2021	4 February 2022
Antrim and Newtownabbey	8 March 2021	1 June 2021	4 October 2023	27 September 2024
Lisburn and Castlereagh	22 March 2021	6 July 2021	30 November 2022	28 June 2023
Fermanagh and Omagh	18 December 2020	12 March 2021	14 October 2022	20 January 2023
Mid and East Antrim	29 March 2021	30 June 2021	28 February 2023	30 June 2023
Derry and Strabane	20 May 2022	20 September 2022	10 May 2024	17 December 2024
Mid Ulster	28 May 2021	–	–	–

As at August 2025, seven councils had submitted their draft Plan Strategies to Dfl with the other four councils still in the processes of preparing their Strategy.

NIAO Reports 2025 and 2026

Title	Date Published
Ambulance Handovers	11 March 2025
Homelessness in Northern Ireland	25 March 2025
Health and Social Care Imaging Services	31 March 2025
Effective Audit and Risk Assurance Committees – A Good Practice Guide	31 March 2025
PSNI Fleet Management	08 April 2025
Continuous Improvement Arrangements in Policing (2025 Report)	13 May 2025
Waste Crime in Northern Ireland	03 July 2025
Major IT Projects in Northern Ireland	04 July 2025
Active Travel in Northern Ireland	29 September 2025
Performance of Restricted Procedures by Health Trusts	07 October 2025
Northern Ireland Energy Strategy	21 October 2025
Comptroller and Auditor General’s Report on Financial Audit Findings 2025 – Central Government	09 December 2025
Local Government Auditor’s Report 2025	11 December 2025
Leading and Resourcing the Northern Ireland Civil Service	27 January 2026
Raising concerns in the Northern Ireland public sector	20 March 2026
Raising Concerns: A Good Practice Guide for the Northern Ireland Public Sector	20 March 2026
Partnership Working: Departments and Arm’s Length Bodies	25 March 2026
Evaluation of Programmes Addressing Educational Disadvantage	31 March 2026
Assessing the Quality of Education in Northern Ireland	02 April 2026



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Subject:	Delegation of Local applications with NI Water objections
Date:	16 th June 2026
Reporting Officer(s):	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
Contact Officer(s):	Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management) Ciara Reville, Principal Planning Officer (South and West) Lisa Walshe, Principal Planning Officer (North and East)

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

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

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

1.4	Elected Members can also still request that the applications at Appendix 1 are referred to the Committee under paragraph 3.8.1 of the Scheme of Delegation.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	That the Committee agrees to delegate to the Director of Planning and Building Control those Local planning applications to which NIW has objected set out at Appendix 1 .
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	As reported to the Committee Workshop in November 2021, NIW is objecting to a significant number of Local applications on grounds of insufficient waste-water infrastructure capacity.
3.2	As advised at the Committee Workshop, officers have been engaging with NIW to try to resolve those objections in a strategic context. Whilst progress is being made, and NI Water has been considering a threshold for the scale and nature of development above which they would like to be consulted on future planning application, the objections to these Local applications remain.
	<u>Scheme of Delegation</u>
3.3	The Committee will be aware that the Council operates a Scheme of Delegation for Planning which identifies which matters are to be determined by the Committee and which are delegated to officers.
3.4	Paragraph 3.8.5 (f) of the Scheme of Delegation (December 2025) states that planning applications are not delegated where ' <i>There is an objection from a statutory consultee and the recommendation of the Planning Officer is to approve.</i> ' This means that those applications are required to be determined by the Planning Committee.
3.5	The Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 identifies NIW as a statutory consultee ' <i>...where a development proposal is likely to significantly impact upon the availability of suitable water and sewerage infrastructure to service development proposals.</i> '
3.6	This means that where NIW has lodged an objection to a Local application and the officer recommendation is to approve, the application is not delegated and must be determined by the Committee.
3.7	Therefore, the Committee has agreed to delegate Local applications with the NIW objections to the Director of Planning and Building Control, as set out in similar previous reports to the Committee. This has avoided the potential need to report to date 343 individual applications to the Committee. To have reported all those applications to the Committee would have been logistically extremely challenging, costly and would have resulted in further delays for applicants.
	<u>Nature of NI Water objections</u>
3.8	NI Water has lodged objections to Local applications for one or both of the following reasons. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) there is insufficient capacity at the local Waste Water Treatment Plant to support the proposed development, and/or

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

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

DRAFT

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

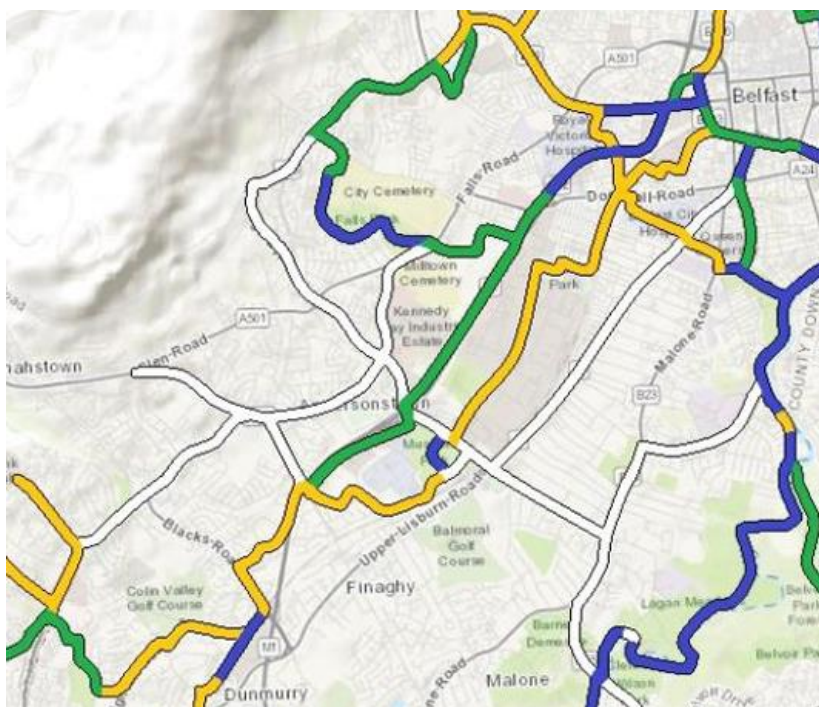
	DEA	REFERENCE	DATE RECEIVED	PROPOSAL	ADDRESS
1	Court	LA04/2026/0015/f	27/01/2026	change of use from public house to veteran community hub	203 York Road
2	Titanic	LA04/2026/0569/F	20/03/2026	Change of use from 4 bed dwelling (class C1) to 4 bed / 4 person HMO (sui generis) including fenestration changes.	200 Ravenhill Avenue,
3	Botanic	LA04/2025/0002/F	27/5/2026	Change of Use of existing vacant upper floors to 1 no. apartment	155 Lisburn Road, Malone Lower
4	Black Mountain	LA04/2026/0748/F	27/05/2026	Retrospective change of use from a retail shop unit to a Cafe/Sandwich Bar. Installation of extraction flue and storage shed.	44E Glen Road, Belfast, BT11 8BG
5	Balmoral	LA04/2025/2228/F	23/12/2025	Modify Condition 15 - LA04/2020/2189/F (submit detailed proposals for disposal of storm water and foul sewage)	236-238 Malone Road, Belfast, BT9 5LR

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ADDENDUM REPORT 3	
Application ID: LA04/2022/0809/F	Committee Date: 16 th June 2026
Proposal: Amendments to approved schemes ref. Z/2008/0993/F (erection of 53 No. dwellings) & ref. Z/2013/0120/F (erection of 46 No. dwellings); to reduce overall density from 99 No. dwellings to 92 No. dwellings and associated and ancillary works.	Location: Lands to the south and west of Woodland Grange to the north of Blacks Gate and to the east of Moor Park Mews, Belfast.
Referral Route: Major development	
Recommendation:	Approval subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement
Applicant Name and Address: M J McBride Construction Ltd	Agent Name and Address: Gravis Planning 1 Pavillions Office Park Kinnegar Drive Holywood
Date Valid: 25 th November 2025	
Target Date: 25 th June 2026	
Contact officer: Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management)	
<p>Background:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This application was originally approved by the Committee at its 14th October 2025 meeting, with addendum reports presented on 9th December 2025 and 17th February 2026 to deal with landownership issues. The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to resolve final consultation responses, finalise the wording of conditions, and to deal with any other matters that might arise provided that they were not substantive. 2. This report should be read in conjunction with the original report to the 14th October Committee 2025, Addendum Report 1 to the 9th December 2025 Committee meeting and Addendum Report 2 to the 17th February 2026 Committee meeting, appended. <p>Cycle and pedestrian link:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The Committee will recall from its previous consideration of the application that at the request of DfI Roads, the proposal includes a cycle and cycle/pedestrian link to the future Greenway linking Dunmurry to Belfast City centre. DfI Roads has recently raised further issues regarding the design of the link. 4. As the proposed link would serve not just the development but the wider area, particular design standards must be met. DfI Roads has therefore indicated the need for further design changes to the link. These may increase the cost of delivery, which may have implications for the applicant / developer. 5. As background, the site benefits from extant permission on the site for 99 units, with the access roadway from Finaghy Road North already constructed to the point of access into the site in accordance with previously approved details. 	

Assessment of potential proposed changes to the proposal:

6. The proposed development is to be accessed via an existing roadway directly off Finaghy Road North, currently serving the adjacent Woodland Grange development.
7. As part of the package of green travel measures, including provision of Travel Cards for each residential unit, a dedicated and segregated 400m long cycle path is proposed that runs from Finaghy Road North, through the site and connects into Black's Gate to the south. This is intended to tie in with plans set out for the area as part of the West Belfast Greenway, outlined in the DFI document 'Belfast Cycling Network Delivery Plan 2022-31' *Scheme 037 West Belfast Greenway Phases 3 & 4*. This forms part of short term and medium term plans for a series of Greenways. The 6,900m long Greenway in question runs south-west to north-east from Dunmurry to Belfast City Centre and is highlighted in yellow and green below.



Existing routes	—
Short term (2022 - 25)	—
Medium term (2025 - 28)	—
Long term (2028 - 31)	—

8. However, as a result of further discussions regarding the design of the proposed safe cycle path and potential shared roadway which will link into the Blacks Gate development, the applicant has raised concerns about potential increased costs and viability of the scheme.
9. To reduce reliance on the private car it was originally proposed that free Residential Travel Cards are offered to each residential unit for the first three years of occupation, to be secured through a Section 76 planning agreement.

10. However, the discussions with Dfl Roads indicate that the design alterations required to the cycle link may increase costs. The applicant has suggested that this is off-set through a reduction to the green travel measures offer such as Travel Cards. Officers agree with Dfl Road's position that ensuring an appropriately designed cycle link is the more important element of the package of green measures. Regard is also had to the fall-back of the extant approval for 99 dwellings.
11. In view of these factors, officers advocate a flexible approach and are seeking delegated authority to deal with these issues, namely the revisions to the design of the cycle link and consideration of development viability, which could result in a reduction or removal of the other green travel measures if required. The applicant will be expected to submit evidence in relation to any viability case they wish to make.
12. Discussions are ongoing with DFI Roads concerning the final details of the access road, which may include the provision of a new cycle path on the eastern side of the access road into Dfl lands within the motorway embankment. This would incur a slight revision of the application site (red line), however, no other third parties would be prejudiced as notice has already been served on Dfl Roads during the course of the application. It is established practice that an application site may only be extended during the application process where it is to facilitate access.

Consultation Responses:

13. A final consultation response from Dfl Roads remains outstanding, pending resolution of this issue. Dfl Roads has also raised issues regarding the detail of the Private Streets Determination (PSD) proposals. Delegated authority is sought to deal with the issues raised by Dfl Roads in its further consultation response.

Section 76 planning agreement:

14. Legal Services has confirmed that the Section 76 planning agreement has been agreed in principle. However, with ongoing discussions around the details of the new cycle path and shared roadway/ cycle path, and associated viability issues, the draft planning agreement may need to be modified.

Recommendation:

15. Having regard to the development plan and relevant material considerations, the proposed development is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.
16. Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the Section 76 planning agreement and conditions, and deal with any issues that may arise from the further consultation with Dfl Roads, and deal with any other matters that arise, provided that they were not substantive.

ADDENDUM REPORT 2

Application ID: LA04/2022/0809/F	Committee Date: 17 th February 2026
Proposal: Amendments to approved schemes ref. Z/2008/0993/F (erection of 53 No. dwellings) & ref. Z/2013/0120/F (erection of 46 No. dwellings); to reduce overall density from 99 No. dwellings to 92 No. dwellings and associated and ancillary works (amended plans).	Location: Lands to the south and west of Woodland Grange to the north of Blacks Gate and to the east of Moor Park Mews, Belfast.
Referral Route: Major development	
Recommendation:	Approval subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement
Applicant Name and Address: M J McBride Construction Ltd	Agent Name and Address: Gravis Planning 1 Pavillions Office Park Kinnegar Drive Holywood
Date Valid: 25 th November 2025	
Target Date: 25 th June 2026	
Contact officer: Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management)	
<p>Background:</p> <p>17. This application was originally approved by the Committee at its 14th October 2025 meeting. The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to resolve final consultation responses, finalise the wording of conditions, and to deal with any other matters that might arise provided that they were not substantive.</p> <p>18. The application was reported back to the Committee at its 9th December 2025 meeting as it had become apparent during the Section 76 planning agreement process that the applicant had not correctly served notice of the application on everyone with an interest in the land when originally made. The ownership certificate was subsequently corrected and the application re-advertised in the press. No additional representations were received. The Committee again delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the Section 76 planning agreement and conditions, and to deal with any other matters that might arise from outstanding consultations and further public consultation, provided that they were not substantive.</p> <p>19. It is a requirement that all interest parties in the land are a signatory to the Section 76 planning agreement. The applicant indicated that they did not wish to proceed on this basis and so they have removed the additional third party's land from the application site. This has resulted in a reduction of the scheme by two units to a total of 92 units. The application is reported back to the Committee so that it can consider this change.</p>	

20. This report should be read in conjunction with the original report to the 14th October Committee meeting and Addendum Report 1 to the 9th December 2025 Committee meeting, appended.

Assessment of the proposed change to the proposal:

21. As described, a third-party land ownership issue has emerged during the process of drafting the Section 76 planning agreement. This has resulted in a small triangular portion of land in the north-western part of the site being omitted from the application site, resulting in the removal of 2 No. semi-detached dwellings and their associated plots from the proposed layout. This has also seen a reduction in the red line on the site location plan and the replacement of the two residential plots with an additional area of public open space.

22. The revised description of development now reads:

*‘Amendments to approved schemes ref. Z/2008/0993/F (erection of 53 No. dwellings) & ref. Z/2013/0120/F (erection of 46 No. dwellings); to reduce overall density from 99 No. dwellings to **92 No. dwellings** and associated and ancillary works.’*

23. With the changes to the layout, omission of two dwellings and subsequent increase in area of open space there are a number of subsequent planning policy implications which are considered below.

24. With the reduction in numbers from 94 to 92 units and the slight reduction in the size of the site (by circa 250 sqm) there has been a slight change in the overall density of development. The previous site area was approximately 3.4 hectares. The removal of the small portion of land has seen this fall to approximately 3.375. The provision of 92 units within a site of 3.375 hectares would result in a density of approximately 27.2 dwellings per hectare. This represents a slight reduction from the previously proposed density of 27.6 dwellings per hectare. This reduction in density is not considered an issue and the resultant density remains in line with the density band for Outer Belfast (25-125) as set out in Policy HOU4 and considered in the original Committee report.

25. The removal of the two dwellings has also seen an addition to the area of public open space which runs along the northern boundary of the site. The additional area of open space measures approximately 710 square metres in area and neatly continues the linear area of open space to the western boundary. As a result, the new area of open space to the north measures approximately 5,900 square metres. This sees the overall amount of open space provision increasing from 5,950 square metres to 6,660 square metres, representing approximately 19.7% of the overall site area. This overall open space provision continues to meet the requirements of Policy OS3. This is a substantial overall provision well above the recommended 10% and an increase of 0.2% of the overall site area from the previously proposed 19.5%.

26. The removal of the two semi-detached units has also seen a change in the proposed housing mix to the following:

- Semi-detached – 54 units
- Detached – 16 units
- Townhouse – 3 units
- Apartment – 19 units

27. The resultant change in housing mix is not considered to be significant, with the revised layout still providing a suitable mix of house types and sizes to promote choice and assist in meeting community needs, and remains in accordance with Policy HOU6.

28. There are no other concerns raised by the change in relation to placemaking, transport and access, and other considerations.

Planning agreement:

29. Legal Services has confirmed that the Section 76 planning agreement has now been agreed in principle.

Recommendation:

30. Having regard to the development plan and relevant material considerations, the proposed development is considered to remain acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

31. Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the Section 76 planning agreement and conditions, and deal with any other matters that arise from the outstanding consultations and further public consultation, provided that they were not substantive.

ADDENDUM REPORT 1

Application ID: LA04/2022/0809/F	Committee Date: 9 th December 2025
Proposal: Amendments to approved schemes ref. Z/2008/0993/F (erection of 53 No. dwellings) & ref. Z/2013/0120/F (erection of 46 No. dwellings); to reduce overall density from 99 No. dwellings to 94 No. dwellings and associated and ancillary works.	Location: Lands to the south and west of Woodland Grange to the north of Blacks Gate and to the east of Moor Park Mews, Belfast.
Referral Route: Major development	
Recommendation:	Approval subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement
Applicant Name and Address: M J McBride Construction Ltd	Agent Name and Address: Gravis Planning 1 Pavillions Office Park Kinnegar Drive Holywood
Date Valid: 25 th November 2025	
Target Date: 25 th June 2026	
Contact officer: Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management)	
<p>Background:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This application was approved by the Committee at its 14th October 2025 meeting. The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to resolve final consultation responses, finalise the wording of conditions, and to deal with any other matters that might arise provided that they were not substantive. 2. This report should be read in conjunction with the report to the 14th October 2025 Committee meeting, appended. <p>Ownership certificate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. During the process of finalising the Section 76 planning agreement, it has become apparent that the applicant did not properly serve notice on everyone with an interest in the land when they originally made the application. The correct ownership certificate is required by Article 3(1)(d) of the Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 and this means that the application was technically invalid. 4. The applicant has since submitted an amended application form and ownership form, confirming the serving of notice on additional parties on 24th November 2025. 5. The application is to be re-publicised in the press on 14th December 2025, with the 14-day consultation period for representations ending on 26th December; due to the public holiday with the consultation window would effectively end on 29th December. 6. The requirement for the applicant to serve the correct notice is a procedural matter and, subject to the review of any additional representations, does not affect the planning merits of the proposal or assessment of the application undertaken by officers as set out in the original Committee report, appended. 	

NIE Consultation Response received:

7. Following the 14th October meeting, NIE provided its consultation response on 11th November 2025, offering no objection to the proposal, and providing the following advice.
 - The developer should not alter levels (cut or fill) or erect any structure or permanent surfacing within 5 horizontal metres of the tower legs.
 - No planting (specifically trees) takes place within the cable easement area as this may cause damage to the existing underground equipment.
8. This advice will be relayed to the applicant by way of an informative.

Late items:

9. At the 14th October meeting, Members noted the following amendments to the original Committee report, with officers advising that the proposal remained acceptable and in compliance with relevant planning policy:
 - Para 8.14 of planning report states an incorrect dwelling mix. It should read:
Semi-detached - 58
Detached - 16
Apartments - 20
 - Para 8.15 – the applicant has confirmed that NIHE welcomed the provision of 'affordable housing' but had no input into housing mix.
 - Para 8.19 – omission of total no. of wheelchair units. Wheelchair units are Nos. 2-6 and 7-21 (20 No. in total) (proposal still policy compliant).
 - Para 8.60 – through discussions with DfI Roads 'Active Travel' section, the dedicated and segregated cycle path has been removed (at their request) and the main access road is now designed as a 'cycle priority' road.

Recommendation:

10. The recommendation remains to grant planning permission, with delegated authority sought to deal with any issues arising from outstanding consultations and any new representations made, provided that they are not substantive.
11. Having regard to the development plan and relevant material considerations, the proposed development is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.
12. Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the Section 76 planning agreement and conditions, and deal with any other matters that arise from the outstanding consultations and further public consultation, provided that they were not substantive.

Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

Summary	
Application ID: LA04/2022/0809/F	Committee Meeting Date: 14 th October 2025
Proposal: Amendments to approved schemes ref. Z/2008/0993/F (erection of 53 No. dwellings) & ref. Z/2013/0120/F (erection of 46 No. dwellings); to reduce overall density from 99 No. dwellings to 94 No. dwellings and associated and ancillary works.	Location: Lands to the south and west of Woodland Grange to the north of Blacks Gate and to the east of Moor Park Mews, Belfast.
Referral Route: Major development	
Recommendation:	Approval subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement
Applicant Name and Address: M J McBride Construction Ltd	Agent Name and Address: Gravis Planning 1 Pavillions Office Park Kinnegar Drive Holywood
Date Valid: 21 st April 2022	
Target Date: 17 th November 2025	
Contact officer: Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management)	
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>The application seeks full planning permission for 94 no. dwellings.</p> <p>The site is located in the north-western part of the city between Finaghy Road north to the east and Blacks Road to the west. The site area is approximately 3.4 hectares.</p> <p>The key issues for the assessment of the application are below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of development • Site layout, density and Design • Open Space Provision • Affordable Housing • Trees and landscaping • Traffic, Movement and Parking • Climate change • Impact on amenity • Contaminated land • Drainage and Flooding • Natural Heritage/ Impact on Protected Sites • Section 76 planning agreement • Pre-application Community Consultation <p>The site is unzoned in BUAP and Draft BMAP (2004 and 2014). Given the extant approvals for residential development on the site the principle of residential development is established.</p>	

The density, layout and design of the development are considered in keeping with the established housing developments in the area with the predominance of two storey semi-detached dwellings reflective of housing abutting the site to the north and west off Blacks Road and east off Finaghy Road North.

An area of planted open space along the northern boundary, incorporating an existing buffer of mature vegetation, forms an intrinsic communal space running incorporating a Site of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCI) which runs along the watercourse that defines the northern boundary of the site.

There are no objections from statutory consultees. DfI Roads has indicated that it is content although a final written consultation response is awaited. Delegated authority is sought to deal with these and any other outstanding matters provided that they are not substantive.

Similarly a response is outstanding from Environmental Health in terms of Contaminated Land and Air Quality, however reassurances have been provided that the principle of development is acceptable and no fundamental objections will be raised.

There are no objections from non-statutory consultees.

A Section 76 planning agreement will be required to secure the provision of a cycle path, affordable housing, delivery and management and of the public open space and employability and skills.

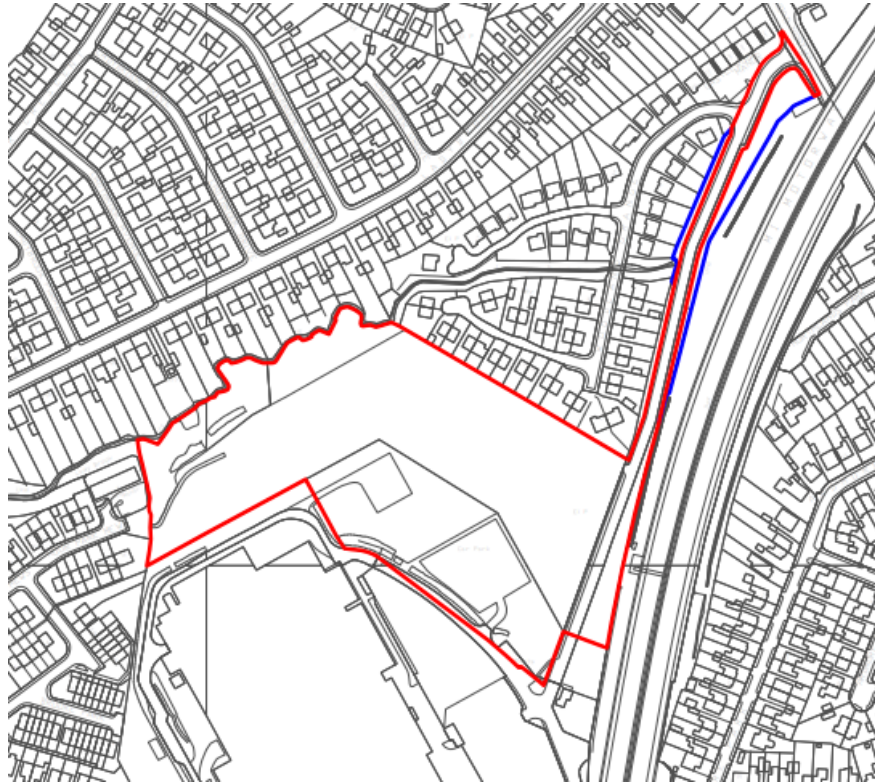
There have been no letters of objection or third party representations.

Having regard to the development plan and relevant material considerations, the proposed development is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions and Section 76 planning agreement and deal with any other issues that may arise, including the final consultation responses from DfI Roads, provided that they are not substantive.

Case Officer Report

Site Location Plan and Layout



1.0	Description of Proposed Development
1.1	This application seeks planning permission for 94 no. dwellings. The following housing mix is proposed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Semi-detached 56 - Detached 16 - Townhouse 3 - Apartment 19
1.2	The site is accessed via an existing roadway onto Finaghy Road North which also serves an abutting housing development to the north (Woodland Grange). The layout comprises a main access roadway running from south-east to north-west then north-east to south-west along the northern boundary of the site.
1.3	The scheme mostly comprises 2 storey detached, semi-detached dwellings and apartment blocks. The predominant house type is semi-detached units (56 units), as shown in the layout above.
1.4	All dwellings are served by 2 in-curtilage parking spaces. Communal parking bays serve the three apartment blocks in the south-eastern portion of the site.
1.5	There are pockets of open space throughout the development, the largest of which is located along the northern boundary, measuring approximately 5,200 sqm.
2.0	Description of Site and Area
2.1	The site area is approximately 3.4 hectares (ha) and rises slightly from south to north, with land continuing to rise beyond the site across the Upper Springfield Road to Black Mountain. The site is well defined with mature planting along all boundaries, and within the site itself. It is characterised by this vegetation and undulating rising land.
2.2	The site is currently accessed from an existing laneway off Finaghy Road North, which serves both residential development and the former Ford Visteon site.
2.3	The residential developments in the area include Woodland Grange, Ladybrook Park, and Moor Park Mews. Dwellings in the surrounding area vary from one to two storey in height and are a mix of semi-detached, detached and terrace dwellings with amenity space to the front and rear of the properties.
3.0	Planning History (on site to south of application site)
3.1	Z/2008/0993/F- Development comprising of 24 no. townhouses and 29 no. apartments. Lands between the Ford Visteon Plant and Phase 1 of a proposed housing development (Z/2002/2135) Finaghy Road North, Belfast. Approved 11/08/2010
3.2	Z/2013/0120/F - Land adjacent to former Ford Visteon Plant, Finaghy Road North. Proposed housing development comprising of 10 semi detached dwellings and 36 townhouses. Approved 26/04/2017
3.3	Z/2013/1434/F - Demolition of existing buildings and proposed comprehensive mixed-use development comprising 244no social and private/affordable residential units (with access from Black's Road), with associated public open space/linear park. Non-residential element to include community centre and class B business units (class B1b/B1c/B2 uses) with associated parking and access from Finaghy Road North. Amended proposals to provide increase in level of Class B Business uses and separate community centre building. Former Visteon Factory, Blacks Road. Approved 08/01/2016

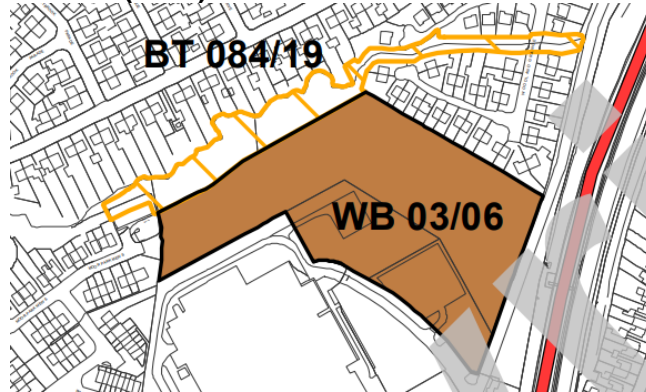
3.3	Planning permission was previously granted on the northern part of the site for a residential development of 10 no. semidetached dwellings and 36 No. townhouses on 26th April 2017 under planning reference Z/2013/0120/F.
3.4	Planning permission was previously granted on the southern part of the site for a residential development of 24 No. townhouses and 29 No. apartments on 11th August 2010 under planning reference Z/2008/0993/F.
3.5	Both of these permissions are live, and this has been confirmed through a Certificate of Lawfulness.
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	<p>Operational policies – the Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These are listed below:</p> <p><i>Strategic Policies</i></p> <p>Policy SP1A – managing growth and supporting infrastructure delivery</p> <p>Policy SP2 – sustainable development</p> <p>Policy SP3 – improving health and wellbeing</p> <p>Policy SP4 – community cohesion and good relations</p> <p>Policy SP5 – positive placemaking</p> <p>Policy SP6 – environmental resilience</p> <p>Policy SP7 – connectivity</p> <p>Policy SP8 – green and blue infrastructure network</p> <p><i>Spatial Development Strategy</i></p> <p>Policy SD1 – Settlement hierarchy</p> <p>Policy SD2 – Settlement Areas</p> <p><i>Shaping a Liveable Place</i></p> <p>Policy HOU1 – Accommodating new homes</p> <p>Policy HOU2 – Windfall housing</p> <p>Policy HOU4 – Density of Residential Development</p> <p>Policy HOU5 – Affordable Housing</p> <p>Policy HOU6 – Housing Mix</p> <p>Policy HOU7 – Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation</p>

	<p>Policy DES1 – Principles of Urban Design Policy DES2 – Masterplanning Approach for Major Development Policy RD1 – New Residential Developments Policy HC1 – Promoting healthy communities</p> <p>Policy ENV1 – Environmental Quality Policy ENV2 – Mitigating Environmental Change Policy ENV3 – Adapting to Environmental Change Policy ENV4 – Flood Risk Policy ENV5 – Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)</p> <p>Policy TRAN1 - Active travel – walking and cycling Policy TRAN2 – Creating an Accessible Environment Policy TRAN 3 – Transport Assessment Policy TRAN 4 – Travel Plan Policy TRAN6 – Access to public roads Policy TRAN8 – Car Parking and Service Arrangements Policy TRAN10 – Design of Car Parking</p> <p>Policy OS1 – Protection of Open Space Policy OS3 – Ancillary Open Space Policy NH1 – Protection of Natural Heritage Resources Policy TRE1 – Trees Policy LC1 - Landscape</p> <p>4.5 The following Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is relevant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable Housing and Housing Mix • Residential Design • Placemaking and Urban Design • Planning and Flood Risk • Masterplanning approach for major development • Transportation • Trees and Development <p>4.6 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.</p> <p>4.7 In the BUAP 2001, the site is unzoned.</p> <p>4.8 BUAP 2001 In dBMAP (v2004 and v2014), the site is zoned for housing (a small section in the south-west corner is unzoned in v2004). The site is also abuts a site of local nature conservation importance which runs along its northern boundary in dBMAP (v2014).</p>
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dBMAP(2004)



dBMAP (2014)



4.9

Regional Planning Policy

Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland 2015 (SPPS)

4.10

Other Material Considerations

Developer Contribution Framework

Creating Places

Belfast Agenda

Belfast Cycling Network Delivery Plan 2022-31

5.0

Statutory Consultees

DfI Roads – Awaiting final response, agreed in principle.

DAERA – No objection, advises conditions.

DfI Rivers – No objection.

NI Water – No objection.

NI Housing Executive – Support.

Shared Environmental Services – No objection, advises condition.

6.0

Non-Statutory Consultees

BCC Environmental Health – Awaiting final response.

<p>7.0</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p>	<p>Representations</p> <p>The application has been advertised and neighbour notified.</p> <p>No objections have been received to date.</p>
<p>8.0</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p> <p>8.3</p> <p>8.4</p> <p>8.5</p>	<p>ASSESSMENT</p> <p>The key issues for the assessment of the application are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of development • Site layout, density and Design • Open Space Provision • Affordable Housing • Trees and landscaping • Traffic, Movement and Parking • Climate change • Impact on amenity • Contaminated land • Drainage and Flooding • Natural Heritage/ Impact on Designated Sites • Impact on Protected Sites • Section 76 planning agreement • Pre-application Community Consultation <p>Principle of development</p> <p>The site is unzoned in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP 2001) and zoned for housing in both versions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (dBMAP). Moreover, the site is within the development limit of the city where housing is generally acceptable. The principle of housing at the site is established through two extant planning approvals Z/2008/0993/F and Z/2013/0120/F.</p> <p>Policy HOU1 identifies a requirement for 31,660 homes during the plan period 2020-2035 including 18,100 homes in the rest of Belfast outside the city centre and Belfast Harbour estate. The provision of 94 no. residential dwellings supports this strategy.</p> <p>Site layout, density and design</p> <p>The proposed site layout would inevitably create four distinctive character areas within the development. The scheme is largely influenced by surrounding residential character, existing topography and mature field boundaries to the north and east (including an area of local nature conservation importance).</p> <p>Each character area relies on differing densities, open spaces and house types to reinforce a sense of local ownership and security of spaces. This distinct identity is reinforced by public realm spaces which include a linear landscaped park running along the northern boundary the site adjacent to a local watercourse. Two character areas are located along to in north-west to south-east axis, linked by a short connecting roadway with the final character area defined by a cluster of 3 apartment blocks and 3 dwellings close to the south-east boundary of the site adjacent to the motorway.</p>

8.6	<p><i>Density:</i></p> <p>The site is approximately 3.4 hectares (ha) in size. With 94 units proposed, the density is approximately 27.6 dwellings per ha. This density is in line with the density band for Outer Belfast (25-125) as set out in Policy HOU4. Whilst the density would be at the lower end of this band, it would complement existing residential densities in the area. Regard is also had to the longevity of the application process with the application in April 2022, well in advance of adoption of the Plan Strategy and formal introduction of Policy HOU4, and that the design concept has therefore been set for some time. Consideration is also given to the live planning approvals on the site, which are of a similar density, albeit slightly less.</p>
8.7	<p><i>Design</i></p> <p>The dwellings are of standard traditional pitched roof design, some dwellings with ground floor bays to the front elevations. These bays are also present on side elevations of dwellings on prominent junctions in order to create a dual aspect and prevent blank gable elevations onto the street. In terms of finishes the walls are largely red brick. The roof slates are dark grey slate. The design and finishes are reflective of the character of the area, particularly that of Woodland Grange to the north and east.</p>
8.8	<p>In terms of layout the scheme can be broken up into distinctive areas. As the layout has been largely dictated by topography there is inevitably long stretches of housing in the upper/ northern part of the site. To avoid potential monotony in terms of visual character, there is a change in surfacing in the cul-de-sacs and planting and decorative railings help define defensible spaces along street frontages. This adds quality and enhances character, helping to create a sense of place.</p>
8.9	<p>The variation in house types, with subtle changes in design used on longer stretches of street reduces the potential monotony in the layout. Coupled with the landscaping and railing details to the front of the dwellings, this will ensure a high quality of streetscape along the more expansive straights within the site.</p>
8.10	<p>There is opportunity to introduce further variety through a different colour palette of materials used in the different character zones, reinforcing a sense of place for residents and visitors. The detail of this can be dealt with through a planning condition.</p>
8.11	<p>As stated above, the design of dwellings on key junctions also respond to their location with the introduction of dual frontage dwellings, avoiding a scenario where blank gables face onto the public road.</p>
8.12	<p>Similarly, the apartment blocks respond to the site layout, forming a built 'bookend' onto the motorway to the east.</p>
8.13	<p>The proposal is considered to accord with Policies DES1, DES2 and RD1.</p>
8.14	<p><i>Housing mix:</i></p> <p>Policy HOU6 states that permission will be granted for residential developments of this scale where the proposed development provides a suitable mix of house types and sizes to promote choice and assist in meeting community needs. Provision should particularly be made for smaller homes across all tenures to meet future household requirements. The proposed housing mix is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Semi-detached 56 - Detached 16 - Townhouse 3 - Apartment 19

8.15	The applicant states that the housing mix is informed by housing need in the area with NIHE involved in discussions in terms of house type and open space provision. NIHE supports the proposed housing mix and state that the proposal will help address specific housing need in the area.
8.16	In assessing the housing mix, regard is had to the location of the site and the previously approved housing mix (two live approvals on site). Taking these considerations into account, on balance, the proposed housing mix is acceptable and compliant with Policy HOU6. <i>Adaptable and accessible accommodation:</i>
8.17	Policy HOU7 states that all new homes should be designed in a flexible way to ensure that housing is adaptable throughout all stages of life.
8.18	The proposed residential units are designed to Lifetime Home standards in terms of minimum space requirements and adaptability. Given that the proposed units are allocated for social housing it is accepted that they will meet Policy HOU 7 standards.
8.19	For schemes of 10 units or more, Policy HOU7 requires at least 10% of the units to be wheelchair accessible. The proposal would include the following wheelchair units:
8.20	All of the Co-Ownership houses will be designed to Lifetime Homes standards and therefore will be capable of being adapted for wheelchair use. There are 20 No. Co-Ownership dwellings proposed, accounting for c.21% of the housing, thus meeting the requirements of Policy HOU7. <i>Masterplanning:</i>
8.21	The proposed development has been assessed against Policy DES2 as set out below.
8.22	<i>Adopting a holistic approach to site assembly, layout and design that is mindful of adjacent sites, where suitable for redevelopment, while avoiding prejudice to future development potential and/or quality where development is of a significant scale and prominence;</i>
8.23	The proposed development is adjacent to a larger housing approval on the Ford Visteon site. The overall site layout takes into account the existing natural features including hedgerows and a watercourse along the northern boundary (forming part of a SLNCI), whilst the residential units are positioned to minimise retaining structures, working with the existing topography of the land and vegetation. In terms of connectivity the scheme will link through to the adjacent 'Blacks Gate' Development via a pedestrian and cycle path. This will promote linkage between Finaghy Road North to the east and Blacks Road to the west. At a more strategic level this will also provide a linkage within a planned greenway, which is discussed further below.
8.24	<i>Promoting opportunities for urban repair and greater connectivity to neighbouring areas by minimising or mitigating physical barriers that create undue effort or separation, informed by feedback from existing communities;</i>
8.25	The application site, adjacent top existing housing developments, is currently vacant and has the potential to encourage anti-social behaviour. Its development offers an opportunity to regenerate the locality and provide ongoing surveillance throughout. Connectivity has been considered with linkages to adjacent Woodlands sports grounds,

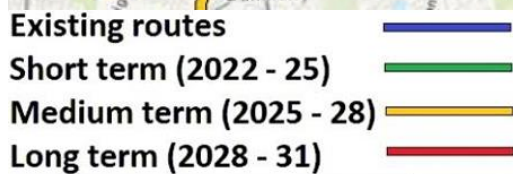
	promoting linkages from the Blacks Gate housing development and Blacks Road to the west.
8.26	<i>Maximising solutions to deliver energy efficiencies that seek to achieve BREEAM 'excellent' or comparable standard;</i>
8.27	The proposed development will deliver energy efficiencies as outlined within climate change considerations.
8.28	<i>Promoting higher density residential and mixed-use development along city corridors and at gateway locations;</i>
8.29	The proposed development provides a mix of residential accommodation and densities appropriate to its location. 56 Semi-detached, 16 Detached 16, 3 Townhouses and 19 Apartment units. With 94 units proposed, the density is approximately 27.6 dwellings per ha. This density is in line with the density band for Outer Belfast (25-125) as set out in Policy HOU4
8.30	<i>Contributing positively to the improvement of the public realm within, and in the proximity of, the development site through the use of high quality hard and soft landscape materials and street furniture;</i>
8.31	A high standard of hard and soft landscape materials are proposed throughout the site with public open space utilising the existing setting provided by the heavily vegetated SLNCI along the northern boundary.
8.32	<i>Including an appropriate landscape management and maintenance plan, early in the planning process, as an integral part of all landscape proposals;</i>
8.33	A landscape management and maintenance plan has been included.
8.34	<i>Enhancing the waterside character and setting of the River Lagan, including the improvement of existing and provision of new access points and new cross river connections where appropriate;</i> N/A
8.35	Referencing unique parts of the city through the realisation of key landmarks within prominent or gateway locations; N/A
8.36	<i>Seeking to include where appropriate the provision of public art; and</i>
8.37	A high standard of communal open space will be provided throughout the site including an equipped children's play area. It is not considered necessary, given the scale of the proposal, to include any public art.
8.38	<i>Seeking the retention of existing trees within and around the site and make adequate provision to allow them to mature while ensuring the continuance of tree cover through new tree planting.</i>
8.39	The site has been surveyed for vegetation suitable for retention and a landscaping plan has been developed which seeks to maximise the retention of existing natural boundaries. Of particular importance, for not only visual but biodiversity reasons, is the

	band of mature planting along the northern boundary of the site. This is being retained in its entirety, and a condition will be applied to ensure this.
8.40	In conclusion, it is considered that the design and external appearance of the proposal is acceptable having regard to Policies RD1, DES1, DES2, DES3, HOU6 and HOU7 of the Plan Strategy.
	Amenity and Open Space Provision
8.41	The proposal has been assessed against Policies OS3 and RD1(d) of the Plan Strategy and <i>Creating Places</i> .
8.42	Policy OS3 of the Plan Strategy requires residential proposals of this scale to delivery a minimum of 10% of the site as open space. The site area is approximately 3.4 ha. Therefore, the expectation is that 3,400 sqm metres of public open space is provided.
8.43	The site consists of two main parcels of open space. The main area of open space is located along the northern boundary of the site, incorporating the SLNCI, and has an area of approximately 5,200 sqm. There is a smaller secondary area of public open space, measuring approximately 750 sqm located in the south-eastern part of the site beside the main point of access.
8.44	These areas represent a total 'usable' area of public amenity space of approximately 5,950 sqm. This overall open space provision of approximately 17.5% of the overall site area meets the requirements of Policy OS3. This is a substantial overall provision well above the recommended 10%. The area to the north will not only provide an attractive open space area but also acts as a buffer to the SLNCI which runs along the northern boundary.
8.45	In terms of private open space, rear garden sizes range from 61 sqm to 296 sqm, with an average provision greater than 70 sqm, and most with areas in excess of this standard. As such the private amenity provision is in keeping with the requirement set out in the <i>Creating Places</i> guidance.
8.46	The apartment blocks would all have areas of semi-private public open space. Each of the apartment blocks in south-eastern corner of the site have a communal area to their rear or side measuring approximately 160-180 sqm. The block with units 2- has an area of approximately 180 sqm, equating to 5sqm per unit. The block housing units 7-15 has an area of 200 sqm, equating to 9sqm per unit and the block housing units 16-21 has an area of 163sqm, equating to 6 sqm per unit. Although the communal space per unit is quite low for the apartments, it must be considered with the overall open space provision for the development, which has a significant overprovision of open space as stated above. On balance the provision for the apartments is considered to be acceptable.
	Affordable Housing
8.47	Policy HOU5 of the Plan Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for residential development on sites greater than 0.1 hectares and/or containing 5 or more dwelling units where a minimum of 20% of units are provided as affordable housing.
8.48	NIHE carries out a Housing Need Assessments (HNAs) annually across all relevant housing areas. This site is located within the Andersonstown Common Landlord Area which sits within the wider Middle West HNA. The social housing new build need for Middle West is 1,107 units for the 2022- 2027 period.

8.49	There are 20 No. Co-Ownership dwellings proposed, accounting for c.21% of the housing. As such, the requirements of Policy HOU5 are met in terms of the quantum of units and the provision of affordable housing (minimum of 20%).
8.49	The Housing Executive, in their initial response, stated that it would welcome the inclusion of accommodation to help address the demand for intermediate housing in the Belfast City Council area. The requirement for this provision is based on the Housing Executive's knowledge of the local housing market; assessment of the intermediate market; and the level of Co-ownership activity in the Belfast City Council area. The Housing Executive estimates intermediate housing demand for the Council area at 140 homes per year.
8.50	NIHE supports the application, citing that mixed tenure development is an important way to create cohesive, sustainable and balanced communities. Ultimately the affordable housing element of the proposal will be secured via a clause within an agreed Section 76 legal agreement, discussed below.
	Trees and landscaping
8.51	The proposal has been assessed against Policy TRE1, LC1, LCB2 and LC3.
8.52	Policy TRE1 seeks to protect existing trees from development, particularly those that are of visual, biodiversity or amenity quality and significance. The landscape strategy focuses on retaining and enhancing the existing hedgerow boundary treatment and the creation of a corridor of open space along the northern boundary incorporating lands within the SLNCI, to provide a high-quality landscape setting incorporating pathways, lighting, rain garden and SUDS swales with associated species-rich yet low maintenance planting.
8.53	The landscaping plan also includes the establishment of an 30-45 metre deep vegetation buffer along the northern boundary of the site to the southern side of the watercourse which defines the site boundary. Existing hedgerows will be augmented to strengthen this boundary providing a strong planted edge not only to the development but along the edge of the SLNCI. Similarly along the north-eastern boundary a 10m deep 'wildlife corridor' is proposed.
8.54	The approach to existing hedgerows along the northern and north-eastern boundaries includes retention of high value tree species and augmentation with native woodland species to provide a diverse hedgerow/woodland boundary to the site.
8.55	Overall, it is considered that there would be no adverse impact on the existing landscape along the site boundaries and the tree planting and landscaping proposals are considered to provide suitable mitigation and enhancement of the site from an ecological point of view.
	Traffic, Movement and parking
8.56	The proposed development site has an existing vehicular access directly off Finaghy Road North, which currently serves the adjacent Woodland Grange development.
8.57	As there is a committed development on the site for 99 dwellings. The proposal sees a reduction in numbers to 94. As such there will be no greater impact upon the road network.
8.58	The proposal includes 2 in curtilage car parking spaces for each of the 75 dwellings (150), 30 spaces for the 19 apartment units and 52 visitor car parking spaces, which equates to approximately 2.5 spaces per residential unit.

8.59 **Green Travel Measures**
 In response to DFI Roads request for green travel measures the agent has confirmed a Green Travel Plan will be submitted setting out how the developer seeks to promote alternatives to the private car and promote green methods of travel.

8.60 Alongside the formal green travel measures a dedicated and segregated 400m long cycle path is proposed that runs from Finaghy Road North, through the site and connects into Black's Gate to the south. It is important to note that this wasn't a feature in the extant permissions and was something that was agreed with local representatives and community groups at Pre-Application stage. This will tie in with plans set out for the area as part of the West Belfast Greenway, outlined in the DFI document 'Belfast Cycling Network Delivery Plan 2022-31' *Scheme 037 West Belfast Greenway Phases 3 & 4*. This forms part of short term and medium term plans for a series of Greenways. The 6,900m long Greenway in question runs south-west to north-east from Dunmurry to Belfast City Centre and is highlighted in yellow and green below:



8.61 The short term schemes are focussed on joining up the existing elements of the network and beginning the process of reaching into areas of the city that are currently without a significant element of infrastructure. The medium term schemes start in earnest the process of delivering cycling infrastructure in the areas of the city where there is currently a marked lack of infrastructure.

8.62 The proposal includes 20 cycle spaces (2 separate blocks of 10) located within the curtilage of the apartment blocks.

8.63 To further reduce the reliance on the private car the offer a free Residential Travel Card to one occupier of each dwelling (within one month of their occupation) until three years after first occupation of that dwelling shall be secured via a Section 76 legal agreement.

8.64	The location of the development reduces the need for vehicular journeys, as major attractions within Belfast City centre can all be accessed by the sustainable modes of transport that will be promoted through the travel plan.
8.65	There are a range of existing pedestrian linkages available to the site with pedestrian footways and streetlighting connecting to the site from Finaghy Road North and leading to Glen Road, Andersonstown Road and a number of nearby residential areas.
8.66	The sites connectivity and accessibility are further reinforced by the provision of a cycle path connecting the site to Finaghy Road North and the Blacks Gate development to the west, this will ultimately be secured via condition for completion prior to occupation of the first residential unit. A variety of sports clubs, churches, cafes, primary schools, bus stops and community/ youth facilities are all accessible within walking distance. A range of shops and nursery, primary and secondary schools are all accessible within walking distance.
8.67	Although a final conclusive consultation response from DfI remains outstanding, the principle of the proposal, including the cycle path provision, has been accepted. The only matter outstanding is the technical details of the cycle path and how it ties into adjacent development and existing cycle/ pedestrian network. Subject to DfI Roads response to the amended plans, it is considered that the proposal complies with Policies TRAN1, TRAN2, TRAN4, TRAN6, TRAN8, TRAN9 and TRAN10.
Climate change	
8.68	Policy ENV2 states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to mitigate environmental change and reduce Green House Gases (GHG) by promoting sustainable patterns of development. The policy goes on to state that development proposals should, where feasible seek to avoid demolition and seek to maximise opportunities to incorporate sustainable design features.
8.69	Policy ENV3 states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to adapt to environmental change to support sustainable and enduring development.
8.70	The proposed units are orientated to maximise solar gains across the site, including alternative elevations for same house types where necessary.
8.71	Policy ENV5 states that developments should include, where appropriate, SuDS measures to manage surface water effectively on site. Across the site Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) measures are included to manage the watercourse along the northern boundary and storm water holistically within the landscaping.
8.72	In conclusion, given the extant planning approvals on the site and the fact the application was submitted well in advance of the adoption of the Local Development Plan – Plan Strategy, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable, having regard to Policies ENV2, ENV3 and ENV5.
Impact on Amenity	
8.73	The proposal has been assessed against Policies RD1, DES 1 and DES3. Policies DES1, DES3 and RD1 highlight the need to minimise the impact of overshadowing and loss of daylight on both new and existing residents and the promotion of quality residential environments.

8.74 The site abuts existing residential development on three sides, to the north-east and north-west in Woodland Grange and to the west in the Blacks Gate development (currently under construction). With the levels from south to north the proposal has potential to impact upon residential amenity to the east. However, given ample separation distances and a significant level of existing and proposed planting along the eastern boundary it is not envisaged that existing properties will experience a significant loss of amenity.

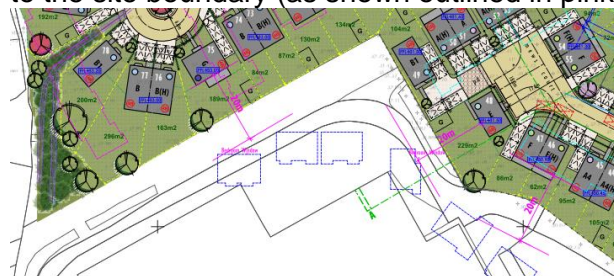
8.75 The 'back to back' separation distance between the proposed dwellings and the dwellings in Woodland Grange ranges between 22m and 26m. This generous separation distance is accompanied by a landscape buffer shown below. With the proposed dwellings having a similar finished floor level, the separation distances and landscaping should ensure there will be no significant impact on residential amenity. It should also be noted that the previously approved dwellings were located much closer to the existing dwellings, as shown below outlined in pink. The proposal is a more favourable layout in terms of potential impacts on neighbouring amenity.


Woodland Grange



8.76 To the north west, the separation distance are substantial between existing and proposed dwellings, and with the SLNCI and associated landscape along the northern boundary and views onto the existing properties will be minimal at best.

8.77 Blacks Gate is a newly constructed development to the west/ south-west of the site, on the former Ford Visteon site. The generous separation distances are evident in the section from the site layout below and measure at least 20m, as recommended in the 'Creating Places' guidance document. Subsequently it is not considered that the amenity of the dwellings in Blacks Gate would be unduly compromised by the proposal. Again it is also worth noting that the extant approval on the site had dwellings located much closer to the site boundary (as shown outlined in pink below)



8.78	<p><i>Noise</i></p> <p>The main source of noise for both day and night hours is noted to be the M1 Motorway.</p>
8.79	<p>The noise report advises that, due to the high level of environmental noise from the M1 Motorway, the design criteria for external noise levels contained within BS8233:2014 will, in the main, not be achievable. However, as per the guidance in the standard, the applicant's consultant has advised that this exceedance should not be a reason to object to object to the development in principle.</p>
8.80	<p>In order to mitigate the worst of the road traffic noise from the M1 Motorway to amenity areas, the applicant's noise consultant has recommended the use of close boarded fencing in the 'rear gardens' of all properties. It is noted two different heights have been suggested; namely 1.8m and 2.1m.</p>
8.81	<p>The orientation and position of the housing units with regard to the location of the associated rear gardens would suggest that areas within certain gardens will benefit from partial shielding from noise provided by the mass of the associated building and/or other adjacent housing units. In such cases, the provision of a close boarded boundary fence around the rear garden would have little to no effect on reducing road traffic noise from the M1 to the external amenity space. Furthermore it would appear that given the layout of the proposal, there will be solid boundary walls provided to some rear gardens. Where this is the case, it is likely that close boarded fencing will be unnecessary.</p>
8.82	<p>These proposed apartments backing onto the M1 are set at a lower level than the motorway and screened by a planted bank, as shown below. The noise impact assessment concluded that noise from the M1 would not adversely impact these units, subject to mitigation measures such as suitable window systems and cavity walls etc, which will be secured via condition.</p>
	
8.83	<p>The applicant's consultant has not provided a map or a schedule to indicate where such fencing mitigation is necessary and which of the two heights of fencing suggested are required. The environmental noise survey shows that road noise levels from the M1 Motorway reduce with distance as per a line source. The shielding provided by the residential units and walls proposed for the development will reduce noise levels further as distance from the motorway increases. At an undefined point, it may be the case that an external amenity space could comply with the external amenity levels contained within BS8233:2014, especially where appropriate mitigation such as close boarded fencing is provided. Noise modelling software may be able to provide information with regard to the above.</p>
8.84	<p>The applicant's consultant has availed of the derogation contained with BS8233:2014, which indicates that in high environmental noise areas, developments should be designed to achieve the lowest practicable noise levels in external amenity spaces but should not be prohibited. It is likely that close boarded boundary fences may reduce environmental noise levels in external amenity spaces that face towards the M1</p>

	Motorway, however, with the information currently provided it is unclear how effective the mitigation would be and where it would be deemed 'necessary'.
8.85	The derogation contained within BS8233:2014 is considered to be a sensible, pragmatic approach to allow developments in high environmental noise areas to proceed, however, the unspecified mitigation measures that may be employed to reduce external amenity area noise levels 'as far as practicable' do not translate well into a recommendation for a planning condition. As such a condition shall be applied ensuring that the appropriate noise mitigating fencing is approved and implemented prior to occupation of any of the apartment units abutting the motorway to the east of the site.
8.86	With regard to façade mitigation, the consultant has indicated that standard cavity wall construction will mitigate the envisaged levels of environmental noise leaving the windows as the main point of noise break in. The consultant has identified that suitable window systems should be applied to all building facades.
8.87	Two different dB Rw levels have been recommended, 37dB Rw +Ctr for proposed units No.1-42 and No.90-94 and 32dB Rw +Ctr for proposed Units No.43-89. It is noted that this recommendation will see different window systems applied to the adjoined semidetached units 42 and 43. It is also noted that the above recommendation does not consider where the mass of the proposed units provides shielding from the predominant M1 Motorway road noise to their own windows or potentially that of adjacent units.
8.88	The applicant's consultant indicates that an alternative means of ventilation will be required. It is typical to rate the use of trickle ventilators with a sound reduction performance (plus traffic noise correction) however, the alternate suggestion of a mechanical ventilation system can potentially generate its own noise which would need specified to meet BS8233:2014 internal noise standards. The chosen means of alternative ventilation has not been specified and the selected method will therefore require some form of performance verification once selected.
8.89	Environmental Health has no objection in principle to the development with regard to adverse impact from environmental noise and has requested that conditions relating to noise and alternative means of ventilation are attached should approval be forthcoming. These conditions are detailed below.
	Contaminated Land
8.90	A Preliminary Risk Assessment (PRA) & Generic Quantitative Risk Assessment (GQRA) report has been provided by RSK Environment Limited (RSK) in support of this application. RSK conclude the GQRA stating the development is regarded low risk to environmental receptors. NIEA Regulation Unit, Land & Groundwater Team have no objections to the development subject to conditions.
8.91	Environmental Health are content subject to condition with regard to Contaminated Land report alongside the extant approvals on the site, and NIEA's opinion the proposal is considered to comply with ENV1 of the Plan Strategy.
	Drainage and Flooding
8.92	The proposal has been assessed against Policy ENV4 and the SPPS.
8.93	There is a designated watercourse known to Dfi Rivers as the Ladybrook River (Extension) that flows along the Northern boundary of this site, the site may be affected by undesignated watercourses of which DFi Rivers have no record.

8.94	Flood Hazard Map (NI) indicates that the development does not lie within the 1 in 100 year fluvial flood plain but is located within a predicted flooded area as indicated on the Surface Water Flood Map. DfI Rivers would have no specific reason to object to the proposed development from a flood risk perspective.
8.95	DfI Rivers has stated that it is essential that a working strip (5-10m) is retained adjacent to the watercourse to facilitate future maintenance by DfI Rivers, other statutory undertaker or the riparian landowners. DfI Rivers acknowledges the provision of a working strip as detailed on the site layout DWG uploaded to the public planning portal on 15th November 2023. This will be secured via planning condition, as detailed below.
Natural Heritage/ Impact on designated sites	
8.96	NIEA Natural Environment Division (NED) notes that the site contains Ladybrook 'Site of Local Nature Conservation Importance' (SLNCI) woodland habitat. NED highlight that this is of high local conservation value. NED welcome plans to retain this area and recommend there is no construction activities or development works within the SLNCI woodland in order to minimise any significant disturbance or deterioration of the SLNCI designated habitat. NED has recommended a condition to protect the Ladybrook SLNCI during the construction phase, this is detailed below.
8.97	This planning application was also considered in light of the assessment requirements of Regulation 43 (1) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) by Shared Environmental Service on behalf of Belfast City Council.
8.98	Having considered the nature, scale, timing, duration and location of the project, it is concluded that it would not be likely to have a significant effect on any European site, either alone or in combination with any other plan or project and therefore an appropriate assessment is not required.
8.99	Between the area of substantive works and the adjacent watercourse, an amenity open space including retention of existing trees is proposed. Only two semi-detached houses are being built in proximity to the watercourse but given the scale/nature of these two properties and the 18km hydrological distance between the development site and designated sites, any potential construction contaminants would be well dispersed/dilute in the water volume before reaching Belfast Lough. Assessment has concluded that there will be no likely significant effects that would undermine the conservation objectives of any European site features.
Section 76 Agreement planning agreement	
8.100	<p>The following planning obligations are considered necessary to make the proposed development acceptable and should be secured through a Section 76 planning agreement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable housing – a minimum of 20% of the 94 residential units should be secured as 'shared ownership' housing in compliance with Policy HOU5; • Green travel measures – travel cards three years as required by Policy TRAN4; • Open space management – delivery, management and maintenance of the open space as required by Policy OS3. • Construction, Employability and Skills Plan – to be agreed prior to commencement of development specific to the Development, addressing the

	<p>employability and skills requirements of the Development during construction phase.</p> <p>The S76 planning agreement has been agreed and will issue alongside any planning permission granted.</p> <p>Pre-application Community Consultation</p> <p>8.101 Applicants for Major development are required to carry out community consultation in advance of submitting an application.</p> <p>8.102 Prior to submitting the application, applicants must give notice to the Council, known as a 'Proposal of Application Notice' (PAN) that an application for planning permission for Major development is to be submitted and set out the proposals for community consultation. A PAN was submitted to the Council on 16th June 2021.</p> <p>8.103 Where pre-application community consultation has been required and a PAN has been submitted at least 12 weeks in advance of the application being submitted, the applicant must prepare a pre-application community consultation report to accompany the planning application.</p> <p>8.104 A Pre-Application Community Consultation Report has been submitted in support of this application. The Report confirms the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under normal circumstances, consultation with the wider public on the proposal would have taken place through a public event, however due to current COVID-19 social distancing restrictions, the public consultation was held through online and remote means. • An online public consultation was held between 28th June 2021 - 2nd August 2021. Information could be accessed online. • A public notice was placed in the Belfast Telegraph W/C 21st June 2021. • A leaflet containing details of the consultation was designed and distributed extensively, by Mail Matters Limited, to properties directly opposite and adjoining the site. • During the five-week online consultation period the project webpage received 301 page views and 225 unique page views to the site. • Engagement also took place with MPs, Assembly Members, and local Councillors. • Meetings were also held with local representatives to provide them with a detailed overview of the plans and an opportunity for them to express their views on the project. <p>8.105 Feedback was received in relation to the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased traffic • Impact of housing numbers, and scale of houses on surrounding area • Environmental and Wildlife concerns • Support for housing provision <p>Following the public consultation period the feedback informed the submission of a Transport Impact Assessment, a planting scheme along site boundaries and an ecological report.</p>
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	It is considered that the Pre-Community Consultation Report submitted has demonstrated that the applicant has carried out their legislative duty to consult the community in advance of submitting an application.
9.0	Recommendation
9.1	Having regard to the development plan and relevant material considerations, the proposed development is considered acceptable.
9.2	It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.
9.3	Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions and Section 76 planning agreement and deal with any other issues that may arise, including the final consultation responses from DfI Roads, provided that they are not substantive.
10.0	DRAFT CONDITIONS
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission. Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. 2. Notwithstanding the submitted details, no development shall commence on site until a Phasing Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall not be carried out or sequenced unless in accordance with the approved Phasing Plan. Reason: In the interests of the orderly development of the site. 3. No residential unit shall be occupied until the dedicated and segregated 400m long cycle path proposed, that runs from Finaghy Road North, through the site and connects into Black's Gate to the south, is completed to the satisfaction of the Council, unless otherwise agreed in writing. Reason: To promote sustainable travel patterns and promote healthy communities. 4. No residential unit shall be occupied unless its respective external amenity/garden areas (and in the case of the apartments its respective external and internal amenity areas) have been provided in accordance with the approved plans. Reason: To ensure that a quality residential environment is provided for occupants of the approved development. 5. All hard and soft landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any phase unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council. Any existing or proposed trees or plants indicated on the approved plans which, within a period of five years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged, diseased or dying shall be replaced during the next planting season with other trees or plants of a location, species and size, details of which shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. All hard surface treatment of open parts of the site shall be permeable or drained to a permeable

area. All hard landscape works shall be permanently retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area

6. Prior to works commencing on site, temporary fencing with exclusion signs shall be erected along the Ladybrook SLNCI. No works, infill, storage or constructional activity associated with the development, including the removal, dumping or storage of materials shall take place east/west/north/south of this fence. The fence shall not be removed until all works are completed.

Reason: To ensure the SLNCI is not compromised.

7. If piling is required, no development or piling work should commence on this site until a piling risk assessment, undertaken in full accordance with the methodology contained within the Environment Agency document on "Piling and Penetrative Ground Improvement Methods on Land Affected by Contamination: Guidance on Pollution Prevention", has been submitted in writing and agreed with the Planning Authority. The methodology is available at:
<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20140329082415/http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/scho0501bitt-e-e.pdf>

Reason: Protection of environmental receptors to ensure the site is suitable for use.

8. If during the development works, new contamination or risks are encountered which have not previously been identified, works should cease and the Council shall be notified immediately. This new contamination shall be fully investigated in accordance with the Land Contamination: Risk Management (LCRM) guidance available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/land-contamination-how-to-manage-the-risks>
In the event of unacceptable risks being identified, a remediation strategy shall be agreed with the Planning Authority in writing, and subsequently implemented and verified to its satisfaction.

Reason: Protection of environmental receptors to ensure the site is suitable for use.

9. After completing any remediation works under Condition 7, and prior to occupation of the development, a verification report needs to be submitted in writing and agreed with the Council. This report should be completed by competent persons in accordance with the Land Contamination: Risk Management (LCRM) guidance available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/land-contamination-how-to-manage-the-risks>

The verification report should present all the remediation, waste management and monitoring works undertaken and demonstrate the effectiveness of the works in managing all the risks and wastes in achieving the remedial objectives.

Reason: Protection of environmental receptors to ensure the site is suitable for use.

10. No development should take place on-site until the method of sewage disposal has been agreed in writing with Northern Ireland Water (NIW) or a Consent to discharge has been granted under the terms of the Water (NI) Order 1999.

Reason: This condition is both to ensure protection to the aquatic environment and to help the applicant avoid incurring unnecessary expense before it can be ascertained that a feasible method of sewage disposal is available. The applicant should note this also includes the purchase of any waste water treatment system.

11. No development shall commence within each phase unless a final Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for that phase has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The final CEMP must be site specific and include all necessary mitigation measures for the construction and operational phases of the development to avoid any pollutant egress to Belfast Lough. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved CEMP.

Reason: To ensure the project will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site.

12. Prior to works commencing on site, temporary fencing with exclusion signs shall be erected along the Ladybrook SLNCI. No works, infill, storage or constructional activity associated with the development, including the removal, dumping or storage of materials shall take place east/west/north/south of this fence. The fence shall not be removed until all works are completed.

Reason: To ensure the protection of a designated site.

13. The residential units hereby approved shall not be occupied until their respective boundary treatment has been implemented in accordance with the approved plans. The boundary treatment shall be retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of amenity.

14. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied or operated until the parking and turning areas have been provided in accordance with the approved plans. Such areas shall not be used for any purpose other than the parking and turning of vehicles and such areas shall remain free of obstruction for such use at all times.

Reason: To ensure adequate car parking within the site.

15. Prior to occupation of the development, the noise mitigation measures specified within Section 6.0 of the Layde Consulting report entitled 'Noise Impact Assessment-Proposed Residential Development Comprising of 94 No. units including Detached, Semi-Detached, Townhouses & Apartments [LA04/2021/1559/PAN], Lands at Finaghy Road North, Belfast April 2022 P573/1 as amended by Layde Consulting letter of clarification addressed to Chris Bryson of Gravis Planning referenced P573-3 and dated 16th January 2025 shall be installed within habitable rooms of the development and retained at all times.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of occupants of the buildings hereby approved.

16. Prior to commencement of development the applicant shall submit to the planning service for review and approval, the final details of the ventilation strategy to habitable rooms. The final details shall confirm that any passive vents (when open) have a sound reduction equivalent to or greater to the sound reduction achieved by the glazing. Where any element of mechanical or active means of ventilation is proposed, the final details shall include a Noise Impact Assessment that confirms that the noise associated with its operation will not exceed internal target levels for habitable rooms in line with BS 8233:2014 Guidance on sound insulation and noise for buildings/ ProPg 2017 .

REASON: To safeguard the amenity of occupants of the buildings hereby approved. Approval is required upfront because the ventilation strategy may be integral to the overall design of the development.

17. Prior to occupation of the hereby permitted development, the approved final window schedule and approved alternative means of ventilation shall be installed so as to achieve suitable internal noise levels in all habitable rooms in accordance with BS8233:2014, with the windows closed and the alternative ventilation provided.

Reason: Protection of residential amenity.

18. Prior to the occupation of the development the approved ventilation strategy to habitable rooms (in addition to that provided by open windows) shall be installed as approved and retained at all times.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of occupants of the buildings hereby approved.

19. Prior to occupation of any of the residential units hereby approved, details of acoustic fencing along the boundary of the motorway shall be submitted to the Council for approval in writing. These details must demonstrate how external amenity noise levels will be achieved in accordance with BS8233:2014. The noise mitigation fencing will be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation of any of the approved apartment units No. 2-6, as shown on approved site layout plan.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity.

20. Prior to the occupation of the proposed development, a Verification Report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. This report must demonstrate that the remediation measures outlined in the RSK Ireland report entitled 'MJ McBride Construction Ltd, Remedial Strategy, Finaghy Road North, Belfast, 605546-R2(00), January 2025' have been implemented.

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 (residential with homegrown produce). It must demonstrate that the identified human health contaminant linkages are effectively broken. The Verification Report shall be in accordance with current Environment Agency and CIRIA guidance and British Standards. In particular, the Verification Report must demonstrate that:

a) A minimum 600mm capping layer has been emplaced in the landscaped areas of Plots 46 to 51 and 89 to 94, as demonstrated on Figures 4 and 5 of the RSK Ireland report entitled 'MJ McBride Construction Ltd,

	<p>Remedial Strategy, Finaghy Road North, Belfast, 605546-R2(00), January 2025'. The capping layer must be formed from material that is demonstrably suitable for use (residential with homegrown produce).</p> <p>Reason: To demonstrate that the required remedial measures have been incorporated into the development, in the interests of human health.</p> <p>21. 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that any contamination within the site is appropriately dealt with, in the interests of human health.</p> <p>22. The service strip along the northern boundary of the site, as shown on site layout plan No. 02A, published on the Planning Portal 15th November 2023, shall be provided prior to occupation of any residential unit hereby approved and retained in accordance with the approved details. This strip shall remain free from future tree/ hedge planting, raising of levels and any permanent structure.</p> <p>Reason: To facilitate any necessary servicing of the adjacent watercourse.</p>
	<p>DRAFT INFORMATIVES</p> <p>Section 76 planning agreement This planning permission is subject to a planning agreement under Section 76 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. This decision should be read in conjunction with the planning agreement, which secures the following planning obligations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable housing • Green travel measures • Delivery, management and maintenance of the open space <p>Dust Management Construction dust management measures in accordance with the provisions of the IAQM guidance 'Assessment of dust from demolition and construction 2024 V2.2' shall be developed, documented, implemented and monitored throughout the duration of the construction phase of the development.</p> <p>Compliance with planning permission Please make sure that you carry out the development in accordance with the approved plans and any planning conditions listed above. Failure to do so will mean that the</p>

proposal is unauthorised and liable for investigation by the Council's Planning Enforcement team. If you would like advice about how to comply with the planning permission, you are advised to the contact the Planning Service at Belfast City Council at planning@belfastcity.gov.uk

Discharge of conditions

This planning permission includes condition(s) which require further details to be submitted to and approved by the Council. Please read the condition(s) carefully so that you know when this information needs to be provided and approved. It could take a minimum of 8 weeks for the Council to approve the details, assuming that they are satisfactory, and sometimes longer depending on the complexity of the condition. You should allow for this when planning the timeline of your project.

Non-planning requirements

The grant of planning permission does not dispense with the need to obtain licenses, authorisations may have been identified by consultees in their response to the application and can be accessed on the Northern Ireland Planning Portal website. The responses from consultees may also include other general advice for the benefit of the applicant or developer. consents or permissions under other legislation or protocols.

ADDENDUM REPORT	
Committee Meeting Date: 16 th June 2026	
Application ID: LA04/2025/0288/F	
<p>Proposal: Retrospective change of use from ground floor taxi passenger terminal, cafe, office and newsagent to a Homeless Centre, Category D1(B). [The centre will provide meals, washing and changing facilities and an internal social amenity area for users. The centre will operate Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week from 4:00 pm up until 10:00 pm] (Amended Description)</p>	<p>Location: Existing taxi passenger terminal and former retail unit located within 35a King Street, Belfast, BT1 1HU</p>
<p>Referral Route: Paragraph 3.8.7 of the Scheme of Delegation (discretion of the Director of Planning and Building Control).</p>	
<p>Recommendation: Approval with conditions</p>	
<p>Applicant Name and Address: Belfast Homeless Services Charity No. 108018 35a King Street, Belfast, BT1 1HU</p>	<p>Agent Name and Address: Harry McConnell RPP Architects Ltd 155-157 Donegall Pass Belfast BT7 1DT</p>
<p>Valid date: 11th March 2025</p>	
<p>Target date (15 weeks): 24th June 2025</p>	
<p>Contact officer: Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management)</p>	
<p>Background:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This application was reported to the Planning Committee on 17th February 2026. The Committee deferred consideration of the application on the grounds that there was an outstanding Environmental Health consultation response. 2. Environmental Health had provided its response on the day of the Committee but it was too late to report it to the meeting. Whilst the Environmental Health response recommended conditions, these included the requirement for the applicant to provide further information regarding the design of the odour abatement system. Officers considered it prudent to require the information to be submitted upfront before a decision is made to ensure that the proposed solution can be dealt with under the confines of the planning application. 3. This addendum report deals with the subsequent further information submitted to the Council and Environmental Health's further consultation response. It also provides updated advice from PSNI in relation to crime and anti-social behaviour issues. The addendum report should be read in conjunction with the original report to the 17th February 2026 Committee, appended. 	

Odour abatement:

4. In its consultation response of 17th February 2026 (published on the NI Planning Portal on 18th February 2026), Environmental Health recommended conditions in respect of odour abatement, hours of operation and noise.
5. In relation to odour abatement, Environmental Health recommended a condition that seeks a schematic drawing detailing the exact specifications of the proposed odour control components, location and duct runs to achieve a “very high level” of odour control as per best practice guidance. As stated previously, officers sought the information up-front to ensure that the proposals were within the confines of the proposal. Having reviewed the further plans submitted by the applicant, it is evident that some of the odour abatement equipment would be outside the application site (red line) and could not therefore be appropriately secured by condition.
6. In response, the applicant has accepted a “no-cooking” condition that would dispense with the need for enhanced odour abatement. Environmental Health has confirmed that it is content with this approach. A list of updated conditions, including those relating to hours of operation and noise controls, is provided at the end of this Addendum report. Subject to these conditions, and having regard to the advice from Environmental Health, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy ENV1.

Advice from PSNI:

7. PSNI has provided updated advice. It advises that when comparing crime and Anti-Social-Behaviour (ASB) reported and recorded on King Street and Castle Street (only) between:

1/1/25 – 3/6/25

AND

1/1/26 – 3/6/26

There has been no increase in reported [emphasis] crime or ASB.

8. PSNI had previously advised that there had similarly been no reported increase in crime or ASB during the period 1/5/25 (when it is understood the use commenced) to 1/3/26.
9. However, PSNI states that this does not mean either crime or ASB has not increased; relevant stakeholders may say different and many businesses in meetings PSNI has attended throughout the City Centre advise they do not have time to report etc.

Recommendation:

10. 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.
11. Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the conditions and deal with any other matters which may arise, provided the issues are not substantive.

DRAFT CONDITIONS

12. A list of updated draft conditions is provided below.

1. This planning permission has effect from the date which the development hereby approved was carried out.

Reason: *As required by Section 55 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.*

2. The development hereby permitted shall not be operated unless in accordance with the approved management plan.

Reason: To ensure adequate management and in the interests of the amenity of the area.

3. The homeless shelter hereby approved shall not be operational outside the following hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week from 4:00 pm up until 10:00 pm.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the area.

4. No external plant or equipment shall be installed unless previously approved in writing by the Council.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the area.

5. No amplified sound shall take place on the premises.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the area.

6. No tannoys/PA/Loudspeakers shall be used at any time.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the area.

7. There shall be no cooking on the premises other than the preparation of hot beverages or the heating of food in a panini machine / toaster / air-fryer / microwave oven.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the area.

Development Management Report	
Committee Meeting Date: 17 th February 2026	
Application ID: LA04/2025/0288/F	
Proposal: Retrospective change of use from ground floor taxi passenger terminal, cafe, office and newsagent to a Homeless Centre, Category D1(B). [The centre will provide meals, washing and changing facilities and an internal social amenity area for users. The centre will operate Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week from 4:00 pm up until 10:00 pm] (Amended Description)	Location: Existing taxi passenger terminal and former retail unit located within 35a King Street, Belfast, BT1 1HU
Referral Route: Paragraph 3.8.7 of the Scheme of Delegation (discretion of the Director of Planning and Building Control).	
Recommendation: Approval with conditions	
Applicant Name and Address: Belfast Homeless Services Charity No. 108018 35a King Street, Belfast, BT1 1HU	Agent Name and Address: Harry McConnell RPP Architects Ltd 155-157 Donegall Pass Belfast BT7 1DT
Valid date: 11 th March 2025	
Target date (15 weeks): 24 th June 2025	
Contact officer: Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management)	
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>This application seeks full planning permission for change the use of 35a King Street from taxi passenger terminal with café, offices and newsagents to a Homeless Centre, Category D1(B). The centre will provide meals, washing and changing facilities and an internal social amenity area for users. The centre will operate Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week from 4.00pm up until 10.00pm.</p> <p>The use has been operating since May 2025 and retrospective planning permission is sought.</p> <p>The key issues for consideration of the application are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of the proposed use • Design and Placemaking • Health and Wellbeing • Access and Transport • Impact on neighbour amenity • Anti-social behaviour <p>The site is located within Belfast City centre and is designated as Primary Retail Core in both dBMAPs.</p>	

The proposal is considered to comply with Policies DES1, HC1 CI1, SP3, SP4, SP5, TRAN8 of the Belfast Local Development Plan Strategy 2035, the SPPS and Section 91(2) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.


Recommendation

Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.

Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the conditions, environmental health final consultation response and deal with any other matters which may arise, provided the issues are not substantive.

Officer Report

1.0	Drawings and Imagery
1.2	
1.3	

1.4	 <p>EXISTING FRONT ELEVATION</p> <p>PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION - NO CHANGES TO BE MADE TO FRONT ELEVATION</p>
2.0	Characteristics of the Site and Area
2.1	The site is located at 35a King Street, which was formally a taxi passenger terminal with café, offices and newsagents.
2.2	<p>The surrounding area is predominantly commercial, with a residential apartment block and multi storey car park attached to the building.</p> <p>The site is located on the edge of the city centre boundary opposite the southern entrance to Castlecourt Multi Storey Carpark. There are hotels, bars, and retail offerings in the immediate surroundings of the site commensurate with its city centre location.</p>
3.0	Description of Proposal
3.1	The application seeks full planning permission for change the use of 35a King Street from taxi passenger terminal with café, offices and newsagents to a Homeless Centre, Category D1(B). The centre will provide meals, washing and changing facilities and an internal social amenity area for users. The centre will operate Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week from 4.00pm up until 10.00pm.
3.2	The proposed change of use relates to the ground floor of the premises only.
3.3	The use has been operating since May 2025 and retrospective planning permission is sought.
4.0	Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations
4.1	Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035
4.2	<u>Strategic policies</u>
4.3	<p>Policy SP2 – sustainable development</p> <p>Policy SP3 – improving health and wellbeing</p>

	<p>Policy SP4 – community cohesion and good relations Policy SP5 – positive placemaking Policy SP6 – environmental resilience Policy SP7 – connectivity Policy SD2 – Settlement Areas</p> <p><u>Operational policies</u></p> <p>4.4 DES1 – Principles of Urban Design HC1 – Promoting Healthy Communities CI1 – Community Infrastructures TRAN8 - Car parking and Servicing Arrangements</p> <p>4.5 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)</p> <p>Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) (Edition 2, 2025)</p> <p>Other Policies <i>Belfast Agenda</i> (Community Plan) Creating Places (DfI)</p> <p>Relevant Planning History</p> <p>The site and surrounding area do not have any planning history of direct relevance to consideration of the application.</p>
5.0	Consultations and Representations
5.1	<p>Statutory Consultations</p> <p>DFI Roads – No objection</p>
5.2	<p>Non-statutory Consultations</p> <p>Environmental Health – Awaiting final response PSNI – Comments (see main report)</p>
	<p>Representations</p>
5.3	<p>The application has been advertised in the press and neighbours notified.</p>
5.4	<p>67 objections have been received, raising the following concerns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-social behaviour • Impact on residential amenity • Impact on community cohesion • Health and Wellbeing • Detrimental to placemaking
	<p>All issues have been addressed in the main body of the report.</p>

	<p>The council also note that there have been 149 letters of support received. The key points have been outlined below;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The scheme will help combat the homelessness problem withing Belfast - The centre was successful in other locations - Adequate anti-social behaviour policies - Zero tolerance drug and alcohol policy - Accessible city centre location - Provides a local need
6.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT
	<p><u>Development Plan Context</u></p> <p>6.1 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.</p> <p>6.2 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.</p> <p>6.3 The Development Plan is the Belfast Local Development Plan, which replaces the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 as the statutory plan for the city. The Belfast LDP is in two parts: Part 1 is the Plan Strategy, which was adopted on 02 May 2023. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan, which will provide the zonings and proposals map for Belfast and has yet to be published.</p> <p>6.4 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 maps 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.</p> <p>6.5 Operational policies – the Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These are listed in the report.</p> <p>Proposals Maps The site is located within the City Centre in both versions of BUAP, it also falls within the Primary Retail Core</p> <p><u>Key issues</u></p> <p>6.6 The key issues are in assessing the application are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Principle of the proposed use ● Design and Placemaking ● Health and Wellbeing ● Access and transport ● Impact on neighbour amenity ● Anti-social behaviour

6.7	<p>Principle of the proposed use.</p> <p>The council seeks to ensure that all new developments aid the needs of the community. Policy CI1 (Community infrastructures) seeks to protect and provide development opportunities for community, health, leisure, nurseries and educational facilities based on local need in line with the projected population growth. The proposal will provide an important support service for vulnerable people in a sustainable, accessible location close to public transport and local services. The use is similar to other community-type facilities. BCC Planning therefore believe the indoor facility will meet the needs of the homeless community in City Centre Belfast.</p>
6.8	<p>Belfast Homeless Services previously resided at another premises location on Amelia Street. However it is understood that the building was no longer safe due to its structural condition and therefore the charity had to find another building to reside in. The proposal will provide an important support service for vulnerable people in a sustainable, accessible location close to public transport and local services. The use is similar to other community-type facilities</p>
6.9	<p>It is noted that in Belfast, an average of 9,661 households with homelessness status were listed, according to data from Belfast City Council in February 2025. This number has shown a steady increase year-over-year, according to Homeless Connect. Additionally, at the end of 2023, there were 8,725 homeless households in Belfast, with North and West Belfast areas experiencing the highest concentrations</p>
6.10	<p>The site lies within a mixed use commercial and residential area within the Primary Retail Core of the City Centre. The principle of a change of use from a taxi passenger terminal with café, offices and newsagents to Homeless Day Centre is considered acceptable at this location.</p>
6.11	<p>Design and Positive Placemaking</p> <p>Policy SP5 of the Local Development plan relates to positive place making and Accessibility. The aim of this policy is to promote the principles of good design in the creation of buildings and spaces that strengthen civic pride, community ownership and stewardship. The built environment and its future development will have a substantial influence on the character and quality of Belfast. By way of scale, location and nature, there is no reason to suggest that the proposed use is conflicting which Policy SP5. BCC Planning service are of the view that the homeless centre is making use of a vacant city centre site and adding diversity to the area.</p>
6.12	<p>The proposed homeless centre is within an existing building designed in accordance with Policy DES1, ensuring that it responds sensitively to the character and context of the surrounding area. The scale, massing, and materials respect the local built environment, avoiding any institutional appearance. The layout promotes safety and privacy for users, with clearly defined public and private spaces and inclusive access throughout. The building integrates well with the street frontage while maintaining a discreet and welcoming entrance that supports social integration and reduces stigma.</p>
6.13	<p>The development also meets DES1 principles through its emphasis on sustainability, connectivity, and high-quality design. Located near public transport and key services, the centre supports active travel and accessibility for both volunteers and service users. The spaces have been designed to enhance quality of life, providing private accommodation and communal areas.</p>
6.14	<p>Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>The council seek to ensure that all new developments maximise opportunities to promote healthy and active lifestyles. New developments should be designed,</p>

	constructed, and managed in ways to improve health and promote healthy lifestyles. Policy HC1 (Promoting Healthy Communities) aligns with the Belfast Agenda, which places an emphasis on healthy lifestyles, physical and emotional wellbeing, reducing health inequalities and better services for those who suffer poor health.
6.15	Policy HC1 states planning permission will be granted for proposals that help to sustain and improve neighbourhoods in all parts of the city. The homeless centre will be used to bring communities together by way of its accessible design, inclusive demonstrations, and educational studies, therefore complying with Policy HC1.
6.16	Policy SP3 of the Belfast Local Development Plan also relates health and wellbeing in that the council will support development that maximises opportunities to improve it. By introducing a day centre for the homeless in Belfast it will allow for social inclusion and enhance the daily living of its visitors.
	Access and transport
6.17	The site is highly accessible and benefits from the transport links within Belfast City Centre, therefore the council consider the proposal has met policy TRAN8 (Car parking and servicing arrangements) of the Belfast Local Development Plan. The application site is also accessible by foot due to its prime located on King Street. It is presumed that the vast majority of attendees will arrive on foot. The walking infrastructure in the city centre is of a high standard and promotes a sustainable mode of transport.
6.18	Impact on neighbour amenity
	The site is located in a mostly commercial area although the premises is part of a much larger building which contains apartments, as well as a retail store and multi-storey car park. Access to the apartment block is via a controlled door at the opposite corner to the centre.
6.19	BCC Planning note that the noise generated from the proposed use will be of no greater impact than the previous taxi passenger terminal with café, offices and newsagents. Therefore, the proposal will not harm the amenity of adjacent and nearby landuses by way of noise.
6.20	Environmental Health has been consulted and have raised no concerns with regard to impact on the amenity of local residents from the proposal.
	Any general disturbance in the area is for the PSNI to deal with accordingly.
	Anti-Social Behaviour
6.21	The daytime use of the centre minimises the potential for impact on residential amenity during antisocial hours, normally considered to be between 11pm and 7am.. A condition has been added to ensure that the day centre is only operated between 4pm-10pm.
6.22	The addition of the day centre to the city centre, will assist the issue of homelessness and ensure that there is a safe place to attend, which will be managed by staff at all times.
6.23	The agent has submitted a management plan to the council, section 4 covers anti-social behaviour. Please see below;

6.24	<p>Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero tolerance for ASB: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Guests involved in ASB (inside or outside the Centre) are issued temporary exclusions. ○ Repeat offenders face permanent exclusions from the service. ○ All incidents are reported to PSNI when necessary.
6.25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nightly Guest Register with times and names. ○ Completion of Incident Reports as required. ○ Alcohol is strictly prohibited inside the Centre or outside the premises. ○ Protocols for safe litter disposal
6.26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer presence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Three volunteers stationed outside the Centre during operating hours to monitor compliance.
6.27	<p>PSNI has been informally consulted on the application as a non-statutory consultee, and have advised:</p> <p><i>“The carefully considered opinion of my team is that it is probable there will be an increase in what is perceived as anti-social behaviour if this becomes a homeless centre. It is harder to confidently say there will be an increase in crime but again it is a potential outworking.</i></p> <p><i>While I have no doubt the venue will continue to be managed internally to a very high standard the staff and volunteers of Belfast Homeless Services can have little control over what will happen as persons make their way to and from the venue or if they are refused entry / removed due to how they are presenting. This will then be for the PSNI to manage.”</i></p>
6.28	<p>Whilst the proposed use has the potential for anti-social behaviour, the management plan proposed and to be conditioned, is considered sufficiently robust to deal with matters which may arise. Furthermore, the centre has been operational since mid 2025 and no evidence has been provided to show that the centre has had an unacceptable impact on the amenity of the local area.</p>
6.29	<p>On balance; it is considered that given the important and necessary support role the centre plays within the city, its daytime only use, alongside the appropriate conditioning of a robust management plan, it will therefore not significantly impact the amenity of the local area to an unacceptable degree and the application is recommended for approval.</p>
7.0	<p>Summary and Recommendation</p>
7.1	<p>Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.</p>

7.2

Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise conditions, deal with the final Environmental Health consultation response and any other matters which may arise as long as they are not substantive.

DRAFT CONDITIONS:

8. This planning permission has effect from the date which the development hereby approved was carried out.

Reason: As required by Section 55 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

9. The development hereby permitted shall not be operated unless in accordance with the approved management plan. (Insert name and date).

Reason: To ensure adequate management and in the interests of the amenity of the area.

10. The daytime homeless shelter hereby approved shall not be operational outside the following hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week from 4:00 pm up until 10:00 pm.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the area.

11. *Cooking on premises- awaiting EHO response.*

DRAFT INFORMATIVES:

1. Please make sure that you carry out the development in accordance with the approved plans and any planning conditions listed above. Failure to do so will mean that the proposal is unauthorised and liable for investigation by the Council's Planning Enforcement team. If you would like advice about how to comply with the planning permission, you are advised to contact the Planning Service at Belfast City Council at planning@belfastcity.gov.uk.
2. This decision relates to the following approved drawing numbers: 01,02,03,04 and 05 (Uploaded to the Public Planning Portal on 21/02/25 and 12/03/25)

Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

Summary	
Application ID: LA04/2025/1991/F	Committee Meeting Date: 16 th June 2026
Proposal: Subdivision of the existing cash and carry building and the change of use of 4,750 sq,m gross floorspace for use as a Class A1 retail; erection of new loading bay in service yard; minor external alterations to building; reconfiguration of car park.	Location: Makro, 97 Kingsway, Belfast, BT17 9NS
Referral Route: Paragraph 3.8.2 of the Scheme of Delegation (major application)	
Recommendation:	Approval subject to conditions
Applicant Name and Address: Tesco Stores Ltd Tesco Head Office Falcon Way, Shire Park Welwyn Garden City AL7 1TW	Agent Name and Address: Roderick MacLeod Reline Planning Services Glen Road Dunblane FK15 0HR
Date Valid: 3.12.2025	
Target Date: 01.07.2026	
Contact Officer: Ciara Reville, Principal Planner (Development Management)	
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>The application seeks full permission for the subdivision of the existing cash and carry building and the change of use of 4,750 sq,m gross floorspace for use as a Class A1 retail; erection of new loading bay in service yard; minor external alterations to building; reconfiguration of car park.</p> <p>The application relates to Makro situated at 97 Kingsway which is a cash and carry business within a large warehouse building. The site includes a considerable amount of parking to the north of the building.</p> <p>The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Principle of the Change of Use</i> • <i>Proposed Design and placemaking</i> • <i>Proposed Access and Car Parking</i> • <i>Climate Change</i> • <i>Health Impacts</i> • <i>Environmental Protection</i> • <i>Waste Water Infrastructure</i> 	

- *Waste Storage*
- *Employability and Skills*
- *Pre-Application Community Consultation*

The principle of the proposed development is considered acceptable under the strategic aims of the RDS, the SPPS and the Plan Strategy. It has been demonstrated there is no sequentially preferable site to accommodate the proposal and it will not have an adverse impact on existing centres.

A consultation from DFI Roads remains outstanding, delegated authority is requested to deal with the consultation.

NI Water object to the proposal and SES require further information to carry out a comprehensive HRA. Delegated authority is requested to deal with this issue.

No objections have been received.

Recommendation

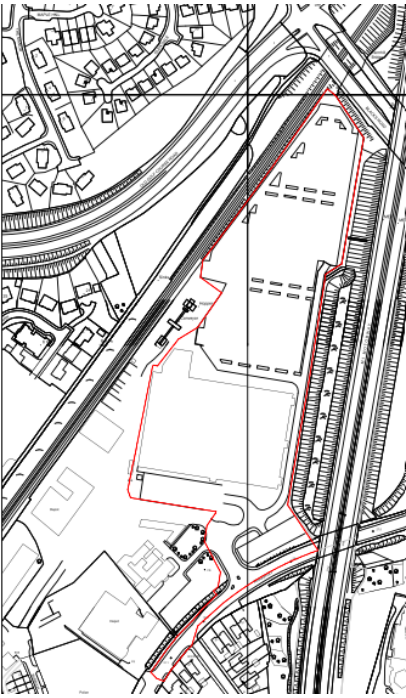
Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.

Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with the outstanding DFI Roads response, SES and any other issues that arise provided that they are not substantive.

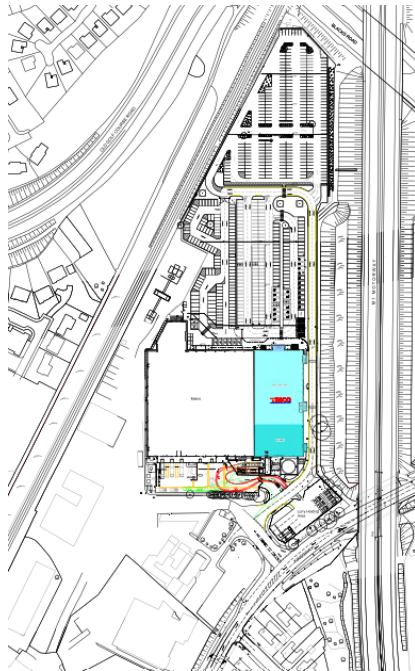
Officer Report

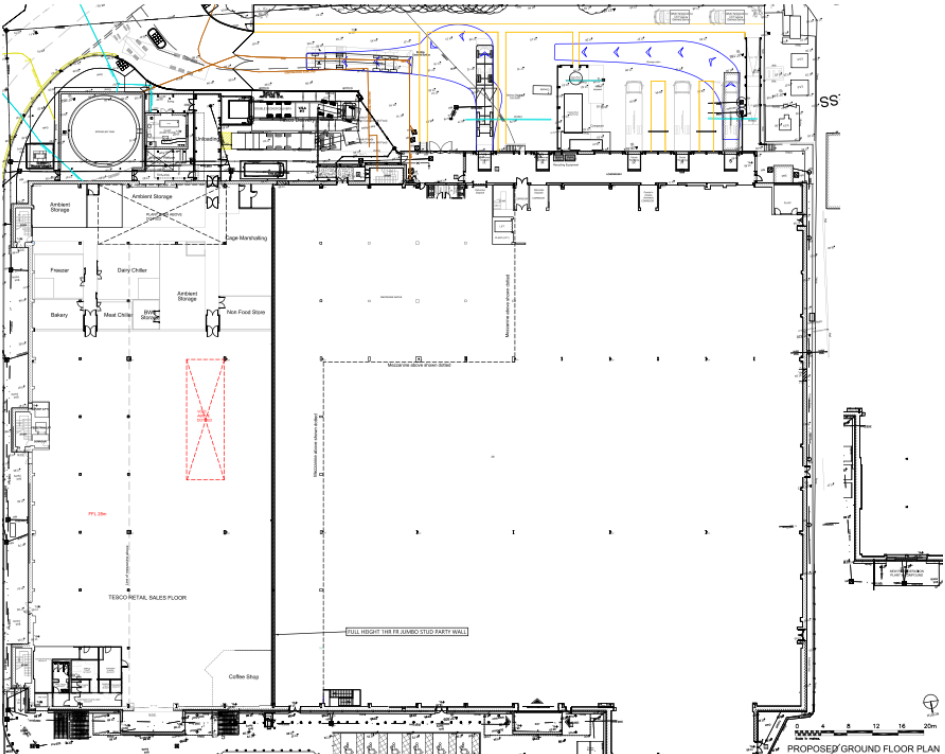
1.0

**Proposed Plans
Site location plan**



Proposed Site Plan:



	<p>Proposed Ground Floor Plan</p> 
<p>2.0</p>	<p>Characteristics of the Site and Area</p>
<p>2.1</p>	<p>The application relates to Makro situated at 97 Kingsway which is a cash and carry business within a large warehouse building. The site includes a considerable amount of parking to the north of the building.</p>
<p>2.2</p>	<p>The site is bounded to the east by the motorway and to the west by the railway. The surrounding area is industrial in nature with construction companies situated to the south west. Residential areas are separated from the site by the railway to the west and industrial uses to the south/south west.</p>
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Description of Proposal</p>
<p>3.1</p>	<p>The application seeks full planning permission for the subdivision of the existing cash and carry building and the change of use of 4,750 sq,m gross floorspace for use as a Class A1 retail; erection of new loading bay in service yard; minor external alterations to building; reconfiguration of car park.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Development Plan – operational policies Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035</p>
<p>4.2</p>	<p>Strategic Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy SP1A – Managing growth and supporting infrastructure delivery • Policy SP2 – Sustainable development

<p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p> <p>4.5</p> <p>4.6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy SP3 – Improving health and wellbeing • Policy SP5 – Positive placemaking • Policy SP6 – Environmental resilience • Policy SP7 – Connectivity • Policy SD2 – Settlement areas <p>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)</p> <p>Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</p> <p>Other Guidance Placemaking and Urban Design SPG Transportation SPG Retail and Main Town Centre Uses SPG</p> <p>Relevant Planning History LA04/2024/1913/PAN- Makro, 97 Kingsway. Subdivision of existing cash and carry and change of use of c. 4,000 sq,m gross floorspace for use as Class A1 shop for occupation by Tesco (after relocation from existing store in Dunmurry), reconfiguration of car park, junction alterations and erection of petrol filling station. Proposal of Application Notice is acceptable.</p> <p>There are a number of historical applications relating to alterations of the existing Makro store but are not relevant to this application.</p>
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Consultations and Representations</p>
<p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p>	<p>Statutory Consultations DfI Roads – Awaiting Response</p> <p>NI Water- Recommend Refusal</p> <p>Shared Environmental Services- Request Wastewater Impact Assessment to be completed to allow a comprehensive HRA to be completed.</p> <p>NIEA- Water Management Unit advise the proposal has the potential to adversely affect the surface water environment.</p> <p>Non-Statutory Consultations</p> <p>Environmental Health- No objections with conditions</p> <p>Local Plan Economy Response- No objections</p>

5.3	<p>Representations</p> <p>One letter of support has been received.</p>
6.0	<p>PLANNING ASSESSMENT</p>
6.1	<p>Development Plan Context</p>
6.2	<p>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.</p>
6.3	<p>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.</p>
6.4	<p>The Development Plan is the Belfast Local Development Plan, which replaces the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 as the statutory plan for the city. The Belfast LDP is in two parts: Part 1 is the Plan Strategy, which was adopted on 02 May 2023. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan, which will provide the zonings and proposals map for Belfast and has yet to be published.</p>
6.5	<p>Operational policies – the Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy DES1 – Principles of urban design • Policy BH1 – Listed Buildings • Policy BH2 – Conservation Areas • Policy BH5 – Archaeology • Policy EC1 – Delivering inclusive economic growth • Policy HC1 – Promoting healthy communities • Policy RET1 – Establishing a centre hierarchy • Policy RET2- Out of Centre Development • Policy TRAN1 – Active travel – walking and cycling • Policy TRAN2 – Creating an accessible environment • Policy TRAN4 – Travel plan • Policy TRAN6 – Access to public roads • Policy TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements • Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality • Policy ENV2 – Mitigating environmental change • Policy ENV3 – Adapting to environmental change • Policy ENV5 – Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) • Policy NH1 – Protection of natural heritage resources

6.6	<p>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 maps 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, other than policies that relate to Sprucefield, which remain contentious.</p>
6.7	<p>The proposed site is located on whiteland as per BUAP 2001 and both versions of draft BMAP.</p>
6.8	<p>MAIN ASSESSMENT</p> <p>Key Issues</p>
6.9	<p>The key issues relevant to consideration of the application are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of the Change of Use • Proposed Design and placemaking • Proposed Access and Car Parking • Climate Change • Health Impacts • Environmental Protection • Waste Water Infrastructure • Waste Storage • Employability and Skills • Pre-Application Community Consultation <p>Principle of Change of Use</p>
6.10	<p>The proposal involves the sub-division of the existing Makro store to create a retail store (Use Class A1) with a floorspace of approximately 4,750sqm.</p>
6.11	<p>Policies RET1 (Establishing a centre hierarchy) and RET2 (Out of centre Development) are relevant to the consideration of this proposal. RET1 establishes a network and hierarchy of centres for main town centres uses which includes cultural and community facilities, retail, leisure, entertainment and businesses. The proposal is a retail use and therefore Policy RET 1 applies.</p>
6.12	<p>The sequential approach directs these uses to centres before considering edge of centre sites. RET2 states that main town centre uses outside of centres must:</p> <p>a) Demonstrate that there is not a sequentially preferable site in, or on the edge of, centres having regard to criteria of suitability, availability and viability; and b) Submit a retail impact assessment and assessment of need for proposals that have a floorspace of 1,000 m² gross and above. The SPPS also states that a sequential test should be applied to planning applications for main town centre</p>

	uses that are not in an existing centre. The site is not located within a designated centre and is therefore considered to be in an out of centre location.
6.13	The proposed floorspace exceeds 1000sqm and therefore a Sequential Test and Retail Impact Assessment have been submitted in support of the application.
6.14	The sequential test identified a ten minute drivetime catchment for the proposal due to the spatial distribution of existing Tesco stores across Belfast and on the principle that shoppers will not pass another store to shop at another. The sequential test sets out the key site requirements for the broad development and assessed the availability of sequentially preferable sites in District Centres within the catchment. The assessment concluded there are no alternative suitable sites. The Local Development Team were consulted and considers that the applicant has address the sequential requirement of the policy considerations.
6.15	In terms of the Retail Impact Assessment the Assessment assumes a base year of 2025, a design year of 2027 and a test year of 2029 whereby the previous Tesco Store in Dunmurry is operating.
6.16	The assessment calculates a catchment area population of 143,181 in 2025 rising to 144,272 in 2029. In terms of available spending the assessment concludes the available convenience expenditure per capita in 2025 is £2393, reducing to £2366 by 2029. Taking into account the turnover of convenience retail stores within the catchment the analysis concludes there is a surplus expenditure of £57.32m.
6.17	The Retail Impact Analysis results in trade diversions of between 3 and 7% of retail stores within District Centres of the catchment and concludes the proposal will not have a significant adverse impact on trading performance of any other stores in the catchment.
6.18	The Local Plan Team were consulted and found large variances in the population figures utilised within the Retail Impact Assessment. The Local Plan Team calculated a population within the catchment of 87,551 for 2025 compared to the applicant's 143,181. The applicant revised the Retail Impact Assessment to utilise the Local Plan Team's population figures and concluded a available expenditure surplus of £56.32m. Local Plan Team however, calculated a surplus of £11.5. While there are discrepancies in the figures the Local Plan Team agree that capacity remains within the catchment and have no objections to the proposal.
6.19	The applicant has demonstrated that there is no sequentially preferable site in or on the edge of centres and that the proposal will not have a significant, adverse impact on existing centres. The principle of the proposal is acceptable and complies with Policy RET2.
6.20	Proposed Design and Placemaking Policy DES1 states that planning permission will be granted for new development that is of high quality, sustainable design that makes a positive contribution to placemaking by responding positively to local context and character.

6.21	Alterations to the proposed elevations are minimal to reflect the change of use. The building will maintain its existing appearance and there is no harm to the existing character and appearance.
6.22	The proposal is considered to comply with Policies DES1 (design) and relevant provisions of the SPPS.
	Proposed Access and Car Parking
6.23	Policy SP7 (Connectivity) supports connectivity to and within the city by sustainable transport modes, such as public transport, walking and cycling. Policy TRAN1 (Active travel, walking & cycling) supports development proposals which take account of the needs and safety of walkers and cyclists, their convenience to walking, cycle and public transport access and secure cycle parking facilities. Policy TRAN2 (Creating an accessible environment) promotes suitable access to buildings and their surroundings whilst taking account of the specific needs of people with disabilities or impaired mobility. Development which will generate significant travel uses require a Travel Plan under Policy TRAN4 (Travel plan), whilst Policy TRAN8 (Car parking & servicing arrangements) sets out the criteria under which reduced levels of car-parking will be assessed.
6.24	The proposal maintains the existing access and will provide a pedestrian crossing point along Kingsway. Alterations are proposed to the existing car park to reflect the two operators of the site and need for disabled/parent and child car parking. The parking provision of the proposal will equate to 175 spaces with the Makro store retaining 130 spaces (305 in total). DFI Roads have been consulted and have not yet responded but have indicated any issues would be minor in nature. Delegated authority is therefore requested to deal with the outstanding consultation response.
6.25	Subject to the DFI Roads response it is considered that the proposal will comply with Policies TRAN 1,2,3,4, 8, 9 and 10.
	Climate Change
6.26	Policy SP6 (Environmental resilience) of the Plan Strategy reinforces the RDS policy on climate change which also aligns with the Belfast Agenda, by seeking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate to build environmental resilience. Policy ENV1 (Environmental quality) allows for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality. Any proposal must protect communities from materially harmful development and must not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment. Policy ENV2 (Mitigating environmental change) states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to mitigate environmental change and reduce greenhouse gases by promoting sustainable patterns of development. There is a presumption in favour of retaining existing buildings. Policy ENV3 (Adapting to environmental change) states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to adapt to environmental change. Policy ENV5 (Sustainable Drainage

	Systems) SuDS states that all built development should include, where applicable, SuDS measures to manage surface water effectively on site to reduce surface water runoff
6.27	The proposal is in itself a sustainable form of development by utilising an existing building rather than a standalone new build. The submitted Climate Change Statement outlines a number of measures to be used within the proposed store such as LED lighting, doors on cool food display cabinets to reduce cooling demand and installation of submeters to manage energy consumption. The proposal also includes a number of EV charging spaces within the car park. No SuDS are proposed with the scheme but given there is no associated development and the proposal utilises the existing building, this is considered acceptable.
6.28	The proposal is considered to comply with Policies ENV 2, 3 and 5.
	Health Impacts
6.29	Policy SP3 (Improving health & wellbeing) of the Plan Strategy requires new development to take health and wellbeing into account during early design stages. HC1 (Promoting healthy communities) seeks to ensure that all new developments maximise opportunities to promote healthy and active lifestyles. New developments should be designed, constructed and managed in ways that improve health and promote healthy lifestyles. This will include supporting active travel options, improving accessibility to local service centres, reducing the use of private car travel, adequate provision of public open space, leisure and recreation facilities, high quality design and promoting balanced communities and sustainable neighbourhoods.
6.30	The application includes a Health and Wellbeing Statement. It states that the proposal is within a highly accessible location to enable easier day to day access to convenience goods. The proposal supports active travel options with the inclusion of a pedestrian crossing and aids to sustain the existing neighbourhood.
6.31	The proposal is considered to comply with Policy HC1.
	Environmental Protection
6.32	Policy SP6 (Environmental resilience) of the Plan Strategy reinforces the RDS policy on climate change which also aligns with the Belfast Agenda to build environmental resilience. 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. Environmental Health have been consulted in regards to air quality, noise and contaminated land. The response from EH indicated no objection to the proposal subject to relevant condition.

6.33	<p>Waste-water infrastructure</p> <p>Policy SP1A (Managing growth and supporting infrastructure delivery) of the Plan Strategy require that necessary infrastructure is in place to support new development.</p>
6.34	<p>NI Water has confirmed there is available capacity at the receiving Wastewater Treatment Works, however, an assessment has indicated network capacity issues. 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>
6.35	<p>As the proposal would result in clear intensification of the use of the land, the Council has consulted Shared Environmental Services (SES) to assist its consideration of the Habitats Regulations. SES recognises the NI Water response and requires a Waste Water Impact Assessment to be agreed to by NI Water, in order to complete the comprehensive HRA.</p>
6.36	<p>It is recognised that a HRA cannot be completed at this time and therefore delegated authority is requested for officers to deal with the outstanding information and to re-consult with SES to ensure there will be no impact on any designated European site.</p>
6.37	<p>DAERA has been consulted and is concerned that the sewage loading associated with the proposal has the potential to cause adverse environmental impact.</p>
	<p>Waste Storage</p>
6.38	<p>The proposal contains an acceptable waste storage area to the rear within the service yard. A Waste Management Plan has not been submitted and therefore will be conditioned to be submitted and agreed.</p>
	<p>Employability and Skills</p>
6.39	<p>As this is a major application, a skills assessment has been carried out in line with the council's Developer Contribution Framework. This concluded that developer contributions relating to employability and skills during the construction phase should be applied. In terms of the operational phase the response notes that 23 retail jobs will be created and that retail jobs are in demand. However, the response states that this is more in relation to retail jobs being difficult to fill rather than skills shortages and therefore a contribution relating to employability and</p>

	<p>skills in the operational phase should not be applied. A condition will be added to this effect.</p> <p>Pre-application community consultation</p> <p>6.40 The applicant undertook their statutory duty to submit a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) which set out the applicant's proposals for pre-application community consultation. LA04/2024/1913/PAN was submitted to the Council on 18th November 2024, the council confirmed on 5th December 2024 that the PAN was acceptable in line with the requirements of Section 27 of the Planning Act 2011.</p> <p>6.41 The application is accompanied by a mandatory Pre-application Community Consultation Report (PACC). The PACC report describes the pre-application consultation undertaken by the applicant, which included:</p> <p><u>Pre-exhibition phase</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advertising: newspaper advert, South Belfast News/Andersonstown News on 18th January 2025. 2. Neighbour notification: leaflet drop within 1km of site. 3. Local stakeholder audit: Copies of the PAN distributed to elected representatives and community groups. Offer issued for follow up meetings. 4. Press Coverage: Press Release Issued with articles about proposed consultation in local media. 5. Website: Project website established with details of the proposed development. <p><u>Exhibition phase</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Exhibition Event: In-person PACC events, held on 23rd January 2025 and 6th March 2025 between 2pm and 7pm. <p><u>Post-exhibition phase</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analysis of Community Feedback: 20 attendees to the public consultation events. Three feedback form completed at the consultation events. 155 responses through the website with 140 supporting the proposals and 15 against. Issues raised have been considered. <p>6.42 It is considered that the Pre-Community Consultation Report submitted has demonstrated that the applicant has carried out their duty under Section 27 of the Act</p>
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<p>6.43</p> <p>6.44</p> <p>6.45</p> <p>6.46</p>	<p>Conclusion</p> <p>The principle of the proposed development is considered acceptable under the strategic aims of the RDS, the SPPS and the Plan Strategy. It has been demonstrated there is no sequentially preferable site to accommodate the proposal and it will not have an adverse impact on existing centres.</p> <p>The proposal utilises the existing building and subject to DFI Roads the proposed access and parking is considered acceptable.</p> <p>NI Water object to the proposal and SES require further information to carry out a comprehensive HRA. This will be resolved through the imposition of a condition.</p> <p>No third party objections have been received.</p>
<p>7.0</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p>	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.</p> <p>Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with the outstanding DFI Roads response, SES and any other issues that arise provided that they are not substantive.</p>
<p>DRAFT CONDITIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission. <p>Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The rating level (dBLA_{r,T}) from the operation of all combined plant and equipment must not exceed the existing daytime and night-time background sound levels at the nearest noise sensitive premises, when measured or determined in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 'Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound'. <p>Reason: Protection of residential amenity and human health</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> If contamination is encountered during the carrying out of the development, all related development works shall cease, and the Council shall be notified immediately in writing. No further related development works shall proceed until this contamination has been fully investigated in accordance with current Environment Agency and CIRIA guidance and British Standards. <p>In the event of unacceptable human health risks being identified, a Remediation Strategy shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the</p>	

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.

4. 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.

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.

5. Employability and Skills. (during construction phase only)

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Development Management Report

Summary	
Committee Date: 16 th May 2026	
Application ID: LA04/2025/2215/F	
Proposal: Proposed change of use from offices to nursing home comprising 156 no. bedrooms, ancillary scanning unit and all associated accommodation including dining/ café areas, day rooms and lounges, hairdressers, cinema rooms, treatment rooms and internal courtyard. The proposal also includes ancillary offices, landscaping, cycle parking, external alterations and all other site and associated works.	Location: Halifax Building, 24 Cromac Place, Building, BT7 2JB
Referral Route: Application for Major development	
Recommendation: Approval	
Applicant Name and Address: Healthcare Ireland Group 1st Floor, Building 2, St Helens Business Park 130-134 St Helen's Court, High Street Hollywood BT18 9HQ	Agent Name and Address: TSA Planning 20 May Street Belfast BT1 4NL
Date Valid: 19 th December 2025	
Target Date: 17 th July 2026	
Contact Officer: Ciara Reville, Principal Planning Officer, (Development Management)	
Executive Summary: The application relates to lands at 4 Cromac Place, known locally as the Halifax Building which is situated within the Gasworks Business Park. Full planning permission is sought for the proposed change of use from offices to nursing home comprising 156 no. bedrooms, ancillary scanning unit and all associated accommodation including dining/ café areas, day rooms and lounges, hairdressers, cinema rooms, treatment rooms and internal courtyard. The main issues relevant to consideration of the application are set out below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of a Nursing and Residential Care facility in this location • Flood Risk • Design and Placemaking • Impact on amenity • Climate change • Open space • Access and transport • Health impacts • Environmental protection • Waste-water infrastructure 	

- Waste management
- Section 76 planning agreement
- Pre-Application Community Consultation

The application site is within the development limit and un-zoned in the BUAP 2001. It is also within the city centre and zoned within the main office area in the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004). In the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014), the site is within the city centre and is un-zoned “white land”.

The applicant has demonstrated there is sufficient need for the proposal.

The proposed refurbishment of the building is considered to be of a good design, appropriate to its location and context, that will regenerate the vacant building.

NI Water has objected on grounds of insufficient waste-water infrastructure. This issue is addressed in the main report.

There are no objections from other statutory or non-statutory consultees. There is an outstanding response from NI Water. Delegated authority is sought to deal with the outstanding consultation response from NI Water and any further consultation with SES and issues arising, if necessary.

Recommendation

Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.

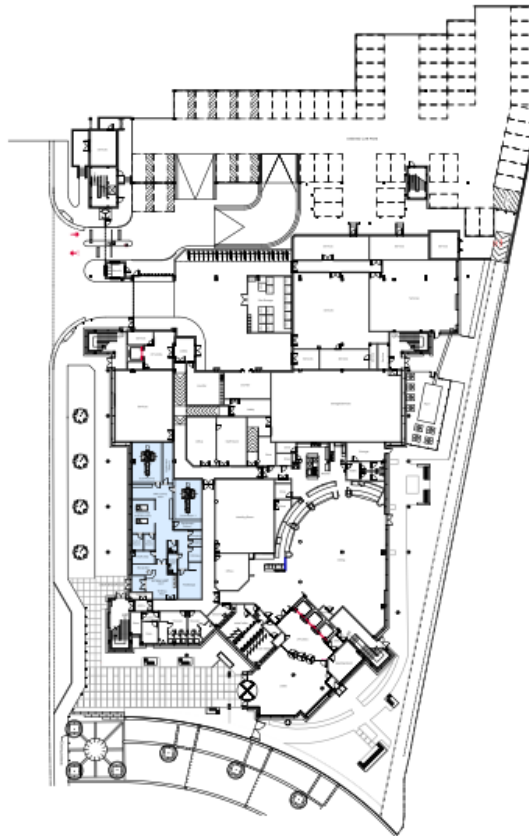
Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise conditions and deal with any issues arising from the outstanding NI Water response and any additional consultation on this issue if necessary.

DRAWINGS AND IMAGERY

Site Location Plan:



Proposed Site Layout:



Proposed Elevations:



PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION
(West Elevation)



PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION
(East Elevation)

GGIs:



<p>1.0</p>	<p>Characteristics of the Site and Area</p>
<p>1.1</p>	<p>The site is located off Cromac Place. To the north of the site are residential properties. To the east is the River Lagan. To the south and west of the site are commercial properties within the Gasworks. The office building on site is currently vacant and was previously occupied by Lloyds Banking Group and Halifax.</p>
<p>1.2</p>	<p>The existing building is a 5-storey office block. The building was constructed in 2000-2001 and underwent external refurbishment works in 2019. There is a multi-storey car park to the rear of the building, accessible from Cromac Place. The existing car parking includes five decks organized in a mezzanine (half floor) system and outdoor parking. The car park contains 183no. car parking spaces in total.</p>
<p>1.3</p>	<p>The surrounding area is characterised by commercial properties within the Gasworks. This includes offices, shops and a hotel. To the north are residential properties that are predominately 2 storeys. Stewart Street Playground is to the north of the site and there is access adjacent to the site to Lagan towpath, which runs to the east.</p>
<p>1.4</p>	<p>Description of Proposed Development</p>
<p>1.5</p>	<p>The proposal includes the conversion of the existing building into a nursing home. The nursing home will comprise of 156no. bedrooms. The associated ancillary accommodation will include could include day rooms, hairdressers, cinema room, treatment rooms, and a scan unit. The proposal also includes communal areas, courtyard, ancillary offices, external alterations and all other site and associated works.</p>
<p>1.6</p>	<p>Associated site parking will remain as existing with 183no. car parking spaces being provided.</p>
<p>2.0</p>	<p>RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY</p>
<p>2.1</p>	<p>LA04/2018/2281/F – Alteration to existing building comprising removal of existing cladding panels and erection of weather protection in the form of steel framing system, insulation and Siniat Board. Approve 14/11/2018.</p>

3.0	<p>PLANNING POLICY</p>
3.1	<p>Development Plan – Plan Strategy</p> <p><u>Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035</u></p> <p><i>Strategic Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy SP1A – managing growth and supporting infrastructure delivery Policy SP2 – sustainable development Policy SP3 – improving health and wellbeing Policy SP5 – positive placemaking Policy SP6 – environmental resilience Policy SP7 – connectivity Policy SD2 – Settlement Areas</p> <p><i>Operational Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy HOU8 – Specialist Residential Accommodation</p> <p>Policy DES1 – Principles of urban design Policy DES2 – Masterplanning approach for major development</p> <p>Policy TRAN1 – Active travel – walking and cycling Policy TRAN2 – Creating an accessible environment Policy TRAN4 – Travel plan Policy TRAN6 – Access to public roads Policy TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements Policy TRAN9 – Parking standards within areas of parking restraint</p> <p>Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality Policy ENV2 – Mitigating environmental change Policy ENV3 – Adapting to environmental change Policy ENV4 – Flood Risk Policy ENV5 – Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)</p> <p>Policy HC1 – Promoting healthy communities Policy GB1 – Green and blue infrastructure network Policy OS3 – Ancillary open space Policy TRE1 – Trees Policy NH1 – Protection of natural heritage resources</p> <p><u>Supplementary Planning Guidance</u></p> <p>Placemaking and Urban Design Masterplanning approach for Major developments Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Transportation Planning and Flood Risk</p>
3.2	<p>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps</p> <p>Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014)</p>

3.3	<p>Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</p>
3.4	<p>Other Material Considerations Developer Contribution Framework (2020) Belfast Agenda (Community Plan)</p>
4.0	CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS
4.1	<p><u>Statutory Consultees</u></p> <p>DfI Roads – No objection subject to conditions.</p> <p>DfI Rivers – No objection.</p> <p>NI Water – Recommends refusal</p>
4.2	<p><u>Non-Statutory Consultees</u></p> <p>Environmental Health – No objection subject to conditions.</p> <p>BCC Economic Development Unit – Recommends an employability and skills developer contribution for both the construction and operational phases.</p>
4.3	<u>Representations</u>
4.4	The application has been advertised in the newspaper and neighbours notified. To date no representations have been made.
5.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT
5.1	<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 a Nursing and Residential Care facility in this location • Flood Risk • Design and placemaking • Impact on amenity • Climate change • Open space • Access and transport • Health impacts • Environmental protection • Waste-water infrastructure • Waste management • Section 76 planning agreement • Pre-Application Community Consultation
5.2	Development Plan Context
5.3	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.

5.4	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.
5.5	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 (“Departmental Development Plan”) remain part of the statutory local development plan until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.
5.6	<u>Operational Polices</u>
5.7	The Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These are listed at paragraph 3.1.
5.8	<u>Proposals Maps</u>
5.9	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 (“Departmental Development Plan”), 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 maps 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.
5.10	Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 –The application site is within the development limit and un-zoned in the BUAP 2001.
5.11	Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) – It is within the city centre and zoned within the main office area in the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004).
5.12	Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) – In the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014), the site is within the city centre and is un-zoned “white land”.
5.13	<u>Principle of a Nursing and Residential Care facility in this location</u>
5.14	The site is located within the city centre limit in the BUAP 2001 and both versions of dBMAP 2015.
5.15	Policy HOU8 of the Plan Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for Specialised Residential Accommodation where the following criteria are met. a. <i>The homes and/or bed spaces to be provided meet community needs demonstrated through a statement of specialist housing need;</i>
5.16	A statement of specialist housing need has been submitted with the application. It states that the 2021 census data demonstrates an ageing population which illustrates that demand for Specialist Residential Accommodation (SRA) will continue to increase. The statement confirms that 23 care homes in Belfast have

	<p>closed since 2015 resulting in a decreased supply while a 2024 report confirmed NI has the highest occupancy levels of SRA in the UK, illustrating that the local care sector is close to capacity.</p>
5.17	<p>Given that the Plan Strategy's requirements of 820 additional bed spaces over the plan period until 2035, combined with the loss of bed spaces in the city, that there is a demonstrable need.</p> <p><i>b. The proposals will deliver convenient access to relevant local services and facilities, including local shops, public transport routes and health facilities.</i></p>
5.18	<p>The location of the site within Belfast City Centre will ensure convenient access to local shops, public transport routes and health facilities at both Belfast City Hospital and the Royal Victoria Hospital. The building is also ideally located adjacent to an access point to the Lagan Towpath, providing additional amenity, with future plans for a bridge at this location which will link the site to Ormeau Park.</p>
5.19	<p>Having regard to the above assessment, the proposal is considered to satisfy Policy HOU8 of the Plan Strategy.</p>
5.20	<p><u>Overriding Health Care Need</u></p>
5.21	<p>The statement goes onto outline the community health care benefits such as patients receiving the right care at the right time, alleviating the strain on hospitals, better health outcomes for patients, safe place for the elderly and vulnerable with appropriate care plans, social interaction and medication management.</p>
5.22	<p><u>Economic Benefits</u></p>
5.23	<p>The applicant states that the proposal represents an investment of £16 million to the local economy with the potential for 80-100 construction jobs and creation of 180 employment positions. These are relevant material considerations that support the case for the proposal.</p>
5.24	<p><u>Design and placemaking</u></p>
5.25	<p>The proposal has been assessed against Policies SP5, DES1 and DES2 of the Plan Strategy, the SPPS and Creating Places. Policies SP5 and DES1 promote good placemaking, high quality design and the importance of proposals responding positively to local context addressing matters such as scale height, massing, proportions, rhythm, and materials avoiding any negative impact at street level. Policy DES2 advocates adopting a holistic approach to site layout that is mindful of adjacent development.</p>
5.26	<p><i>Scale, height and massing:</i></p>
5.27	<p>The development will utilise the existing external built fabric with internal alterations to facilitate the new use and minor external improvements. The height, form, scale and massing of the building remains as existing</p>
5.28	<p><i>Architectural treatment:</i></p>
5.29	<p>The design of the overall building is retained. It is proposed to replace the existing windows in a similar style as existing, comprising polyester powder coated aluminium</p>

	with spandrel panels coloured bronze. On the fourth floor, light grey coloured spandrel panels will be added to windows. In addition, a powder coated rectangular frame is to be added to the front elevation as a design feature.
5.30	<i>Access:</i>
5.31	The proposal will utilise the existing access point to the building, including the main pedestrian access to the front of the building and vehicular access from Cromac Place. As previously identified, a new pedestrian access from Cromac Place to the new Scan Unit is proposed. The existing 183 no. car parking spaces will be retained and cycle parking is provided in a secured service area.
5.32	<i>Landscaping:</i>
5.33	The proposed development includes for new landscaping around the building which comprises areas of tree, shrub and hedge planting throughout the site and will enhance the proposed amenity spaces for residents of the nursing home to enjoy. Tree planting includes <i>Betula pendula</i> and <i>Carpinus betulus</i> . Hedge planting includes Portuguese Laurel and <i>Buxus Sempervirens</i> . <i>Buxus sempervirens</i> topiary balls and shrub planting is also proposed. Existing shrubs and tree planting adjacent to Cromac Place will be retained and amenity areas will include seating
5.34	<i>Masterplanning:</i>
5.35	The proposal adopts a holistic approach to site assembly, layout and design that is mindful of adjacent sites. Through the refurbishment works and bringing the building back into use it also enhances the waterside character and setting of the River Lagan.
5.36	<i>Conclusion:</i> Overall, the design quality of the scheme is welcomed and the proposal is considered compliant with Policies DES1, DES2 and relevant provisions of the SPPS.
5.37	<u>Impact on amenity</u>
5.38	<i>Open space and amenity space:</i>
5.39	Policy OS3 requires that all new development proposals make appropriate provision for open space, including hard and soft landscaped areas and outdoor amenity areas, to serve the needs of the development. The precise amount, location, type and design of such provision will be negotiated with applicants taking account of the specific characteristics of the development, the site and its context and having regard to a) the normal expectation will be at least 10% of the total site area; and b) complementary and ancillary equipment and facilities, including for active or passive enjoyment of residents or occupiers, should be incorporated into the design of the development.
5.40	The proposal includes a number of external amenity areas and internal courtyard as well as lounges, cinema rooms and cafes to provide amenity space for patients, in accordance with Policy OS3. These areas will also assist in promoting positive physical and mental health and wellbeing during recovery.
5.41	The external amenity areas would equate to an average of 8.9sqm per bedroom. <i>Creating Places</i> , published in 2000, recommends that private communal open space should range from 10 sqm to around 30 sqm, however, this applies to apartment or flat developments, or 1 and 2-bedroom houses on small urban infill sites, and is not directly

	applicable to a residential care facility where there would be an expectation of a reduction in amenity space. Nevertheless, the proposed amenity provision is considered generous when also considering the internal facilities which include a cinema room, lounges and café.
5.42	<i>Impact on neighbouring amenity:</i>
5.43	The height, form, scale and massing of the building remains as existing. The proposal is located more than 80m away from residential development to the north west. Surrounding uses to the west and east consist of a hotel and office development. The proposed use and refurbishment of the building is not considered to have any further detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity.
5.44	In these regards, the proposal is considered to satisfy Policies DES1 and RD1, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.
5.45	<u>Climate change</u>
5.46	<i>Demolition:</i> Policy ENV 2 states that:
5.47	<i>‘Development proposals should, where feasible, seek to avoid demolition and should consider how existing buildings or their main structures could be reused. Development proposals that include the demolition of existing buildings should demonstrate that reuse is not appropriate or feasible. Where demolition is proposed, measures should be included to minimise any waste through the reuse of as much building material as possible.’</i>
5.48	The proposal will repurpose an existing vacant office building in a highly sustainable location, with retention of the existing built form therefore, compliant with ENV2.
5.49	In terms of providing an appropriate SUDS, no blue/green roof is necessary as part of the proposal as these requirements are met through tree planting, thus fulfilling Climate Change Strategic Policies ENV3, ENV5, GB1 and TRE1. With regard to climate change risks to the proposed development during the operational period effects are considered to be negligible and not significant therefore no mitigation measures are suggested.
5.50	<u>Access and transport</u> <i>Accessibility and parking:</i>
5.51	The Gasworks is accessible via several bus routes, making it convenient for visitors and locals alike, it is a five-minute walk from City Hall and is adjacent to the Lagan Towpath/National Cycle Network.
5.52	The proposal is supported by a Travel Plan which will further encourage more sustainable forms of transport to and from the site.
5.53	The proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policies TRAN1, TRAN2, TRAN4, TRAN6, and TRAN 9, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.
5.54	Policy TRAN 8 states that development proposals will be required to provide adequate provision for car parking and appropriate servicing arrangements. The proposal will retain the 138 parking spaces.
5.55	In consideration of the above policies, DFI Roads have assessed the proposal and concluded that they are content with the arrangements subject to conditions.

5.56	<u>Health impacts</u>
5.57	Policy HC1 seeks to ensure that all new development maximise opportunities to promote healthy and active lifestyles. New developments should be designed, constructed and managed in ways that improve health and promote healthy lifestyles. This will include supporting active travel options, improving accessibility to local service centres, reducing the use of private car travel, adequate provision of public open space, leisure and recreation facilities, high quality design and promoting balanced communities and sustainable neighbourhoods.
5.58	The site is accessible and provides good opportunities for active travel, including walking and cycling, through excellent linkages within the City Centre and its shops, services and amenities. The proposal is supported by a Travel Plan which will further encourage more sustainable forms of transport to and from the site.
5.59	In terms of place making, the proposed refurbishment of the building is considered to be of a good quality design which would provide a pleasant living environment for residents and staff with good levels of amenity space and open space, and well as enhancing the character and appearance of the area.
5.60	The proposal is considered to satisfy the requirements of Policy HC1.
5.61	<u>Environmental protection</u>
5.62	Policy ENV1 states that planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protects communities from materially harmful development. The proposed development has been assessed by Environmental Health in terms of contaminated land, air quality and noise and they have concluded they are content subject to conditions.
5.63	The proposal is considered to accord with Policy ENV1.
5.64	<u>Waste-water infrastructure</u>
5.65	NI Water have objected to the proposal due to the downstream catchment being constrained by overloaded sewage infrastructure, 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.
5.66	Furthermore, NIW requested a further consultation in relation to the WWIA process due to updated connection solutions. This was actioned 23/01/26. With the consultation on-going delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise conditions and deal with any issues arising from the outstanding NI Water response and any SES consultation if necessary.
5.67	<u>Waste Management</u>
5.68	The application is supported by a Service Management Plan. A separate bin store is located within the site. The provision of bins complies with the Waste Management SPG.

5.69	<u>Employability and Skills</u>
5.70	The <i>Developer Contribution Framework</i> requires proposals for Major development to contribute towards Employability and Skills where necessary.
5.71	The Council's Economic Development Unit has been consulted and recommended that a Section 76 relating to employability and skills during the construction and operational phase should be applied. Following recent further consideration, it is considered appropriate to condition this in this instance.
5.72	<u>Pre-Application Community Consultation</u>
5.73	For applications for major development, there is a legislative requirement for applicants to consult the community in advance of submitting the application.
5.74	Applicants are required to submit to the council a 'Proposal of Application Notice' (PAN) in advance of making the application, which sets out the proposals for the pre-community consultation. A PAN was submitted in September 2025 (LA04/2025/1604/PAN) and confirmed by the Council to be acceptable.
5.75	The applicant is further required to prepare a Pre-Application Community Consultation report (PACC) to accompany the planning application. A PACC Report was submitted with the application, which describes the engagement process and feedback received.
5.76	A public event was held in November 2025 and a dedicated community consultation website established was live for comment from 11/11/25-10/12/25. No feedback forms were returned at the event or via any of the other methods. Comments from members of the public were supportive of the proposed development. Attendees included local residents, community groups and nearby shop owners who expressed a desire to see the building returned to active use. Feedback on the submitted plans and drawings was positive. Representatives from community groups also highlighted the importance of the proposed care home being well integrated with the surrounding community
5.77	The PACC report is considered compliant with the legislative requirements.
6.0	Recommendation
6.1	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.
6.2	Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the conditions, deal with the outstanding consultation response from NIW and any other consultation arising from this issue or matters which may arise, where they are not substantive.
7.0	DRAFT Conditions
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission. Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2. Hard surfaced areas shall be permanently marked in accordance with drawing No.02 uploaded to the received 19th December 2025 to provide for parking within the site. No part of these hard surfaced areas shall be used for any purpose at any time other than for the parking and movement of vehicles in connection with the approved development.

Reason: To ensure adequate provision has been made for parking within the site.
3. The development hereby permitted shall not become operational until sheltered cycle parking facilities have been provided in accordance with Drawing No.02 received 19th December 2025.

Reason: To promote the use of alternative modes of transport in accordance with sustainable transportation principles.
4. The development hereby permitted shall operate in accordance with the Workplace Travel Plan uploaded to the Planning Portal 2nd April 2026.

Reason: To promote the use of alternative modes of transport in accordance with sustainable transportation principles.
5. Prior to installation of window units within the hereby permitted development, the applicant shall submit to the planning service, for review and approval in writing, the final window schedule detailing the glazing configuration and sound reduction performance of the proposed windows to habitable rooms on all facades and floors of the hereby permitted development. The window specification for habitable rooms at all facades and floor levels shall be capable of achieving the minimum sound reduction (in dBRw+Ctr) specified in table 5 of the Irwin Carr Consulting Ltd letter, referenced: Lt0001N 2025497, dated 29th April 2026.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of occupants of the building hereby approved.
6. Prior to installation of any alternative means of ventilation to be incorporated within the hereby permitted development, the applicant shall submit to the planning service, for review and approval in writing, confirmation of the specification of the alternative means of ventilation to serve habitable rooms. The alternative means of ventilation shall be acoustically attenuated and capable of achieving the internal noise levels for habitable rooms outlined in British Standard BS8233:2014 with the windows shut and the alternative means of ventilation operating or in the open position.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of occupants of the building hereby approved.
7. Prior to occupation of the hereby permitted development, the window schedule and approved alternative means of ventilation shall be installed, as approved, to achieve suitable internal noise levels in all habitable rooms in accordance with BS8233:2014, with the windows closed and the alternative ventilation provided. The approved windows and alternative means of ventilation shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of occupants of the building hereby approved.

8. Prior to occupation of the hereby permitted development, the developer shall verify that the windows specification as per the approved schedule and alternative means of ventilation as approved have been installed (in addition to that provided by open windows) by way of a written declaration from the supplier and installation contractor confirming such installation.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of occupants of the building hereby approved.

9. If contamination is encountered during the carrying out of the development, all related development works shall cease, and the Council shall be notified immediately in writing. No further related development works shall proceed until this 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.

10. In the event that the proposed development is to include any substantial centralised combustion plant (boilers/CHP, generator, biomass), and 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, Land-use Planning & Development Control: Planning for Air Quality (January 2017), this Service would request that an Air Quality Impact Assessment will be required. The assessment shall include details of the combustion plant to be installed, to include emission rates and flue termination heights of the proposed combustion systems and must demonstrate that there will be no exceedances of the Air Quality Strategy objectives at relevant human receptor locations, associated with operation of the proposed combustion plant and with the overall development.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of occupants of the development and area.

11. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, an Employability and Skills Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The Employability and Skills Plan must be specific to the development, address the employability and skills requirements of the development and provide for:
 - a) Employment opportunities through the construction and operation of the development;

- b) Employability and skills interventions to include: description of interventions, how the intervention will address employability and skills needs, delivery mechanism and key performance indicators;
- c) Resource plan, identifying how the activity incorporated within the plan will be resourced; and
- d) Mechanism for monitoring and review.

The Employability and Skills Plan shall therefore be implemented throughout the construction and operational phases in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To promote inclusive growth in accordance with the objectives of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy 2035 and as required by the Council Developer Contribution Framework.

DRAFT INFORMATIVES:

1. Please make sure that you carry out the development in accordance with the approved plans and any planning conditions listed above. Failure to do so will mean that the proposal is unauthorised and liable for investigation by the Council's Planning Enforcement team. If you would like advice about how to comply with the planning permission, you are advised to contact the Planning Service at Belfast City Council at planning@belfastcity.gov.uk.
2. This planning permission includes condition(s) which require further details to be submitted to and approved by the Council. Please read the condition(s) carefully so that you know when this information needs to be provided and approved. It could take a minimum of 8 weeks for the Council to approve the details, assuming that they are satisfactory, and sometimes longer depending on the complexity of the condition. You should allow for this when planning the timeline of your project.
3. The grant of planning permission does not dispense with the need to obtain licenses, consents or permissions under other legislation or protocols. The requirement for other authorisations may have been identified by consultees in their response to the application and can be accessed on the Northern Ireland Planning Portal website. The responses from consultees may also include other general advice for the benefit of the applicant or developer.

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Development Management Report

Summary	
Committee Date: 16 th June 2026	
Application ID: LA04/2025/2013/F & LA04/2025/2015/LBC	
<p>Proposal: Change of use of Netherleigh House and existing office blocks (Class B1) to provide residential and nursing care facilities (Class C3 (a) and (b)). Extensions to existing office block including a fourth storey floor, eastern and western gable extension and two front projections from the northern elevation. Erection of 36 no. assisted living apartments over two four storey blocks. Site parking, landscaped amenity areas, woodland trails and all associated site works.</p>	<p>Location: Netherleigh House, 1 Massey Avenue, Belfast, BT4 2JP</p>
Referral Route: Major Planning Application	
Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions	
<p>Applicant Name and Address: Y3 Care Ltd 1-6 St. Helens Business Park Holywood BT18 9HQ</p>	<p>Agent Name and Address: TSA Planning 20 May Street Belfast BT1 4NL</p>
Date Valid: 18 th November 2025	
Target Date: 16 th June 2026	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe, Principal Planner (Development Management)	
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>The application proposes the change of use of Netherleigh House which is a grade B1 Listed Building and existing office blocks to provide residential and nursing care facilities. Extensions to the existing linear office block are proposed including a fourth storey floor, eastern and western gable extensions and two front projections from the northern elevation. The erection of 36 no. assisted living apartments over 2 no four-storey blocks are also proposed.</p> <p>The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of development at this location • Design and Placemaking • Impact on the architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building • Impact on amenity • Trees and landscaping 	

- Environmental protection
- Access, movement and transport
- Natural heritage
- Flood risk and drainage
- Waste-water infrastructure
- Health impacts
- Climate change
- Pre-Application Community Consultation
- Waste management
- Employability and Skills

In the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP 2001), the site is un-zoned “white land”.

In the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) the site is zoned as an area of white land and located within Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA) Campbell / Ormiston. In dBMAP 2015 (v2014) the site is also zoned as whiteland within an LLPA with the western portion of the application site designated as a site of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCI).

The proposal would regenerate a vacant site and heritage asset and HED have no objection to the proposal.

NI Water objects to the proposal on grounds of insufficient network capacity. BCC Urban Design officer has some concerns which have been addressed in the report. A final NIEA: NED response, SES response and BCC Economic unit response are outstanding at the time of writing. No objections have been received from other consultees, subject to conditions and informatives.

Following advertisement in the local press as well as neighbour notification, 1 objection has been received, 4 representations with queries and 1 letter of support which are detailed in the main report.

Recommendation

Having regard to the Development Plan and all other 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, and deal with any other matters that arise including resolving final responses from NIEA: NED, SES and BCC Economic Unit provided that they are not substantive.

Unit B Nursing care facilities - Elevations



Unit A1 Assisted Living Apartment Elevations



Unit A2 Assisted Living Apartment Elevations



unit A2 - Front Elevation

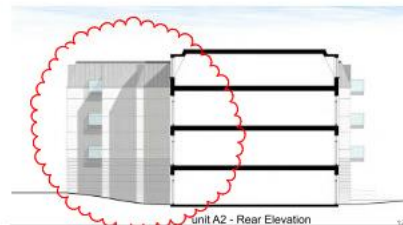


unit A2 - Side Elevation 1

A2



unit A2 - Side Elevation 2

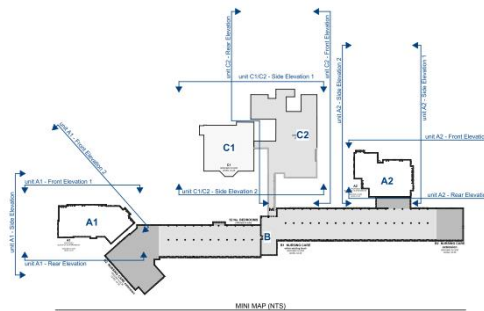


unit A2 - Rear Elevation

OVERALL HEIGHT REDUCED BY 1M WITH MANSARD TYPE ROOF AND DORMERED OPENINGS TO TOP FLOOR

STEPPED ELEVATION TO IMPROVE OUTLOOK FROM DAY ROOM

Unit C1 Netherleigh House & Unit C2 (nursing care facilities)



1.0 Characteristics of the Site and Area

- 1.1 The application site extends to approximately 2.6Ha and comprises Netherleigh House, which is a Grade B1 listed building and two modern office blocks to the south and east of Netherleigh House, interconnected by link corridors, which were previously occupied by the Department for the Economy (DfE). The site also contains areas of hardstanding and a large woodland area to the northwest.
- 1.2 The northeastern boundary of the site runs parallel to Massey Avenue and is defined by a close boarded timber fence with mature woodland vegetation behind. The remaining site boundaries are also defined by mature vegetation with the eastern and western boundaries abutting residential developments. The site is accessed directly via two existing vehicular access points from Massey Avenue. A singular lane system connects the two vehicular access points and follows a one-way system around the periphery of the built form within the site. A private laneway also exists within the confines of the application, which provides access to a number of adjacent dwellings located within Netherleigh Mews. The topography across the land is relatively flat with a fall in levels in a southern direction from 32.5m to 28.5m from the rear of the Listed Building to the rear boundary of the site. The surrounding context is largely residential in nature, characterised by predominately medium to low density 2-storey dwellings and educational and recreational facilities such as Campbell College which is located directly south of the site.

<p>1.3</p> <p>1.4</p> <p>1.5</p> <p>1.6</p>	<p>Description of Proposed Development</p> <p>The application seeks full planning permission and Listed Building Consent for the change of use of Netherleigh House and existing office blocks (Class B1) to provide residential and nursing care facilities (Class C3 (a) and (b)). Extensions to existing office block including a fourth storey floor, eastern and western gable extension and two front projections from the northern elevation. Erection of 36 no. assisted living apartments over two four storey blocks. 143 car parking spaces are proposed which is a reduction from the current 200 spaces. Landscaped amenity areas and a woodland trail is also proposed totalling to 3035m² communal open space.</p> <p>The proposed development is split into various elements to cater for various healthcare needs . The operator, Healthcare Ireland, primarily focuses on providing the following various healthcare services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Disability Services; • Physical Disability Services; • Mental Health Services; • General Nursing Services; • Residential Services; • Dementia Residential Services; and • Dementia Nursing Services. <p>The proposed development overall provides 209 no. 1-bed residential units and 36 no. assisted living apartments. Assisted living apartments are designed for individuals who require some element of daily help but can continue to maintain some level of independence. These apartments offer private living spaces combined with access to onsite supportive services.</p>
<p>2.0</p> <p>2.1</p>	<p>Relevant Planning History</p> <p>LA04/2025/1088/PAN Proposed extension and conversion of existing office block (formerly Department for the Economy HQ) and conversion of Netherleigh House to provide residential and nursing care facility including the erection of 2no. assisted living blocks, and associated site parking, landscaped amenity areas, woodland trail and all associated works. Decided 17th July 2025.</p>
<p>3.0</p> <p>3.1</p>	<p>PLANNING POLICY</p> <p>Development Plan – local development plan</p> <p><u>Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035</u></p> <p><i>Strategic Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy SP1A: Managing growth and supporting infrastructure delivery Policy SP2: Sustainable development Policy SP3: Improving health and wellbeing Policy SP5: Positive placemaking Policy SP6: Environmental resilience Policy SP7: Connectivity Policy SD2: Settlement Areas</p>

	<p><i>Operational Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy HOU8 – Specialised residential accommodation Policy HOU5 - Affordable housing Policy BH1 – Listed Buildings Policy DES2 – Masterplanning approach for Major development Policy DES1: Principles of urban design Policy RD1: New residential developments Policy TRAN1: Active travel – walking and cycling Policy TRAN 2: Creating an accessible environment Policy TRAN6: Access to public roads Policy TRAN3: Transport assessment Policy TRAN4: Travel plan Policy TRAN8: Car parking and servicing arrangements</p> <p>Policy ENV1: Environmental quality Policy ENV2: Mitigating environmental change Policy ENV3: Adapting to environmental change Policy ENV4: Flood Risk Policy ENV5: Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)</p> <p>Policy HC1: Promoting healthy communities Policy LC1: Landscape Policy OS1: Protection of open space Policy OS3: Ancillary open space Policy TRE1: Trees Policy NH1: Protection of natural heritage resources</p> <p><u>Supplementary Planning Guidance</u></p> <p>Residential Design Placemaking & Urban Design Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Transportation Planning and Flood Risk Masterplanning approach for Major developments</p> <p>3.2 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)</p> <p>3.3 Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</p> <p>3.4 Other Material Considerations Belfast Agenda (Community Plan)</p>
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4.0	CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS
4.1	<p>Statutory Consultees</p> <p>DfI Roads - No objection subject to conditions Historic Environment Division (HED) – No objection subject to conditions NI Water – Water objects to the application on grounds of network drainage capacity concerns. DfI Rivers – No objection NIEA: NED – Requests further information NIEA: Ground Regulation Unit - No objection subject to conditions NIEA: Water Catchment Unit - Objection</p>
4.2	<p>Non-Statutory Consultees</p> <p>Environmental Health – No objection subject to conditions. BCC Landscape – No objection BCC: Tree Officer – No objection subject to conditions. BCC Housing Team – No objection BCC: Waste Management – No objection BCC: Urban Design –concerns regarding the overall façade composition of the alterations to the rear block. This is further discussed in the main body of the report. Shared Environmental Services – Outstanding BCC Economic Unit - Outstanding</p>
4.3	<p>Representations</p> <p>The application has been advertised in the newspaper and neighbours notified. 1 objection has been received, 4 representations with queries and 1 letter of support were received. They are summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Level of traffic on Massey Avenue and road safety b) Security lighting c) Access and vegetation maintenance d) Access throughout the site e) Contamination f) Sewage connections g) Ease pressure on NHS by creation of a much-needed facility h) Regeneration of a vacant site and heritage asset i) Deliver significant economic benefits to East Belfast j) Jobs for local people <p>Issue a) will be considered within the main assessment below.</p> <p>Regarding issues (b-f), the agent has provided a response letter dated April 2026 to address the queries. For issue b), they state that here is no intention currently to change the existing external lighting arrangements currently on site. However, any changes to security lighting will be designed in accordance with best practice guidance, to ensure minimal light spill and no adverse impact on natural heritage or neighbouring residential amenity.</p> <p>For issue c), the letter states that the planning application is supported by a Landscape Maintenance and Management Plan, which covers the entirety of the lands within the red line application site, including the access laneway serving Netherleigh Mews and mature vegetation defining the northern boundary. The Applicant is committed to the ongoing upkeep of the access laneway, including regular maintenance of hedgerows and vegetation,</p>

	<p>periodic sweeping, and appropriate management of surface conditions as detailed within this report.</p> <p>Issue d) refers to access throughout the site, the proposed development intends to retain the existing access arrangements by providing a one-way vehicular access movement pattern through the site by utilising a separate entry and exit point.</p> <p>Issues e) and f) will be discussed in the main assessment below. Points (g-j) refer to the letter of support received from East Belfast Community Development Agency. They support the application stating that <i>'We believe it will have a positive and lasting impact on East Belfast through increased employment opportunities, improved care provision and increased economic growth'</i>.</p>
<p>5.0</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p> <p>5.4</p> <p>5.5</p>	<p>PLANNING ASSESSMENT</p> <p>Main Issues</p> <p>The main issues relevant to consideration of the application are summarised below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of development at this location • Design and Placemaking • Impact on the architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building • Impact on amenity • Trees and landscaping • Environmental protection • Access, movement and transport • Natural heritage • Flood risk and drainage • Waste-water infrastructure • Health impacts • Climate change • Pre-Application Community Consultation • Waste management • Employability and Skills <p>Development Plan Context</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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. Appendix A of the LDP also</p>

	<p>discusses Existing/draft Policy Designations including those designated by BMAP which are material considerations as confirmed by paragraph 11.1.4 of the LDP.</p>
5.6	<p><u>Operational Polices</u></p> <p>The Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application:</p> <p>Policy HOU8 – Specialised residential accommodation Policy HOU5 - Affordable housing Policy BH1 – Listed Buildings Policy DES2 – Masterplanning approach for Major development Policy DES1: Principles of urban design Policy RD1: New residential developments Policy TRAN1: Active travel – walking and cycling Policy TRAN 2: Creating an accessible environment Policy TRAN6: Access to public roads Policy TRAN3: Transport assessment Policy TRAN4: Travel plan Policy TRAN8: Car parking and servicing arrangements</p> <p>Policy ENV1: Environmental quality Policy ENV2: Mitigating environmental change Policy ENV3: Adapting to environmental change Policy ENV4: Flood Risk Policy ENV5: Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)</p> <p>Policy HC1: Promoting healthy communities Policy LC1: Landscape Policy OS1: Protection of open space Policy OS3: Ancillary open space Policy TRE1: Trees Policy NH1: Protection of natural heritage resources</p>
5.7	<p><u>Proposals Maps</u></p> <p>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 maps 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.</p>
5.8	<p>Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 – the site is un-zoned “white land” within the development limit.</p>
5.9	<p>Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004 & 2014) in dBMAP 2015 (v2004) the site is zoned as an area of white land and located within Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA) Campbell / Ormiston. In dBMAP 2015 (v2014) the site is also zoned as whiteland within an LLPA with the western portion of the application site designated as a site of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCI).</p>
	<p><u>Principle of development</u></p>

5.10	<p>The site is located within the development limit in BUAP 2001 and both versions of dBMAP 2015. The current established use on the site is offices (Class B1) which have been vacant since 2023. The proposed use is for a nursing home (Class C3b) and assisted living apartments (Class C3a). The site is on undesignated whiteland and the economic policies within the LDP do not protect offices in out of centre location, it is therefore considered that the proposed use do not conflict with land use zonings. The site is within an site of local conservation importance (SLNCI) and Local landscape policy area (LLPA) and the principle of the proposed development is considered acceptable subject to detailed considerations of related policies as set out below.</p>
5.11	<p>Policy HOU8 of the Plan Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for Specialised Residential Accommodation including retirement villages and care-related facilities, where the following criteria are met:</p> <p><i>a. The homes and/or bed spaces to be provided meet community needs demonstrated through a statement of specialist housing need;</i></p>
5.12	<p>The applicant submitted a statement of specialist housing need in support of the application. The applicant has highlighted that 2021 census data demonstrates an ageing population and that demand for Specialist Residential Accommodation (SRA) will continue to increase. Recent research from the Alzheimer’s Society referenced, which notes that the need for residential dementia and nursing dementia services of the type that Netherleigh House will provide will also increase significantly over the coming years.</p>
5.13	<p>The Belfast Local Development Plan Strategy 2035 has stated a need for an additional 820 bed spaces in residential care homes during the plan period, and therefore a demonstrable need exists. This proposal will provide 209 bed spaces, approximately 25% of LDP requirements. The Council’s LDP Housing team are supportive of the proposal. Criterion a. of Policy HOU8 is satisfied.</p>
5.14	<p>Policy HOU8 of the Plan Strategy also states that planning permission will be granted for Specialised Residential Accommodation where:</p> <p><i>b. The proposals will deliver convenient access to relevant local services and facilities, including local shops, public transport routes and health facilities.</i></p>
5.15	<p>The application site is served by existing footways along Massey Avenue which connect to existing footways on Castlehill Road to the east and Belmont Road which is approximately 70m to the west and provide a range of local amenities. There are several bus stops located along Massey Avenue, with one located directly outside of the site. These bus stops are served by the Metro Bus Service. Additionally, the site is accessible by dedicated cycle provision, provided by ‘on road’ painted cycle routes along Belmont Road, Upper Newtownards Road and Stormont Estate. The site is also directly adjacent to the Community Greenway Odyssey/Stormont Community Greenway. Local services within Belmont and Ballyhackmore are within approximately 5 minute drivetime by private car.</p>
5.16	<p>Having regard to the above assessment, the proposal is considered to satisfy Policy HOU8 of the Plan Strategy.</p> <p>Affordable housing</p> <p>Policy HOU5 of the Plan Strategy requires housing schemes of 5 units or more, or sites of 0.1 hectares or greater, to deliver a minimum 20% affordable housing.</p>
5.17	<p><i>Assisted Living Units:</i></p>

5.18	<p>HOU8 states that as specialist residential accommodation does not meet the needs of the general population, it is therefore exempt from affordable housing obligations. As such HOU5 is not applicable to the proposed up to 36no. assisted living units. However, if planning permission were to be granted, the developer could benefit from permitted development rights to convert these units into Class C1 housing units once the permission has been implemented. Therefore, it is necessary to include a condition that removes such permitted development rights. This would mean that if there was a future proposal to use some or all of the assisting living units as standard housing (Class C1) then affordable housing would be expected to be provided under Policy HOU5.</p>
5.19	<p><u>Design & placemaking</u></p> <p>The proposal has been assessed against Policies SP5, DES1, and RD1 of the Plan Strategy, the SPPS and Creating Places. Policies SP5 and DES1 promote good placemaking, high quality design and the importance of proposals responding positively to local context addressing matters such as scale height, massing, proportions, rhythm, and materials avoiding any negative impact at street level. Policy DES1 states that planning permission will be granted for new development that is of a high quality, sustainable design that makes a positive contribution to placemaking and goes onto list 11 criteria, (a.) to (k.).</p>
5.20	<p><i>Block B – Nursing care facilities</i></p> <p>The proposed development retains the built form of the existing 3 storey linear office block building to the rear of the site but proposes a full redesign of all external facades. The proposal includes various extensions to the existing linear office block including a fourth storey extension to the existing building, an extension to the eastern & western gable and two front projections from the northern elevation. This building will be 14.05m high after the additional floor is added. To mitigate the bulk and mass of the additional floor, the roof profile has been sensitively designed to enable a number of rooms to be set within the roof and served by extended dormer style windows, providing a subservient back drop to the listed building. The existing red brick is to be replaced with smooth render in off white/light grey with bronze panels interspersed throughout, the upper storey is finished in grey zinc cladding panels.</p>
5.21	<p>BCC Urban Design state that ‘<i>The revised material palette and introduction of bronze detailing assist in breaking up the building mass. The incorporation of roof terraces is welcomed and contributes positively to reducing visual bulk while respecting the listed building. The addition of dormer elements across the upper floor introduces articulation and reflects earlier PAD iterations, which is also supported</i>’. They however go on to state ‘<i>concerns remain regarding the overall façade composition, the northern elevation exhibits limited rhythm and coherence in fenestration</i>’.</p>
5.22	<p>It is considered that cues have been taken from existing windows and bays of the listed building in the proposed design. The linear block has a clear ‘top-middle-base- approach with the top defined by a mansard style roof profile with projecting dormers, the middle if off white render and the base a contrasting white lined render. Public views of the proposal will also be limited due to the extensive screening around the site boundaries which are sought for retention. The refurbished block presents an improvement to current architectural form and design and is considered in keeping and sympathetic to the listed Netherleigh House and is therefore on balance, acceptable.</p> <p><i>Block A1 & A2 – Assisted Living Apartments</i></p> <p>The proposal includes the erection of 2 no. 4-storey apartment blocks to accommodate 36 no. assisted living apartments. Assisted living apartments allow residents to partake in the amenities and social environment provided while having trained staff available 24/7 for safety</p>

5.23	<p>and support. Assisted living aims to provide a balance between independence and care, allowing residents to live comfortably and securely without the more intensive medical supervision found in nursing homes. Block A1 is located to the southwestern part of the application site, within an existing area of hardstanding to the west of the existing office linear block. It comprises 20 no. apartments and measures 12.8m to ridge and has been designed to correspond with the elevational changes to the main linear block. The second assisted living apartment block A2 is located to the east of the application site and is also located within an existing area of hardstanding. It comprises 16no. apartments and measures approximately 12m to ridge. Block A2 is linked to the existing linear building via one of the proposed front projections, however, , there is no internal access between buildings. Following HED comments to reduce the height of block A2, it has been reduced by 1m and the roof changed to a Mansard style, reducing the potential visual impact on the listed building when viewed from the west. HED are content with the changes. Both blocks are situated in appropriate locations within the site and will be sufficiently screened from public views. It is considered that both blocks are an appropriate height, scale and massing.</p>
5.24	<p><i>Block C2 – Nursing Care facilities</i></p> <p>The development proposes to render the existing service block to match with the design interventions proposed to the main linear block. The service block will continue to provide a mostly ancillary purpose to the nursing care facility through the retention of the existing canteen and kitchen. The first floor of the existing will be changed to provide an additional 5 no. 1 bed residential units. The built form and overall footprint of the block is to remain as existing; however the material finishes proposed to the external elevations will mitigate the massing of this building adjacent to the listed building.</p>
5.25	<p><i>Block C1 (Netherleigh House) – Nursing Care facilities</i></p> <p>The proposal includes the change of use of Netherleigh House from offices to provide a nursing care facility comprising office rooms, nurse stations, dining rooms and day rooms. Details of the proposed changes to Netherleigh House are discussed below in the ‘Impact on the architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building’ section.</p> <p>Overall, it is considered that on balance, the scale, massing and design of the proposal are appropriate to the site and surrounding buildings, the site is considered to absorb the additional development without having a detrimental impact on any built or natural heritage and the proposal accords with RD1 and DES1 of the Plan Strategy.</p>
5.26	<p>Impact on the architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building</p> <p>The proposed development includes the change of use of Grade B1 listed Netherleigh House (HB26/13/012). Section 91 (2) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 applies which states ‘the Department must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.’</p> <p>Policy BH1 of the Plan Strategy provides policy for the Change of use, new development affecting the setting of listed buildings and alterations of a listed building.</p>
5.27	<p>The existing listed building currently provides office spaces across 2 stories along with a basement level. The proposed development intends to utilise the existing formal layout of the building to provide nursing stations/office, day rooms and a dining room. However, to facilitate accessibility across the building for residents, staff and visitors the proposal includes minor internal alterations including the provision of a lift and removal of a wall to provide a disabled accessible bathroom. Criteria f-l of Policy BH1 states that Planning permission will be granted for the alteration and extension of a listed building where all the following criteria are met:</p>

5.28	<p>f. The works preserve, restore and complement the building's features of special architectural or historical importance to ensure the existing building remains intact and unimpaired;</p> <p>g. The design respects the essential character of the existing building and/or setting;</p> <p>h. The proposal makes use of quality materials and appropriate detailing sympathetic with the existing building and/or setting;</p> <p>and i. In the case of extensions, they shall be subservient to the existing building with regard to height, scale, massing, form and alignment;</p>
5.29	<p>The external elevations of Netherleigh House will remain unaffected by the proposed development with the exception of part of a front wall which currently defines part of the entrance porch to the existing building to provide a proposed accessibility ramp. The ramp will have a glass balustrade which is considered an acceptable design feature and complement the building. HED have been consulted and are content with the alterations to the Listed Building On this basis, the proposal is considered to safeguard key features and character of the historic asset.</p> <p>Policy BH1 states that Planning permission will be granted for the change of use of a listed building where this secures its upkeep and survival and the character and architectural or historic interest of the building would be preserved or enhanced. The new use of residential and nursing care is considered an appropriate for Netherleigh House and will bring the vacant building back into use which ensures that the architectural and historic interest of the building is preserved.</p>
5.30	<p>Although the proposal does not include any extension to Netherleigh House itself, it includes various extensions and alterations to the existing built form on site which is attached to the listed building along with two new build assisted living units and are consequently subject to the same level of statutory protection. Criteria a-e of Policy BH1 states that Planning permission will be granted for new development affecting the setting of listed buildings where the following criteria are met:</p>
5.31	<p>a. The development is sympathetic to the essential characteristic, scale, height, massing and alignment of the listed building by way of its scale, form, materials and detailing;</p> <p>b. The development does not result in the significant loss of key views of the listed building;</p> <p>c. The nature of the use proposed respects the character of the setting of the building;</p> <p>d. The development does not have a detrimental impact on the setting of the listed building;</p> <p>and</p> <p>e. The development has regard to relevant supplementary planning guidance.</p>
5.32	<p>HED requested further information and amendments to elements of the scheme which have resulted in assisted living block A2 being reduced in height by 1m and roof changed to a Mansard style, reducing the potential visual impact on the listed building when viewed from the west. Elevational changes to block B (Nursing home) are proposed including simplified dormer detail, a lowered roof over stair tower and a mansard roof to day room. A section of the proposed fourth storey extension has been reduced to provide a roof terrace which has considered a key view when facing the listed building from the north as it is read with the backdrop of the linear building. Materials of the existing service block(Block C2 have been changed from red brick to render which is considered sympathetic to the Listed Building. HED were reconsulted and are now content that the new development will not adversely impact upon the setting of the listed building.</p> <p>Overall, it is concluded that the development is sympathetic to the essential characteristics, scale, height, massing and alignment of the listed building and complies with Policy BH1. There is currently no supplementary planning guidance related to listed buildings. Associated conditions are necessary to protect historic features and protect character.</p>

	<p><u>Impact on amenity</u></p> <p><i>Open space and amenity space:</i></p> <p>5.33 Policy OS1 supports the retention and improvement of existing open space throughout the district area. The lands within the application site are not designated as formal open space, however it is acknowledged that parts of the application site, particularly the woodland area to the northwest provide amenity and biodiversity benefits associated with open space. However, this area has been identified for a woodland trail which will provide useable space that is not currently provided for. It will provide a safe, accessible route to accommodate users of all mobility levels. Overall, the proposal does not result in the loss of designated open space and therefore is compliant with Policy OS1</p> <p>5.34 Policy OS3 requires that all new development proposals make appropriate provision for open space, including hard and soft landscaped areas and outdoor amenity areas, to serve the needs of the development. The precise amount, location, type and design of such provision will be negotiated with applicants taking account of the specific characteristics of the development, the site and its context and having regard to a) the normal expectation will be at least 10% of the total site area; and b) complementary and ancillary equipment and facilities, including for active or passive enjoyment of residents or occupiers, should be incorporated into the design of the development.</p> <p>5.35 The proposed development provides pockets of courtyards spaces throughout the site by providing bench seating and picnic tables across various areas which equates to 3,035m². These areas are located adjacent to block A1 and to the north of Block B. All ground floor apartments have been allocated external amenity spaces which is enclosed. The woodland walk which is subject to detailed design as discussed above equates to 9,102m². The proposed assisted living apartment blocks are also served individually by balconies, providing an element of associated private amenity which equates to 701m² (19.47m² each).. A rooftop terrace is also included as part of the new fourth floor storey extension to the main linear block which will provide an amenity setting for residents of the care facility. The proposal is considered to comply with Policy OS3 and the 10% expectation of open space is met. Associated conditions for the delivery and management of open space are necessary to ensure the provision of acceptable measures.</p> <p>5.36</p>
	<p><i>Impact on neighbouring amenity:</i></p> <p>The surrounding area is characterised largely by existing residential development to the north, east and west, with the southern boundary abutting a large playing field and school grounds associated with Campbell College. The new eastern gable extension to the linear block and the associated fourth floor extension will result in the built form shifting closer to the properties located along Netherleigh Park. It is however considered that there is a sufficient separation distance of approximately 20m with an extensive mature tree boundary defining the eastern boundary of the site that will add screening to the neighbouring properties. The residential properties to the north and west are located a sufficient separation distance away to mitigate impacts of the proposal.</p> <p>The roof terrace proposed to the linear block will not overlook any of the assisted living units as it will look have an outlook towards the open spaced areas behind Netherleigh House, the location of it is therefore acceptable and will not therefore impact privacy of existing residents</p>

5.37	<p>Additionally, the site aspect is an important consideration as the proposed development is located to the west of the properties along Netherleigh Park. The proposed development, particularly the additional fourth storey extension, would not create any significant overshadowing or loss of light to the rear of the adjacent neighbouring properties due to the site orientation. There are no habitable room windows proposed to the gable end of the proposed eastern elevation, therefore the proposal will not result in overlooking or loss of privacy.</p>
5.38	<p>Under Policy HOU8 – Specialist residential accommodation, residential policies do not apply to this specific type of accommodation as it does not meet the needs of the general population as stated within policy HOU8. Space standards therefore do not apply however it is noted that the assisted living apartments meet these requirements. The assisted living apartments all have adequate outlook from bedroom and living area windows. Each nursing home bedroom also has a window for outlook to adjoining external communal areas.</p>
5.39	<p>The proposal is therefore considered to satisfy Policies DES1 and RD1, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
<p>Trees and landscaping</p>	
5.40	<p>In accordance with Policy TRE1 the council will seek to protect existing trees from new development, particularly those that are of visual, biodiversity or amenity quality and significance, and there will be a presumption in favour of retaining and safeguarding trees that make a valuable contribution to the environment and amenity. All proposals for new built development should seek to provide for additional tree planting appropriate to the nature, scale and location of the development.</p>
<p>The application site is defined on all boundaries by mature trees and comprises a dense woodland to the northwest.</p>	
5.41	<p>The trees within the application site are not protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), however, the trees located beyond the southern boundary and all of the trees within the grounds of adjacent Campbell College are all protected by (TPO/2005/0107). 75no. trees within the site were surveyed including a mix of pinus sylvestris, Amelanchier x grandiflora, acer campestre, sorbus aria and Betula jacquemontii. 8no. trees are proposed to be removed due to their condition and to facilitate the proposed development. All these trees</p>
5.42	<p>are located to the rear of the site and therefore do not offer public visual amenity due to restricted views. The large majority of trees within the site (over 95%) will be retained and form part of the proposal, therefore will help contribute with aspects of screen, integration and continue to provide opportunities for local wildlife. The proposed development includes the erection of new built form within existing areas of hardstanding and any areas of additional hardstanding which impose onto any RPAs have been considered in the associated Method Statement.</p>
5.43	<p>63 trees are proposed in various locations throughout the site including car parking areas, within site boundaries and grassed area open spaces. The tree species include scots pine, whitebeam, birch, acer and junberry planted at heights between 2.5m – 5m. BCC Tree Officer has been consulted on the proposal and offers no objections subject to conditions. The proposed planting scheme would secure a net gain in trees as part of the application, complying with policy TRE1. Associated conditions to secure the protection and management of retained trees and proposed vegetation is necessary.</p>
5.44	<p>As the application site is within Campbell/Ormiston Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA) policy LC1, specifically LC1c is applicable. A Landscape Design Statement and Landscape</p>

5.45	<p>Management and Maintenance Plan accompany the application. The layout of the proposal carefully integrates car parking for both the assisted living apartments and nursing home elements, with soft landscaping including shrub planting and hedging used to break up hard surfaces. The hard surfacing used for access arrangements will be finished in asphalt. Existing pedestrian routes connects key areas of the site, promoting accessibility and encouraging movement. Amenity landscape areas is an important aspect of the proposal to ensure residents can relax, interact and enjoy outdoor amenity, they are positioned between Netherleigh House and the apartments and comprise open lawns, seating, picnic benches and ornamental planting. A 1.5m high brick retaining wall to match existing is proposed to the rear of the Listed Building which bounds an area of open space. A 1.2m high estate black railing is also proposed to private patio areas/defensible space. Both boundary treatments are considered appropriate. BCC Landscape Team have been consulted and are content with the proposed. Overall, the proposal maintains existing landscape features as part of the development and will not therefore significantly alter existing natural heritage assets. The development is therefore considered to comply with policy LC1.</p>
5.46	<p><u>Environmental Protection</u></p> <p>Policy ENV1 states that planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protects communities from materially harmful development. The proposed development has been assessed by Environmental Health and NIEA: Ground and Regulation Unit in terms of contaminated land, air quality, lighting, odour and noise.</p> <p><i>Contaminated land</i></p> <p>The proposal is accompanied by a Preliminary Risk Assessment (PRA), Generic Quantitative Risk Assessment (GQRA) and a Remediation Strategy. BCC EHO offers no objections and a condition to ensure that any contamination within the site is appropriately resolved if encountered. NIEA: Ground and Regulation Unit state that there are no significant sources of previous potentially contaminating land uses identified on this application site or in the adjacent area. The proposed development is therefore considered likely to be a low risk to the water environment. They also recommend a condition in relation to unexpected contamination. It is considered that the proposal accords with Policy ENV1.</p>
5.47	<p><i>Air quality</i></p> <p>The submitted TAF indicates the proposed development will generate less vehicle trips than the existing development on site. Therefore, the proposal is not predicted to have any detrimental impact on air quality in the local area from associated vehicle movements.</p>
5.48	<p>BCC EHO notes that the proposed residential development is located in an area where the maximum radon potential is identified at 3-5%. They therefore a condition that in the event that any centralised combustion sources (boilers, CHP, biomass or generators) are proposed and 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, Land-use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Quality (January 2017), an updated Air Quality Impact Assessment be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority</p> <p>It is considered the proposal accords with Policy ENV1.</p> <p><i>Noise</i></p> <p>BCC EHO have no concerns regarding the impact of noise from the proposal. They recommend a condition stating that the development hereby permitted shall not be occupied</p>

5.49	until any necessary sound mitigation measures are installed so that the below internal noise levels are not exceeded within habitable rooms. Policy ENV1 is therefore met.
5.50	<p><i>Light</i></p> <p>The external lighting arrangements on site are not proposed to be changed, Environmental Health therefore did not comment on this and no conditions are recommended on this issue.</p> <p>The proposal is considered to accord with Policy ENV1, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
	<p><u>Access, Movement and Transport</u></p>
5.51	<p>The application site is served by existing footways along Massey Avenue which connect to existing footways on Castlehill Road to the east and Bemont Road to the west. There are several bus stops located along Massey Avenue, with one located directly outside of the site. These bus stops are served by the Metro Bus Service. Additionally, the site is accessible by dedicated cycle provision, provided by 'on road' painted cycle routes along Belmont Road, Upper Newtownards Road and Stormont Estate. The site is also directly adjacent to the Community Greenway Odyssey/Stormont Community Greenway. The proposal includes 3 separate covered cycle bays across the site, providing a total of 21 no. cycle parking within the grounds of the application site to encourage sustainable travel to the site. The proposal is considered to take account the needs of walkers and cyclists in a safe, accessible and convenient way, therefore the proposal is considered complaint with TRAN1.</p>
5.52	<p>To ensure that the proposed development is accessible for not only future residents with general mobility issues navigating the site but also visitors and staff attending, the site comprises various ramps across the site to ensure accessibility between car parks and pockets of open space. A drop off point is located at the main entrance to the nursing care home, with a ramp access to the door. A ramp access is also provided to the front door of Netherleigh House. Pathways can accommodate a wheelchair and have a firm surface with level or a gently sloping gradient. A lift is provided within the nursing care home, the assisted living apartment blocks and Netherleigh House. Due to level differences across the site, a platform lift is also provided at the rear of apartment block A1. The design of the buildings, external areas and associated car parking sufficiently allows for ease of movement throughout the site and ensures inclusivity. It is therefore concluded that the proposal aligns with the requirements of Policy TRAN 2.</p>
5.53	<p>Policy TRAN3 requires a Transport Assessment (TA) to evaluate any transport implications which a development proposal may have, especially in scenarios where there is likely to have significant travel generating uses. The findings from the TS confirm that the proposed development generates less trips than the previous / extant use and therefore there is a nil net change in terms of traffic generation between the previous and proposed uses on the development site. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy TRAN 4</p>
5.54	<p>The application site is accessed via two access points along the northern boundary from Massey Avenue. The proposed development intends to retain the existing access arrangements by providing a one – way vehicular access protocol through the site by utilising a separate entry and exit point. Massey Avenue is not a Protected Route and therefore it is considered that the proposed development would not generate an intensification of an existing access nor would it prejudice or significantly inconvenience the flow of road users in compliance with Policy TRAN 6.</p>
5.55	<p>Policy TRAN 8 states that development proposals will be required to provide adequate provision for car parking and appropriate servicing arrangements. The proposal contains 143 parking spaces including 7 disabled spaces.</p>

	<p>Road safety and traffic were raised as a concern in a representation. DfI Roads Service was consulted and have raised no objection subject to conditions relating to access and road safety, adequate parking provision and traffic circulation, adequate cycle parking and alternative modes of transport.</p>
5.56	<p><u>Natural heritage</u></p>
	<p>Policy NH1 relates to the protection of natural heritage resources.</p>
5.57	<p>A Ecological Impact Assessment, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Preliminary Roost Assessment, Bat Survey and Badgers Survey were submitted as part of the application. NIEA: NED responded stating that the reports do not include adequate details of qualifications or relevant experience of the authors. New reports have since been submitted and NIEA:NED reconsulted. Delegated authority is sought to deal with this.</p>
	<p>Shared Environmental Services were consulted in order to ensure the proposal would not impact negatively on protected sites. Their response remains outstanding.</p>
5.58	<p>Given the nature and location of the development and limited interventions proposed to natural heritage assets within the site, it is not anticipated that any fundamental policy concerns are likely based on associated supporting information. Adequate mitigation can be secured by appropriate planning condition if necessary. Delegated authority is requested to resolve associated issues, subject to no substantive issues being identified by the relevant consultees. Protected species are also afforded protection by the Wildlife Order regardless of the outcome of the application,</p>
5.59	
	<p><u>Flood risk and drainage</u></p>
5.60	<p>DfI Rivers has reviewed the Drainage Assessment which indicates that management of flood risk to and from the development will include using SuDS.</p>
	<p>Commenting on the efficacy of the proposed SuDS is outside Rivers Directorate's area of knowledge and expertise. Consequently, Rivers Directorate cannot advise that the potential flood risk to the development, and from the development to elsewhere, has been satisfactorily addressed, or that the proposal is acceptable as required under policy.</p>
5.61	<p>Rivers Directorate advises that if the proposal is to discharge storm water into a watercourse, then an application should be made to the local Rivers Directorate office for consent to discharge storm water under Schedule 6 of the Drainage (NI) Order 1973. If it is proposed to discharge storm water into an NI Water system, a Pre-Development Enquiry should be made, and if a simple solution cannot be identified, a Network Capacity Check should be</p>
5.62	<p>carried out.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the responses from consultees on this issue, the site and lawful use benefit from existing connections to drainage infrastructure. The proposal would result in a slight reduction and/or replacement in the extent/area of existing hardsurfaced areas, therefore associated impacts are not likely to be significant.</p>
	<p>Associated conditions to secure appropriate mitigation can be attached to any grant of permission. On this basis, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy ENV4 and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>

	<p><u>Waste-water infrastructure</u></p>
5.63	<p>Policy SP1A requires that necessary infrastructure is in place to support new development. NI Water objects to the application due to network drainage capacity concerns. It advises</p>
5.64	<p>that the downstream catchment is constrained by overloaded sewage infrastructure including one or more downstream “Unsatisfactory Intermittent Discharges “(UID’s) which are causing a negative impact on the environment. These are located at (1) Parkway CSO; (2) Hollywood Road Tillysburn CSO; (3) Inverary Drive CSO; (4) Sydenham Park Avenue TPS. (1-2) Discharge to the Lagan. (3-4) Discharge to Belfast Harbour.</p>
5.65	<p>NIEA WMU also highlighted concerns with respect to sewage disposal and recommended a condition to be attached to any Approval requiring the means of sewage disposal to be agreed prior to commencement of development.</p>
5.66	<p>Whilst NI Water has objected to the application, 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. A condition is recommended to secure final details of the means of sewage disposal prior to commencement of development.</p>
5.67	<p>For these reasons, it would be unreasonable for the Council to refuse planning permission on these grounds and the proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policy SP1A of the Plan Strategy.</p>
	<p><u>Climate change</u></p>
5.68	<p>Policy ENV2 states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to mitigate environmental change and reduce greenhouse gases by promoting sustainable patterns of development. Policy ENV3 states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to adapt to environmental change.</p>
5.69	<p>Proposed measures include, energy efficient lightbulbs and appliances, double glazing insulating existing walls, replacing windows with new glazed units and upgrading the existing fabric throughout the residential and nursing care facility. Cumulatively these measures will increase the energy efficiency of the buildings and improve the permissible air permeability, thus making a positive climate contribution. This would provide a net benefit given the existing lawful use rights of the buildings on site to continue operating as an office</p>
5.70	<p>development.</p>
	<p>The proposal is considered to accord with Policies ENV2 and ENV3.</p>
	<p><i>SuDS:</i></p>
5.71	<p>Policy ENV5 states that all built development shall include, where appropriate, SuDs measures to manage surface water effectively on site, to reduce surface water run-off and to ensure flooding is not increased elsewhere. The application proposes upgraded surface materials and new planting to promote sustainable drainage and reduce surface water runoff. SuDS will be promoted through filter drains and waterwater gardens to provide both conveyance and water quality treatment of surface runoff.</p>

5.72	The proposals are considered to satisfy Policies ENV5 and a condition is included to secure these measures.
	<p><u>Health impacts</u></p>
5.73	Policy HC1 seeks to ensure that all new development maximise opportunities to promote healthy and active lifestyles. New developments should be designed, constructed and managed in ways that improve health and promote healthy lifestyles. This will include supporting active travel options, improving accessibility to local service centres, reducing the use of private car travel, adequate provision of public open space, leisure and recreation facilities, high quality design and promoting balanced communities and sustainable neighbourhoods.
5.74	In this regard, the site is a sustainably located with good access to public transport, pedestrian walkways and cycle paths. The proposed buildings and associated alterations are acceptable design and incorporates modern urban fabric which is capable of achieving high levels of sustainability standards. The scheme has fully considered good quality hard and soft landscaping and will provide a pleasant and attractive environment for any future staff,
5.75	resident or visitor attending the site, including a new woodland walkway (subject to detailed design) encouraging an active lifestyle for residents. Overall, the proposal is considered compliant with Policy HC1.
	<p><u>Waste Management</u></p>
5.76	A waste management plan has been submitted. The application includes various areas identified for bin stores which have been designed to the appropriate size to accommodate the estimated waste generation across the application site. The enclosed bin stores have been sensitively designed and incorporated into the proposed layout to limit any negative impact or unnecessary clutter. The Council's Waste Management team has been consulted and are content with the proposal. A condition is included to secure adequate provision of refuse and recycling storage in the interests of the amenities of the area. The proposals
5.77	waste measures are considered acceptable.
	<p><u>Employability and Skills</u></p>
5.78	It is argued that the proposal is a total investment of £42.8 million with a construction cost of £34 million over 18 months. and will support the local construction sector by creating 90-120 construction jobs. BCC Economic Unit have been consulted and are outstanding. In the event that Economic Unit consider that employability and skills contributions are necessary this can be dealt with by planning condition and it is requested that this issue is resolved under delegated authority, subject to no substantive issues being identified.
	<p><u>Pre-application Community Consultation</u></p>
5.79	The application was preceded by a statutory Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) under reference LA04/2025/1088/PAN which set out the applicant's proposals for pre-application community consultation.
	The application is accompanied by a mandatory Pre-application Community Consultation Report (PACC). The PACC report describes the comprehensive preapplication consultation undertaken by the applicant.
	The applicant states that they actively sought the views of the public and stakeholders by utilising the following methods of engagement:

5.80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informing Local Councillors, MLAs, and the Constituency MP of the PAN submission by email. - A public notice advertising the community consultation was placed in the local newspaper 'Belfast Telegraph', on Thursday 7th August 2025. - A leaflet drop was carried out to local businesses and residents' addresses close to the application site week commencing 11th August 2025. - A second advertisement was published in the 'Belfast Telegraph' on Monday 11th August 2025 which extended the date for feedback in accordance with newly adopted Planning (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2025 legislation. - A drop-in public consultation event was held at Netherleigh House, 1 Massey Avenue, Belfast, BT4 2JT, on Thursday 21st August 2025 and was attended by members of the public - A website (www.Netherleigh.Consultation.co.uk) was also created and available to access from the 21st August - 18th September which allowed no less than 28 days for interested parties to view the material and provide feedback until the consultation period closed formally.
5.81	
5.82	<p>The PACC report states that the majority of feedback to the public consultation was largely positive, although neighbouring residents did raise a variety of matters related to the proposal. Specific issues were raised and the agent provided the following responses to address them:</p>
5.83	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traffic impact and road safety: - The proposed development is accompanied by various technical reports including a Transport Statement and a Transport Assessment Form (TAF) prepared by RPS which details traffic measures related to the proposal. - Construction phase nuisance: - Any impact from construction is temporary and subject to planning permission being granted, conditions can be imposed on any forthcoming Decision Notice restricting hours of construction. - Access and landscape maintenance of private lane (Netherleigh Mews): - This application is supported by a Landscape Maintenance and Management Plan. This plan details how landscaping within the site will be future managed over an extended period of time. The existing access is not impacted by the proposed development and will continue to be maintained.
5.84	<p>It is considered that the Pre-Community Consultation Report submitted has demonstrated that the applicant has carried out their duty under Section 27 of the Act to consult the community in advance of submitting an application.</p>

5.85	
6.0	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>6.1 Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.</p> <p>6.2 Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other matters that arise including resolving final responses from NIEA:NED, SES and BCC Economic Unit provided that they are not substantive.</p>
7.0	<p>DRAFT CONDITIONS LA04/2025/2013/F</p> <p>Time:</p> <p>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>HED:</p> <p>2. Notwithstanding the submitted details (Drawing Nos. 32, 33, 34, uploaded to the Planning Portal on 21st May 2026), the following internal features shall not be installed, implemented or carried out unless in accordance with further details which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.</p> <p>a. curtain wall cladding b. window and matching panels c. of metal screen d. Zinc cladding</p> <p>The works shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the details so approved.</p> <p>Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.</p> <p>3. The following elements of the approved scheme shall be carried out in accordance with associated detail drawings and documents:</p> <p>a. Lift Installation – Drawing No. 19a, 31a, 35 uploaded to the Planning Portal on 21st May 2026.</p>

- b. Removal and reinstatement of portico lamp methodology – Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment & Interior Significance Record addendum uploaded to the Planning Portal on 1st June 2026.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

Climate change:

4. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied unless the climate change measures described in the application have been implemented. The climate change measures shall be retained in accordance with the approved details at all times.

Reason: To mitigate and/or adapt to climate change.

Waste management:

5. The development shall not be occupied until the refuse and recycling storage area have been provided in accordance with the approved plans and shall be retained as such at all times.

Reason: To ensure adequate provision of refuse and recycling storage in the interests of the amenities of the area.

Trees & Landscaping:

6. All hard and soft landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos. 29a, 26a and 27a uploaded to the Planning Portal on 21st May 2026. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council. Any existing or proposed trees or plants indicated on the approved plans which, within a period of five years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged, diseased or dying shall be replaced during the next planting season with other trees or plants of a location, species and size, details of which shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. All hard surface treatment of open parts of the site shall be permeable or drained to a permeable area. All hard landscape works shall be permanently retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

7. All trees and planting within the site shall be retained unless shown on the approved drawings as being removed. Any retained trees or planting indicated on the approved drawings which become seriously damaged, diseased, or dying, shall be replaced during the next planting season (October to March inclusive) with other trees or plants of a location, species and size to be first approved in writing by the Council.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

8. Prior to any work commencing, protective barriers (fencing) and ground protection shall be erected and installed as specified in British Standard 5837: 2012 (section 6.2) on any trees / hedging to be retained within the site and must be in place before

any materials or machinery are brought onto site for demolition, development, or soil stripping. The protective fencing must remain in place until all work is completed, and all associated materials and equipment are removed from site.

Reason: To ensure the protection of, and to ensure the continuity of amenity afforded by any existing trees to be retained within the site and on adjacent lands.

9. No storage of materials, parking of vehicles or plant, temporary buildings, sheds, offices or fires within the Root Protection Area of trees within the site and adjacent lands during the construction period.

Reason: To safeguard trees of amenity and biodiversity value.

Noise:

10. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until any necessary sound mitigation measures are installed so that the below internal noise levels are not exceeded within habitable rooms. Where closed windows are required to achieve these internal levels then an alternative means of ventilation must be provided which meets, as a minimum, the sound reduction performance required by the windows. In the case of active or mechanical ventilation the applicant must ensure that the operation of the ventilation system does not result in internal noise in excess of the below stated levels:

- 35 dB LAeq,16hrs at any time between 07:00hrs and 23:00hrs within any habitable room, if required with the windows closed and alternative means of acoustic ventilation provided.
- 30 dB LAeq,8hr at any time between the hours of 23:00hrs and 07:00hrs within any bedroom, if required with the windows closed and alternative means of acoustic ventilation provided.
- 45 dB L_{max} more than 10 times between 23:00hrs and 07:00hrs within any bedroom, if required with the windows closed and alternative means of ventilation provided.

The measures required shall be thereafter retained at all times.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of occupants of the building hereby approved.

11. The rating level (dBL_{A,r,T}) from the operation of all combined plant and equipment must not exceed the existing daytime and night-time background sound levels at the nearest noise sensitive premises, when measured or determined in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 'Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound'.

Reason: Protection of residential amenity

Contamination

12. 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.

13. No demolition or construction works shall be carried out outside the following hours:
Monday to Friday – 0800 to 1800 hours
Saturday – 0800 to 1300 hours
No such works shall be carried out on Sundays, Public or Bank Holidays.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the area.

Air Quality

14. In the event that any centralised combustion sources (boilers, CHP, biomass or generators) are proposed and 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, Land-use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Quality (January 2017), this Service would request that an updated Air Quality Impact Assessment be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority prior to the installation of the plant.

The assessment shall include details of the combustion plant to be installed, to include emission rates and flue termination heights of the proposed combustion systems and must demonstrate that there will be no exceedances of the Air Quality Strategy objectives at relevant human receptor locations, associated with operation of the proposed combustion plant and with the overall development.

Reason: Protection of local air quality.

Transport:

15. The vehicular access shall be provided in accordance with Drawing No.05AA uploaded to the Planning Portal 21st May 2026, prior to the occupation of any other works or other development hereby permitted.

Reason: To ensure there is a satisfactory means of access in the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.

safety and the convenience of road users.

16. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until hard surfaced areas have been constructed and permanently marked in accordance with Drawing No.05A uploaded to the Planning Portal 21st May 2026 to provide for parking within the site. No part of these hard surfaced areas shall be used for any purpose at any time other than for the parking and movement of vehicles in connection with the approved development.

Reason: To ensure adequate provision has been made for parking within the site.

17. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until sheltered cycle parking facilities have been provided in accordance with Drawing No.05A uploaded to the Planning Portal 21st May 2026.

Reason: To promote the use of alternative modes of transport in accordance with sustainable transportation principles.

18. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied or operated unless in accordance with the approved Travel Plan uploaded to the Planning Portal on 6th January 2026.

Reason: To promote sustainable travel patterns and off-set the demand for vehicular movements and/or parking.

Drainage:

19. 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.

Reason: To ensure appropriate foul and surface water drainage of the site, in the interests of safeguarding the environment integrity of Belfast Lough. Approval is required upfront because the design of the drainage is an integral part of the development and its acceptability.

Removal of Permitted Development

20. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 (or any order revoking and/or re-enacting that order with or without modification), no change of use of the development hereby approved shall be permitted without express planning permission.

Reason: Alternative use requires further consideration by the Council, having regard to the Local Development Plan and relevant material considerations.

DRAFT CONDITIONS LA04/2025/2015/LBC

1. The works hereby granted must be begun within five years from the date of this consent.

Reason: As required by Section 94 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2. Notwithstanding the submitted details (Drawing Nos. 32, 33, 34, uploaded to the Planning Portal on 5th June 2026), the following internal features shall not be installed, implemented or carried out unless in accordance with further details which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

- a. curtain wall cladding
- b. window and matching panels
- c. of metal screen
- d. Zinc cladding

The works shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the details so approved.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

3. The following elements of the approved scheme shall be carried out in accordance with associated detail drawings and documents:
 - c. Lift Installation – Drawing No. 19a, 31a, 35 uploaded to the Planning Portal on 5th June 2026.
 - d. Removal and reinstatement of portico lamp methodology – Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment & Interior Significance Record addendum uploaded to the Planning Portal on 5th June 2026.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

Development Management Report

Summary	
Committee Date: 16 th June 2026	
Application ID: LA04/2026/0021/F & LA04/2026/0022/LBC	
Proposal: Conversion of former convent to 28no. apartments (1, 2 & 3 bed) involving internal and external refurbishment/retention and re-configuration. Provision of ground floor extension with partial demolition and provision of new stairwell and lift. Provision of dormers, rooflights and extension to first, second floor and attic levels regarding new stairwell and lift. External layout reconfigurations to include construction of new access from Ormeau Road, amended parking layout, provision of cycle parking, bin stores, landscaping, substation and associated works.	Location: Former Good Shepherd Centre at lands at Nos. 511 and 511a Ormeau Road Belfast BT7 3GS
Referral Route: Application for more than 12 units with representations received contrary to officer recommendation	
Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions	
Applicant Name and Address: Alskea 16a Crosscavanagh Road Dungannon BT70 3BJ	Agent Name and Address: Clyde Shanks Ltd 2nd Floor 7 Exchange Place Belfast BT1 2NA
Date Valid: 22/01/2026	
Target Date: 07/05/26	
Contact Officer: Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management)	
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>This application relates to the former Good Shepherd Centre at Nos. 511 and 511a Ormeau Road. The application seeks full planning permission and Listed Building Consent for the conversion and extension of the former convent to 28no. apartments (1, 2 & 3 bed), new access from Ormeau Road, amended parking layout and other associated works.</p> <p>The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of housing in this location • Housing density • Affordable housing • Housing mix • Adaptable and accessible accommodation • Design and placemaking • Impact on heritage assets • Climate change 	

- Residential quality and impact on amenity
- Open space
- Access and transport
- Health impacts
- Environmental protection
- Flood risk and drainage
- Waste-water infrastructure
- Natural heritage

The site is within the settlement limits and un-zoned “white land” within the most recent version of draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014). The site is designated within the Rosetta Area of Townscape Character (ATC).

The site is considered a suitable location for residential use; the proposal would make effective use of previously developed land in an accessible and sustainable location and support the long-term use of a Listed asset.

The height, scale and massing of the proposal are unaltered by the proposal, other than a ground floor extension, safeguarding the existing historic and architectural features.

The proposal would provide dedicated parking within the boundary of the site which is on an acceptable level (43 spaces for 28 residential units). Delegated authority is sought to resolve the provision of dedicated disabled parking spaces.

The application proposes the delivery of 28 private apartments with no affordable housing or green travel measures proposed. The applicant has submitted a Viability Assessment, which has been independently appraised, and concludes that the proposal is unviable with the inclusion of affordable housing or provision of green travel measures.

DAERA, DfC HED, DfI Roads, DfI Rivers, Shared Environmental Services, BCC Environmental Health, internal conservation advice and Tree Officer offer no objection. NI Water initially objected on grounds of insufficient capacity, but following further reports the issues of concern were resolved and NI Water has withdrawn its objection, recommending conditions. DAERA NIEA's further consultation response is outstanding.

There have been five third-party objections and comments received, expressing concerns about the impact on trees/wildlife, traffic generation, outdoor amenity space/balconies providing overlooking and impact on water infrastructure. These issues are dealt with in the main report.

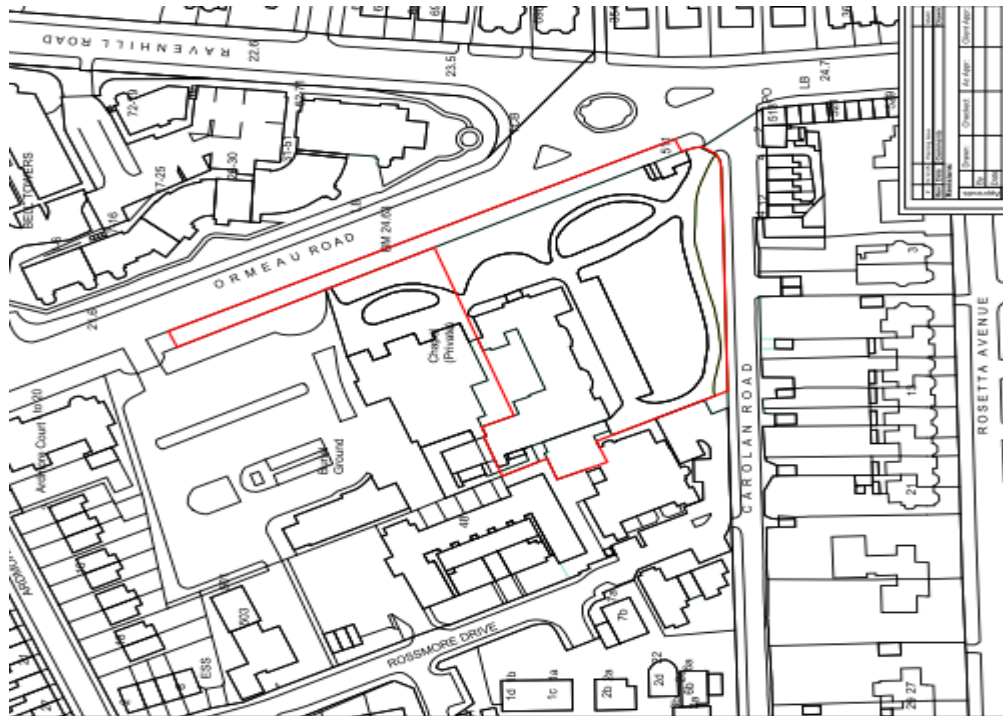
Recommendation

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, resolve the provision of dedicated disabled parking spaces and outstanding consultation from DAERA NIEA NED, and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.

PLANS, DRAWINGS AND IMAGERY

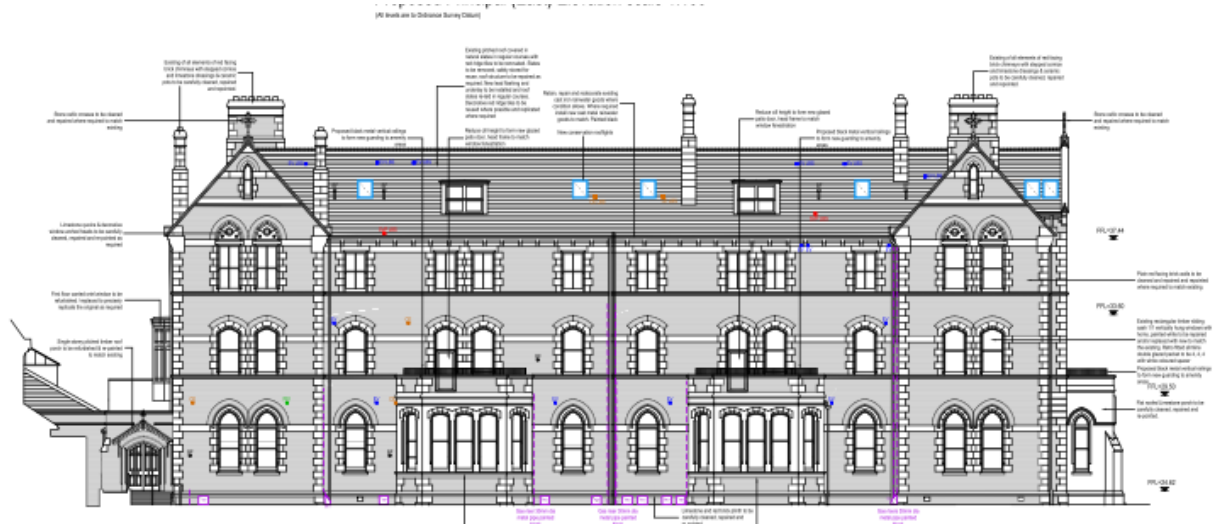
Site Location Plan:



Proposed site layout:



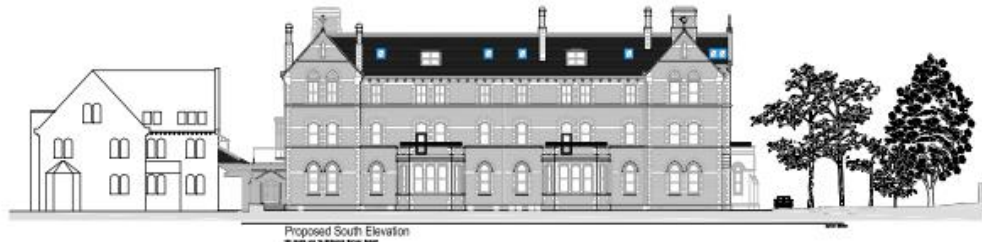
Proposed Side Elevation (south):



Proposed Side Elevation (north):



Contextual Elevations:



1.0

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE AND AREA

1.1

The site is a vacant former convent building of four storeys including dormer loft; it is finished in red facing brick with stonework detailing including quoins, window fenestration and string courses. The site is enclosed by a stonework boundary wall enclosing a mature garden area with significant tree planting and car park.

1.2

The building has listed status due to age and significant local importance. The site is within the Rosetta Area of Townscape Character (ATC).

1.3

The surrounding area is dominated by residential use with traditional two-storey housing along Carolan Road (south) and neighbouring older building of similar age and building style to the site which have been converted to apartment use (east & west). To the south of the site is the neighbouring Good Shepherd Church.

1.4	<p>DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Full planning permission and Listed Building Consent are sought for the conversion of the former convent to 28no. apartments (1, 2 & 3 bedrooms) involving internal and external refurbishment/retention and re-configuration. Provision of ground floor extension with partial demolition and provision of new stairwell and lift. Provision of dormers, rooflights and extension to first, second floor and attic levels regarding new stairwell and lift. External layout reconfigurations to include construction of new access from Ormeau Road, amended parking layout, provision of cycle parking, bin stores, landscaping, substation and associated works.</p>
2.0	<p>PLANNING HISTORY</p> <p>2.1 LA04/2020/1901/F & 1899/LBC: Internal refurbishment works to existing listed building and retention and reconfiguration of existing office and ancillary floorspace across ground, first & second floors; Provision of ground floor extension with internal mezzanine floor; Partial demolition and reconstruction to third floor (attic) to provide new stairwell and lifts; External alterations to existing building including provision of dormers and rooflights; External layout reconfigurations to include construction of new access from Ormeau Road, amended parking layout, provision of cycle parking, bin store, substation and associated works. Approved in December 2023.</p> <p>2.2 LA04/2021/2527/LDE: Mixed Use of the Property comprising office (Class B1) on ground and first floor; and artists' studios (Class D1) on part of the second floor (up to 169 sqm), as shown on Drawing No. 02 uploaded to the planning portal on 18th November 2021. No use identified for the third-floor attic. Approved in April 2022.</p>
3.0	<p>PLANNING POLICY</p> <p>3.1 Development Plan – Plan Strategy</p> <p><u>Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035</u></p> <p><i>Strategic Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy SP1A – managing growth and supporting infrastructure delivery Policy SP2 – sustainable development Policy SP3 – improving health and wellbeing Policy SP5 – positive placemaking Policy SP6 – environmental resilience Policy SP7 – connectivity Policy SD2 – Settlement Areas</p> <p><i>Operational Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy HOU1 – Accommodating new homes Policy HOU2 – Windfall housing Policy HOU4 – Density of residential development Policy HOU5 – Affordable housing Policy HOU6 – Housing Mix</p>

Policy HOU7 – Adaptable and accessible accommodation
Policy DES1 – Principles of urban design
Policy RD1 – New residential developments
Policy BH1 – Listed Buildings
Policy BH4 – Works to grounds affecting listed buildings
Policy HC1 – Promoting healthy communities
Policy TRAN1 – Active travel – walking and cycling
Policy TRAN2 – Creating an accessible environment
Policy TRAN4 – Travel plan
Policy TRAN6 – Access to public roads
Policy TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements
Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality
Policy ENV2 – Mitigating environmental change
Policy ENV3 – Adapting to environmental change
Policy ENV4 – Flood Risk
Policy ENV5 - Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)
Policy OS3 - Ancillary open space
Policy TRE1 – Trees
Policy NH1 – Protection of natural heritage resources

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Affordable Housing and Housing Mix
Residential Design
Placemaking and Urban Design
Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
Transportation
Development Viability

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)

Regional Planning Policy

Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)
Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)

Other Material Considerations

Developer Contribution Framework (2020)
Creating Places (published by former Department of Environment)

4.0	CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS
4.1	<p><u>Statutory Consultees</u></p> <p>DfI Roads – concerns regarding travel plan, conditions supplied to matters outside of travel plan.</p> <p>DfC HED – no objection subject to conditions.</p> <p>DAERA NIEA – waiting final response to ecology report.</p> <p>NI Water – no objection, following additional reports.</p>
4.2	<p><u>Non-Statutory Consultees</u></p> <p>Planning Service Internal Conservation Advice – no objection, proposal has minimal impact on ATC.</p> <p>Environmental Health – no objection subject to conditions.</p> <p>BCC Tree Officer – no objection with conditions.</p> <p>Shared Environmental Services (SES) – response no longer relevant given NI Water has removed its objection.</p>
	<p><u>Representations</u></p>
4.3	<p>The application has been advertised in the newspaper and neighbours notified.</p>
4.4	<p>There has been five third-party objections and comments received, expressing concerns about the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • impact on trees/wildlife • traffic generation • outdoor amenity space/overlooking • impact on water infrastructure.
4.5	<p>These issues are addressed within the main assessment below.</p>

5.0	<p>PLANNING ASSESSMENT</p> <p><u>Summary of Main Issues</u></p>
5.1	<p>The main issues relevant to consideration of the application are set out below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of housing in this location • Housing density • Affordable housing • Housing mix • Adaptable and accessible accommodation • Design and placemaking • Public realm • Impact on the heritage assets • Climate change • Residential quality and impact on amenity • Open space • Access and transport • Health impacts • Environmental protection • Flood risk and drainage • Waste-water infrastructure • Natural heritage <p><u>Development Plan Context</u></p>
5.2	<p>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.</p>
5.3	<p>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.</p>
5.4	<p>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 (“Departmental Development Plan”) remain part of the statutory local development plan until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.</p> <p><u>Operational Polices</u></p>
5.5	<p>The Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These have been listed above.</p>

	<u>Proposals Maps</u>
5.6	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 maps 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.
5.7	Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 – the site is un-zoned “white land”.
5.8	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004) – the site is un-zoned “white land” and designated within the Rosetta Area of Townscape Character (ATC)
5.9	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) – the site is un-zoned “white land” and designated within the Rosetta Area of Townscape Character (ATC)
	<u>Principle of housing in this location</u>
5.10	Policy HOU1 of the Plan Strategy sets out the housing requirements for the plan-period. This includes a total of 2,000 windfall homes. The proposal comprises windfall housing and so Policy HOU2 applies. Policy HOU2 requires windfall housing to be delivered on previously developed land, which the application site is. Policy HOU2 goes onto require that such proposals also satisfy three criteria discussed below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The site is suitable for housing – the site is a sustainable location within the City and considered suitable in principle for housing. b. The location is accessible and convenient to public transport and walking cycle infrastructure – the site is located on the Ormeau Road and is highly accessible to shops, services, amenities and public transport. c. Provision is made for any additional infrastructure required as a result of the development – suitable infrastructure is generally in place.
5.11	The proposal is considered compliant with Policies HOU1 and HOU2 and the principle of housing in location is considered acceptable.
	<u>Housing density</u>
5.12	Policy HOU4 seeks to promote appropriate housing densities to ensure effective use of land, a finite resource, in sustainable locations.
5.13	The proposal is for conversion and extension of a former convent use apartments. The site is situated on city corridor route therefore the policy seeks a density of 50 to 150 units per hectare. The site area is 0.5 ha and therefore there is an expectation of 25 to 75 to be compliant with policy. The proposal will provide 28 units at a density of 56 units per hectare, which is just within the density guidelines. Whilst at the lower end of the density band, this is acceptable given the constraints of the Listed Building.
5.14	The proposal is compliant with Policy HOU6.

	<u>Affordable housing</u>
5.15	<p>Policy HOU5 of the Plan Strategy requires housing schemes of 5 units or more, or sites of 0.1 hectares or greater, to deliver a minimum 20% affordable housing.</p> <p><i>Background:</i></p>
5.16	<p>No affordable housing is proposed as part of the development as the applicant states that this would make the scheme financially unviable. To support this position, the applicant has submitted a full Viability Assessment. This has been subject to independent appraisal by Naylor Devlin (ND) acting on behalf of the Council. ND issued its independent report in May 2026. The independent report concludes that the scheme is unviable, and even with the payment of a Financial Developer Contribution in lieu of on-site affordable housing provision.</p> <p><i>Assessment:</i></p>
5.17	<p>Policy HOU5 requires the scheme to provide 6 affordable housing units as part of the proposed development.</p>
5.18	<p>However, Policy HOU5 states that: <i>‘Where it can be demonstrated that it is not sustainable or viable for a proposed development to meet the requirements of this policy in full, the council will consider suitable alternatives on a case-by-case basis.’</i></p>
5.19	<p>The amplification text of Policy HOU5 at paragraph 7.1.36 further clarifies that: <i>‘It is recognised that there may be occasions where a particular housing site in Belfast might not be able to meet the affordable housing demands in full, so flexibility has been built into the policy to ensure that viability can be taken into account on a case-by-case basis. Where a developer is able to demonstrate, through evidence provided in accordance with agreed assessment approaches to viability testing, that the development is unviable if affordable housing obligations are met in full, alternative approaches will be considered. This could include varying the mix of affordable housing units, the provision of affordable housing on a suitable alternative site within the local area or, in exceptional circumstances, a reduction in the proportion of affordable housing in lieu of a financial contribution to an affordable housing development elsewhere in the district.’</i></p>
5.20	<p>The applicant’s Viability Assessment assesses the viability of the proposal in the following scenarios and with sensitivity testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a fully private scheme • 20% affordable housing provision (6 units) • 15% (5 units), 10% (3 units) and 5% (2 units)
5.21	<p>The Viability Assessment indicates that the developer’s profit as a fully private scheme would be 7.38% Gross Development Value (GDV), which would be well below the assumed 15% profit as set out in the Development Viability SPG. The Viability Assessment indicates that the inclusion of 20% affordable Housing would yield a gross profit of only 4.66% GDV, with 5% affordable housing at 7.19%.</p>
5.22	<p>As stated, the applicant’s Viability Assessment was subject to independent appraisal by ND on behalf of the Council. ND produced an independent report, concluding that in its view the residual land value would be significantly less than forecast either by the applicant in its Viability Assessment or the Council’s assumptions set out in the</p>

5.23	<p>Development Viability SPG. Officers accept that a scheme with affordable housing is unviable.</p> <p>The Affordable Housing and Housing Mix SPG provides further guidance on alternatives to a fully compliant scheme, and these are considered below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A deference in the timing of affordable housing requirements pertaining to the site (i.e. a phasing option); 2. A variation in the required mix of tenure, size or type of affordable units on the site, in accordance with the hierarchy of products outlined above; 3. A reduction in affordable units on the site; 4. Provision of the affordable housing units on an alternative site within the same local housing area; or 5. Commuted sum, equivalent to cost of constructing affordable unit(s) on site. 6. The maximum viable financial contribution in lieu of affordable provision. <p><i>Deferred Timing/Phasing:</i></p>
5.24	<p>The proposed scheme is not designed to be delivered in phases, nor would this make the scheme viable in this case.</p> <p><i>A variation in the required mix of tenure, size or type of affordable units:</i></p>
5.25	<p>The potential for the scheme to deliver intermediate housing was considered. However, the higher sales value in this area ruled out this option as it would exceed the co-ownership ceiling value of £210k for all but one of the apartments. The applicant's viability consultant advises that changing the tenure to social housing would render the scheme even more unviable.</p> <p><i>A reduction in affordable units on the site:</i></p>
5.26	<p>As stated, the scheme falls well below the assumed 15% GDV for a fully private scheme (7,38%) for a total private scheme. The provision of a reduced number of affordable units has been modelled by the applicant in the Viability Assessment and would further reduce profit, making the scheme less viable.</p> <p><i>Provision of the affordable housing units on an alternative site within the same local housing area;</i></p>
5.27	<p>The applicant has not proposed provision of affordable housing on an alternative site and it is unclear whether they have alternative available land. In any event, this process would delay consideration of the application significantly with a key benefit of the proposal being to secure the long-term future use of the Listed Building. It is understood that the applicant intends to implement the scheme immediately on the grant of planning permission.</p> <p><i>Commutated sum, equivalent to cost of constructing affordable unit(s) on site:</i></p>
5.28	<p>Given the negative residual land value advised by ND, a commuted sum would not be a viable alternative.</p> <p><i>The maximum viable financial contribution in lieu of affordable provision:</i></p>
5.29	<p>Similarly, as stated above, this approach would not be viable.</p>

5.30	<p>The Development Viability SPG provides further guidance where the Council accepts that a development proposal will be unviable if full policy compliance and/or planning obligations/contributions are sought. The following options will be considered in order:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deferred timing or phasing: A delay in the timing or phasing the delivery of a particular requirement may enable a proposed development to remain viable. 2. Reduced level of obligations and/or contributions: Where the above option is not sufficient to secure the viability of a proposed development, then a reduction in the level of requirement may be considered. There may be potential to do this for some policy requirements that have flexibility. Any reduction would be limited to the minimum necessary for the scheme to remain viable. The Council may consider building in a review mechanism as part of a Section 76 planning agreement to reassess the viability of the scheme at a set point in the future. Further detail on potential alternative solutions to policy requirements is outlined in the relevant SPG. 3. Waiving of requirements: Only in exceptional circumstances will the removal of requirements and/or obligations be considered, as a very last resort. The nature of the proposed development may also be taken into account, where the Council take into account the other social, community, economic or environmental benefits that would be realised in granting permission for the scheme, i.e. the planning gain arising.
5.31	<p>As stated, deferring the timing of the affordable housing contribution would not result in the scheme being viable and the scheme is not designed to be phased. A reduced obligations scheme would also not make the proposal viable for the reasons stated.</p>
5.32	<p>In terms of waiving of the requirements, the proposal would provide a high-quality residential scheme that would make effective use of land with the provision of new housing in a sustainable location complying with Policy HOU2. Importantly, the proposal would secure the reuse of a listed building ensuring its long-term survival as an asset to the character of the area and in line with Policies BH1 and BH4.</p>
5.33	<p>The applicant has demonstrated through their viability information that an affordable housing contribution would not be viable. Having regard to these factors, the waiving of requirements is deemed acceptable in the planning balance in this particular case.</p>
5.34	<p>A viability review mechanism would normally be secured through a Section 76 planning agreement to assess whether any changes to economic conditions prior to commencement of development would enable an element of affordable housing to be provided. The drafting of a planning agreement would delay the application process. It is understood that the developer is keen to implement the planning permission and has agreed to an alternative approach with a reduction to the standard time condition for implementation from 5 years to just 18 months. This is considered a reasonable approach, particularly bearing in mind the desirability of realising the conversion and long-term future use of the Listed Building. Officers are also mindful that a previous planning application by Choice Housing for use of the building as its HQ offices was never implemented and there is a new opportunity to convert the Listed Building to a new use that would secure its long-term future.</p>
5.35	<p>Accepting that Policy HOU5 is not met, it is considered that the viability of the scheme as well as its benefits outweigh the non-provision of affordable housing in the planning balance.</p>

	<p><u>Housing mix</u></p> <p>5.36 Policy HOU6 applies. It requires that provision should be made for small homes across all tenures to meet future household requirements and that the exact mix of house types and sizes will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis, taking account of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Up to date analysis of prevailing housing need in the area; b. The location and size of the site; c. Specific characteristics of the development; and d. The creation of balanced and sustainable communities. <p>5.37 The requirement for a mix of house types will not apply to single apartment developments such as the proposal. In such cases, the housing mix will be considered acceptable through greater variety in the size of units.</p> <p>5.38 The proposed housing mix is shown in the table below.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Accommodation type</th> <th>Number of units</th> <th>% units</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1 bedroom apartments</td> <td>4</td> <td>15%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 bedroom apartments</td> <td>17</td> <td>60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 bedroom apartment</td> <td>7</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>28</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>5.39 As can be seen, the proposal consists of smaller one, two and three bed units. The proposal is in line with the SPG which suggests that provision of some larger apartments such as 3 and 4-bedroom apartments should be encouraged to meet the requirement for increased size, whilst promoting choice and facilitating the creation of sustainable and balance neighbourhoods. Officers consider the proposal satisfies the requirements of Policy HOU6.</p> <p><u>Adaptable and accessible accommodation</u></p> <p>5.40 Policy HOU7 requires that all new homes should be designed in a flexible way to ensure that housing is adaptable throughout all stages of life. Policy HOU7 sets six criteria (a. to f.) to be met in order to help deliver adaptable and accessible homes. The policy also requires that at least 10% of units in residential developments of 10 units or more to be wheelchair accessible and provides an additional nine criteria (g. to o.) which these units must meet. The applicant has provided evidence, in the form of floor plans and site layout plans to demonstrate that the proposal meets the requirements of a to f of the policy.</p> <p>5.41 The proposal does not include 10% wheelchair units as required policy criteria g. The applicant has stated that to achieve wheelchair accessibility would require additional intervention and alterations to the fabric of the listed building. Within the justification and amplification of the policy at paragraph 7.1.51 exceptional circumstances are allowed for of which the conversion and retrofitting of historic buildings for apartments is one. It is stated that policy standards to be applied flexibly to prevent harm to the historic fabric of the building. Where this is the case, a balance is to be achieve having regard to all other material considerations. Officers, taking a balance consideration of the policy</p>	Accommodation type	Number of units	% units	1 bedroom apartments	4	15%	2 bedroom apartments	17	60%	3 bedroom apartment	7	25	Total	28	100%
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5.42	<p>requirement and the need to protect the listed building agree to the non-provision of wheelchair accessible apartments.</p> <p>The policy stipulates that in-curtilage or designated car parking meets disabled parking standards. Criterion i. states that pathways should be wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair and have a firm surface of gently sloping surface. No dedicated disabled parking spaces are shown in the original plans and delegated authority is sought to resolve this issue. All surfaces are level or gently sloping. Subject to resolution of disabled parking, the proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policy HOU7.</p> <p><u>Design and placemaking</u></p>
5.43	<p>The proposal has been assessed against the SPPS, Creating Places and Policies SP5, DES1 and RD1 of the Plan Strategy. Policies SP5 and DES1 promote good placemaking, high quality design and the importance of proposals responding positively to local context addressing matters such as scale height, massing, proportions, rhythm, and materials avoiding any negative impact at street level.</p> <p><i>Scale, height and massing:</i></p>
5.44	<p>Policy DES1 states that planning permission will be granted for new development that is of a high quality, sustainable design that makes a positive contribution to placemaking and goes onto list 11 criteria, a. to k.</p>
5.45	<p>The proposal makes use of an existing building with the addition of an extension and dormer windows. The building is listed therefore there is restrictions to the level of intervention to the existing built form. The design, as proposed, has been assessed by historic architects at HED and found to be acceptable i.e. no significant alteration to the building or the grounds surrounding. Given that there are no significant alterations the building will retain the contribution it makes to the wider character of the area. The design of the proposed externa alterations and ground floor extension is considered to be acceptable.</p>
5.46	<p>The proposal would result in changes to the enclosed grounds of the site. This area will provide outdoor amenity space, car parking spaces as well as bin and cycle storage. Follow negotiations, the circulating road within the site has been reduced to ensure a higher percentage of green space was provided with additional planting. The proposal also requires the closing of the gateway onto Carolan Road with the area behind the gates to be returned to soft landscaping.</p>
5.47	<p>The proposal would result in additional car parking provision within the site; the applicant engaged with the Council's Tree Officer to ensure that impact on trees and soft landscaping features would be kept to a minimum. Two bin storage areas are proposed, one storage area will be to the western boundary, on land that is currently hardstanding. The second storage area is to be located on the edge of the green open space fronting onto the internal service road. The design of the storage areas is to be reflective of the existing building and will be constructed in red brick with a flat roof. It is also proposed to locate covered cycle storage areas; these will be adjacent to the side entrance of the building and will be of a modern glass and chrome design.</p>

5.48	<p>Officers consider the proposal will maintain the existing character with no significant detriment to the area. The proposal is considered to accord with Policy DES1 and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p> <p><u>Impact on neighbouring amenity</u></p>
5.49	<p>The proposal is for a change of use from a form former convent/office to residential use. The proposal therefore is a significant change and has implications regarding potential to impact on neighbouring amenity. Given it is the reuse of an existing building there is no significant change regarding dominance or over shadowing of neighbouring properties. The main issue is related to overlooking; it is the opinion of officers that proposal will not generate significant overlooking due to window orientation and separation distance. The south facing windows, toward Carolan Road and those to the east towards the Ormeau Road are separated in excess of 50m from neighbouring properties the recommended distance, depending on topography is 20 to 30m separation. The proposal is considered compliant with Policy RD2 and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p> <p><u>Impact on the heritage assets</u></p>
5.50	<p>Policy BH1 referring to change of use of a Listed Building states that planning permission will be granted where the change of use will secure the upkeep and survival of the building and character/architectural interest of the building preserved or enhanced. The policy further advises that where the building is to be altered or extended the works are required to preserve, restore and compliment the building's architectural/historic importance to ensure the building remains intact and unimpaired. The design of any intervention should be subservient employ sympathetic materials that respect the essential character of the building and setting.</p>
5.51	<p>In line with s91 of the Planning Act NI 2011 the Council must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting. The Council consulted with DfC Historic Environment Division (HED). Following consideration and some minor alterations HED advises that the proposal is acceptable subject to conditions.</p>
5.52	<p>Officers are content that the proposal would not adversely affect the architectural integrity of the Listed Buildings and is compliant with Policy BH1 and SPPS.</p>
5.53	<p>Likewise, officers are also content that the proposal will not significantly impact on the setting of the Listed Building, alterations to the existing site layout will improve parking and movement within the site. HED is satisfied that the proposal is compliant with policy BH4 – works to grounds affecting built heritage assets.</p> <p><u>Climate change</u></p>
5.54	<p>Policy ENV2 states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to mitigate environmental change and reduce greenhouse gases by promoting sustainable patterns of development. Policy ENV5 states that all built development shall include, where appropriate, SuDs measures to manage surface water effectively on site, to reduce surface water run-off and to ensure flooding is not increased elsewhere.</p>

5.55	The applicant has provided details on the various sustainable design features which will be incorporated in the development. Given the building and setting is listed there is limited scope to the provision of climate change measures. The proposal would see the reuse of an existing building; high efficiency gas boiler to be installed the spoil from the limited demolition will be used for hardcore.																																																																																							
5.56	It is proposed to incorporate resin bound gravel hard surfacing which is a permeable material allowing surface water to soak away also to be employed permeable brick paving within the car parking bays again allowing surface water to soak away. Given this and retention of large areas of green open space, the approach to SuDS is considered acceptable.																																																																																							
5.57	In these regards, the proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policies ENV2, ENV3 and ENV5 and relevant provisions of the SPPS.																																																																																							
	<u>Residential quality</u>																																																																																							
5.58	<p><i>Creating Places</i> advocates external amenity space for apartments of between 10 and 30 sqm per residential unit. The proposal for 28 apartments has a green open area of approximately 1,900sqm, which is equivalent of approximately 67sqm per apartment. Officers are of the opinion that open space provision is acceptable.</p> <p><i>Space Standards:</i></p>																																																																																							
5.59	<p>The proposal comprises a mix of one, two and three-bedroom apartments, with the space standards set out in the table below. The proposed units are in accordance with the minimum space standards as set out in Appendix C of the Plan Strategy.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Apartment Number</th> <th>Number of Bedrooms & Occupancy</th> <th>Floor Area for each unit</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1</td><td>1 bed 2 person</td><td>53 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>2 bed 4 person</td><td>134 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td>2 bed 4 person</td><td>137 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>2 bed 4 person</td><td>135 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td>2 bed 4 person</td><td>114 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>2 bed 4 person</td><td>102 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td>1 bed 2 person</td><td>58 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>1 bed 2 person</td><td>44 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>2 bed 4 person</td><td>86 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>2 bed 4 person</td><td>76 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td>2 bed 4 person</td><td>101 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>12</td><td>2 bed 4 person</td><td>76 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td>2 bed 4 person</td><td>80 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>14</td><td>2 bed 4 person</td><td>85 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>15</td><td>2 bed 4 person</td><td>78 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>16</td><td>2 bed 3 person</td><td>81 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>17</td><td>2 bed 4 person</td><td>77 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>18</td><td>1 bed 2 person</td><td>57 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>19</td><td>2 bed 4 person</td><td>93 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>20</td><td>3 bed 6 person</td><td>121 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>21</td><td>3 bed 6 person</td><td>121 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>22</td><td>2 bed 4 person</td><td>74 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>23</td><td>2 bed 3 person</td><td>78 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>24</td><td>3 bed 5 person</td><td>127 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>25</td><td>3 bed 5 person</td><td>115 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>26</td><td>3 bed 5 person</td><td>102 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>27</td><td>3 bed 6 person</td><td>128 sqm</td></tr> <tr><td>28</td><td>3 bed 6 person</td><td>145 sqm</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Apartment Number	Number of Bedrooms & Occupancy	Floor Area for each unit	1	1 bed 2 person	53 sqm	2	2 bed 4 person	134 sqm	3	2 bed 4 person	137 sqm	4	2 bed 4 person	135 sqm	5	2 bed 4 person	114 sqm	6	2 bed 4 person	102 sqm	7	1 bed 2 person	58 sqm	8	1 bed 2 person	44 sqm	9	2 bed 4 person	86 sqm	10	2 bed 4 person	76 sqm	11	2 bed 4 person	101 sqm	12	2 bed 4 person	76 sqm	13	2 bed 4 person	80 sqm	14	2 bed 4 person	85 sqm	15	2 bed 4 person	78 sqm	16	2 bed 3 person	81 sqm	17	2 bed 4 person	77 sqm	18	1 bed 2 person	57 sqm	19	2 bed 4 person	93 sqm	20	3 bed 6 person	121 sqm	21	3 bed 6 person	121 sqm	22	2 bed 4 person	74 sqm	23	2 bed 3 person	78 sqm	24	3 bed 5 person	127 sqm	25	3 bed 5 person	115 sqm	26	3 bed 5 person	102 sqm	27	3 bed 6 person	128 sqm	28	3 bed 6 person	145 sqm
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	<p><u>Open space</u></p>
5.60	<p>Policy OS3 requires that all new development proposals make appropriate provision for open space, including hard and soft landscaped areas and outdoor amenity areas, to serve the needs of the development. The precise amount, location, type and design of such provision will be negotiated with applicants taking account of the specific characteristics of the development, the site and its context and having regard to a) the normal expectation will be at least 10% of the total site area; and b) complementary and ancillary equipment and facilities, including for active or passive enjoyment of residents or occupiers, should be incorporated into the design of the development.</p>
5.61	<p>Furthermore, planning permission will only be granted for proposals for new residential development of 25 or more units, or on sites of one hectare or more, where public open space is provided as an integral part of the development.</p>
5.62	<p>The site is approximately 5,700sqm of which 4,000sqm is open space of green area (approximately 70%), compliant with Policy OS3.</p>
	<p><u>Access and transport</u></p>
5.63	<p>The site is a highly accessible location on a main city corridor route. It is within short walking and cycling distance to shops, services, leisure and employment opportunities. The site has very good public transport links through access to buses on the Ormeau and Ravenhill Roads. Provision is made for sheltered and secure cycle parking within the ground floor. The proposal accords with Policy TRAN1.</p>
5.64	<p>A green Travel Plan has been provided but it does not incorporate specific measures such as provision of Travel Cards, Belfast Bikes and car club membership requested by DfI Roads. However, for the reasons stated previously, it is accepted that the proposal is unviable and the requirement for green travel measures would increase the unviability of the proposal. Therefore, taking account of viability and the sustainable location of the site, the non-provision of dedicated green travel measures is considered acceptable. Implementation of the Travel Plan should be secured by condition.</p>
5.65	<p>Dedicated in-curtilage general parking is proposed with the total number of parking bays within the curtilage is 43. The Parking Standards advises for apartment development that there should be provision at the rate of 1.5 spaces per apartment, this would require 42 spaces. Officers are content that sufficient parking is achieved at the site.</p>
5.66	<p>As stated, DfI Roads has requested the provision of green travel measures outside of this they have provided all planning conditions relating to the other aspects of the development. The proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policies TRAN1, TRAN6 and TRAN 8, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
	<p><u>Health impacts</u></p>
5.67	<p>Policy HC1 seeks to ensure that all new developments maximise opportunities to promote healthy and active lifestyles. New developments should be designed, constructed and managed in ways that improve health and promote healthy lifestyles. This will include supporting active travel options, improving accessibility to local service centres, reducing the use of private car travel, adequate provision of public open space, leisure and recreation facilities, high quality design and promoting balanced communities and sustainable neighbourhoods.</p>

5.68	<p>The site is highly accessible and provides excellent opportunities for active travel, including walking and cycling, through good linkages with the city and riverside. The site is within short walking distance of Ormeau Park, Lagan embankment shopping and leisure facilities. The proposal would provide an attractive and high quality living environment. It is considered to satisfy the requirements of Policy HC1.</p> <p><u>Environmental protection</u></p>
5.69	<p>Policy ENV1 states that planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protects communities from materially harmful development. The proposed development has been assessed by Environmental Health in terms of noise, air pollution, general amenity, ambient air quality, contaminated land, and other considerations.</p> <p><i>Contaminated land:</i></p>
5.70	<p>The site is not considered to be at risk of ground contamination.</p> <p><i>Air quality:</i></p>
5.71	<p>EH has reviewed the Air Quality Impact Assessment and the clarification report and has stated that the site lies within the Ormeau Road Air Management Area. The levels of nitrogen dioxide concentrations have not varied over the last several years and currently remain below the Air Quality Objective levels. EH is also satisfied in relation to potential dust impacts during construction subject to implementation of the proposed dust management measures.</p> <p><i>Noise:</i></p>
5.72	<p>Having considered the applicant's noise impact assessment, EH is content that the proposal is acceptable subject to conditions.</p>
5.73	<p>In conclusion, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy ENV1.</p> <p><u>Flood risk and drainage</u></p>
5.74	<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>
5.75	<p>DfI Rivers has assessed an associated Flood Risk Assessment for the proposal and do not disagree with the conclusions within the report and offered standard informatives. The proposal is considered to comply with Policy ENV4.</p>

<p>5.76</p> <p>5.77</p> <p>5.78</p> <p>5.79</p>	<p><u>Waste-water infrastructure</u></p> <p>Policy SP1a requires that necessary infrastructure is in place to support new development. Following the submission of further information, NI Water has offered no objection to the proposal, indicating available capacity at the water treatment works and appropriate approval being achieved for foul and surface water connections, and recommends conditions.</p> <p><u>Natural heritage</u></p> <p>Policy NH1 relates to the protection of natural heritage resources.</p> <p>The site is an historic building that has the potential to provide Bat Roosts as does trees within the site. An ecology report was submitted with the application. DAERA NIEA was consulted and advises that a specific reason was required for consultation. DAERA was re-consulted on the proposal to remove tree 37 within the site as the report indicated it had the potential as a Bat roost.</p> <p>A response from DAERA to the latest consultation remains outstanding and delegated authority is sought to deal with the consultation response.</p>
<p>6.0</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p>	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.</p> <p>Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions, resolve the provision of dedicated disabled parking spaces and outstanding consultation from DAERA NIEA NED, and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.</p>
<p>7.0</p>	<p>DRAFT CONDITIONS</p> <p>LA04/2026/0021/F (full planning application):</p> <p>1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within 18 months from the date of this permission.</p> <p>Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.</p> <p><i>Listed Building:</i></p> <p>2. Notwithstanding the submitted details, the following elements of the approved scheme shall not be installed, implemented or carried out unless in accordance with further details or samples which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Detail for construction and reinstatement of existing dormers ii. Detail for verges and eaves to brick extension iii. Detail at 1:5 for insertion of new door in lieu of window to balcony spaces iv. Sample of typical existing sliding sash window retrofitted with slim profile double glazing inserted into existing window. Glazing shall be 4:4: maximum, with white spacer and putty fixing. No trickle vent is permitted in frame. Window shall have a hand painted finish

- v. Sample of proposed brick to extension and boundary wall to church
- vi. Sample of aluminium bronze coloured standing seam cladding
- vii. Sample of new natural slate to match existing salvage slate

The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the details so approved.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

Transport:

- 7. No apartment shall be occupied unless weather protected cycle parking has been fully provided in accordance with the approved plans. The weather protected cycle parking shall be retained as such at all times.

Reason: To ensure acceptable cycle parking facilities on the site and to encourage alternative modes of transport to the private car.

- 8. No apartment shall be occupied unless hard surfaced areas have been constructed and permanently marked in accordance with the approved drawings, to provide for parking and traffic circulation within the site. No part of these hard surfaced areas shall be used for any purpose at any time other than for the parking and movement of vehicles in connection with the approved development.

Reason: To ensure adequate provision has been made for parking and traffic circulation within the site.

- 9. The access gradient shall not exceed 4% (1 in 25) over the first 10m outside the road boundary. Where the vehicular access crosses a footway or verge, the access gradient shall be between 4% (1 in 25) maximum and 2.5% (1 in 40) minimum and shall be formed so that there is no abrupt change of slope along the footway.

Reason: To ensure there is a satisfactory means of access in the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.

- 10. All redundant accesses from the site onto Carolan Road shall be permanently removed and the adjacent footpath reinstated to the satisfaction of the Department for Infrastructure.

Reason: In order to minimise the number of access points on to the public road in the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.

- 11. Prior to the occupation of the proposed development, the proposed bollards located in front of Carolan Road Access gates shall be constructed as per Drg 03B and permanently retained as such.

Reason: To prevent vehicular use of the access in the interests of road safety.

12. The vehicular access, including visibility splays, shall be provided in accordance with Drawing No 03B, prior to the occupation of any other works or other development hereby permitted. The area within the visibility splays and any forward sight line shall be cleared to provide a level surface no higher than 250 mm above the level of the adjoining carriageway before the development hereby permitted (is commenced/occupied/ becomes operational) and such splays shall be retained and kept clear thereafter.

Reason: To ensure there is a satisfactory means of access in the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.

13. The development shall not operate unless in accordance with the approved Service Management Plan.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.

14. The development shall not operate unless in accordance with the approved Travel Plan.

Reason: To encourage alternative modes of transport to the private car.

Environmental impacts:

15. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied unless the sound mitigation measures (glazing and alternative means of ventilation) outlined in section 8 of the Irwin Carr Consulting report titled: 'Noise Impact Assessment - Good Shepherd, Ormeau Road' dated 12th January 2026, have been implemented so that the below internal noise levels are not exceeded within habitable rooms. Where closed windows are required to achieve these internal levels, an alternative means of ventilation shall be provided prior to occupation, which meets, as a minimum, the sound reduction performance required by the windows. In the case of active or mechanical ventilation, the operation of the ventilation system shall not result in internal noise in excess of the below stated levels:

- 35 dB LAeq, 16hrs at any time between 07:00hrs and 23:00hrs within any habitable room, if required with the windows closed and alternative means of acoustic ventilation provided. Belfast City Council - Environmental Health Service Planning Checklist 2008.doc
- 30 dB LAeq, 8hr at any time between the hours of 23:00hrs and 07:00hrs within any bedroom, if required with the windows closed and alternative means of acoustic ventilation provided.
- 45 dB LAmax more than 10 times between 23:00hrs and 07:00hrs within any bedroom, if required with the windows closed and alternative means of ventilation provided. The measures required shall be thereafter retained at all times.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of occupants of the building hereby approved.

16. In the event that any substantial centralised combustion sources (generators, boilers, CHP or biomass) are proposed, and prior to their installation, an updated Air Quality Impact Assessment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The assessment shall include details of the combustion plant to be installed, to include emission rates and flue termination heights of the proposed combustion systems and it must demonstrate that there will be no exceedances of Air Quality Strategy objectives at relevant human receptor locations associated with operation of operation of the proposed combustion plant and with the overall development. The substantial centralised combustion sources shall not be installed unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that ambient air pollution related to the site is appropriately dealt with, in the interests of human health.

Trees:

17. All trees and planting within the site shall be retained unless shown on the approved drawings as being removed. Any retained trees or planting indicated on the approved drawings which become seriously damaged, diseased, or dying, shall be replaced during the next planting season (October to March inclusive) with other trees or plants of a location, species and size to be first approved in writing by the Council.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

18. All landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with approved details on drawing no 45A dated 01/04/2026 under planning application LA04/2026/0021/F. The works shall be carried out prior to the completion of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council. Any trees or plants indicated on the approved scheme which, within a period of five years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged, diseased or dying shall be replaced during the next planting season with other trees or plants of a location, species and size, details of which shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area

19. Prior to any work commencing, protective barriers (fencing) and ground protection shall be erected or installed as specified in British Standard 5837: 2012 (section 6.2) around any trees / hedging to be retained within the site and must be in place before any materials or machinery are brought onto site for demolition, development, or soil stripping. Protective fencing must remain in place until all work is completed, and all associated materials and equipment are removed from site.

Reason: To ensure the protection of, and to ensure the continuity of amenity afforded by any existing trees to be retained within the site and on adjacent lands.

20. No storage of materials, parking of vehicles or plant, temporary buildings, sheds, offices or fires shall take place within the Root Protection Areas of trees within the site and adjacent lands during the construction period.

Reason: To safeguard trees of amenity value.

LA04/2026/0022/LBC Conditions

1. The works hereby permitted shall be begun not later than the expiration of 18 months beginning with the date on which this consent is granted.

Reason: As required by Section 94 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2. Notwithstanding the submitted details, the following elements of the approved scheme shall not be installed, implemented or carried out unless in accordance with further details or samples which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council:

- i. Detail for construction and reinstatement of existing dormers
- ii. Detail for verges and eaves to brick extension
- iii. Detail at 1:5 for insertion of new door in lieu of window to balcony spaces
- iv. Sample of typical existing sliding sash window retrofitted with slim profile double glazing inserted into existing window. Glazing shall be 4:4: maximum, with white spacer and putty fixing. No trickle vent is permitted in frame. Window shall have a hand painted finish
- v. Sample of proposed brick to extension and boundary wall to church
- vi. Sample of aluminium bronze coloured standing seam cladding
- vii. Sample of new natural slate to match existing salvage slate

Where partitions abut cornice or other detail such as capital heads, the partition shall be scribed around the historic detail unless otherwise specified to ensure this is reversible.

The works shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the details so approved.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

3. No works to the windows shall commence on site until a window condition schedule has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The schedule shall identify and detail any necessary repairs. Like-for-like replacements will only be permitted where the condition is proven to be unsalvageable. This shall apply to all windows including:

- i. F27 – oriel window - W/F/10
- ii. S27 – coloured margin panes - W/S/04
- iii. Feature stained glass to south entrance lobby space

The works shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

4. Where the proposed extension adjoins the Listed Building, flashing shall be into existing mortar joints. Under no circumstances are powered tools (for example, air-driven tools; electric angle grinders and so forth) to be used to cut back masonry joints prior to repointing/inserting flashing.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

5. The stained glass privacy window panels shall be carefully taken down, protected and securely stored for future re-use on the site.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

6. No works shall commence on site unless a methodology for the protection of the following features has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council:
 - i. stained glass stair windows
 - ii. retained stair
 - iii. floors retained in situ
 - iv. Plaster/arris details to pillars, arches, reveals during the construction phase has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The works shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details.

The works shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved protection methodology.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

7. No works shall commence on site in relation to the following features, unless a Detailed Method Statement for those works has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Council.
 - i. Taking down, setting aside, insertion of lead trays, reinstating chimneys
 - ii. Cleaning and repointing external walls. (No cleaning of masonry, other than low pressure (20-100 psi) surface cleaning using a nebulous water spray is authorised by this consent without the prior approval from council)

The works shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved Detailed Method Statement.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

8. Notwithstanding the submitted details, the following features shall be retained unless otherwise specified on drawings:
 - i. Windows, shutters and associated joinery – architrave, apron panelling, reveal panelling
 - ii. Doors and architraves
 - iii. Fanlights (where retained in place)
 - iv. Architraves, skirting, dado (where retained in place)
 - v. Wall panelling
 - vi. Fireplaces

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

INFORMATIVES

1. Please make sure that you carry out the development in accordance with the approved plans and any planning conditions listed above. Failure to do so will mean that the proposal is unauthorised and liable for investigation by the Council's Planning Enforcement team. If you would like advice about how to comply with the planning permission, you are advised to contact the Planning Service at Belfast City Council at planning@belfastcity.gov.uk.
2. This planning permission includes condition(s) which require further details to be submitted to and approved by the Council. Please read the condition(s) carefully so that you know when this information needs to be provided and approved. It could take a minimum of 8 weeks for the Council to approve the details, assuming that they are satisfactory, and sometimes longer depending on the complexity of the condition. You should allow for this when planning the timeline of your project.
3. The grant of planning permission does not dispense with the need to obtain licenses, consents or permissions under other legislation or protocols. The requirement for other authorisations may have been identified by consultees in their response to the application and can be accessed on the Northern Ireland Planning Portal website. The responses from consultees may also include other general advice for the benefit of the applicant or developer.

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Development Management Officer Report

Committee Application

Summary	
Committee Meeting Date: 16 th June 2026	
Application Ref: LA04/2026/0340/F	
Proposal: Proposed change of use of 144 no. PBMSA units to short term let accommodation outside of term time (July and August only).	Location: The Edge, 1 Frederick Street, Belfast, BT1 2LW (formally 48-52 York Street, Belfast, BT15 1AS)
Referral Route: Paragraph 3.8.2 (d) of the scheme of delegation – change of use application involving student accommodation	
Recommendation: Approval subject to condition	
Applicant Name and Address: 48-52 York Street Operating LLP 38 Seymour Street London W1H 7BP	Agent Name and Address: TSA Planning 20 May Street Belfast BT1 4NL
Date Valid: 30.03.2026	
Target Date: 13.07.2026	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe, Principal Planner	
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>The application site is situated at 1 Frederick Street, Belfast, BT1 2LW (formally 48-52 York Street, Belfast, BT15 1AS). Permission was granted under Z/2014/0479/O and LA04/2016/1213/RM for an 11-storey building comprising of 3 no. ground floor retail units, 307 studios for use as purpose built managed student accommodation (PBSA). The building is complete and operational and is known as 'The Edge'.</p> <p>The Edge Student Accommodation was previously subject to a planning application for a similar scheme as that proposed, for a temporary period only due to the delayed completion of the building which resulted in a high vacancy rate. This application was approved by planning committee on the 18th March 2025, however due to delays associated with the agreement of the associated Section 76, the processing of the application to a decision had surpassed the temporary restricted period and was subsequently withdrawn.</p> <p>This application seeks full planning permission for a Change of Use of 144 No. Student Bedrooms (less than 50% of the total rooms) to provide Short Term Let Accommodation outside of term time (July and August) only.</p> <p>The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of the proposal • Access, movement and parking 	

One representation was received which is detailed in the report below.

Dfl Roads were consulted and had no objections.

A Section 77 to vary the Section 76 of the host approval is necessary and is agreed in principle with Legal Services.

Recommendation

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

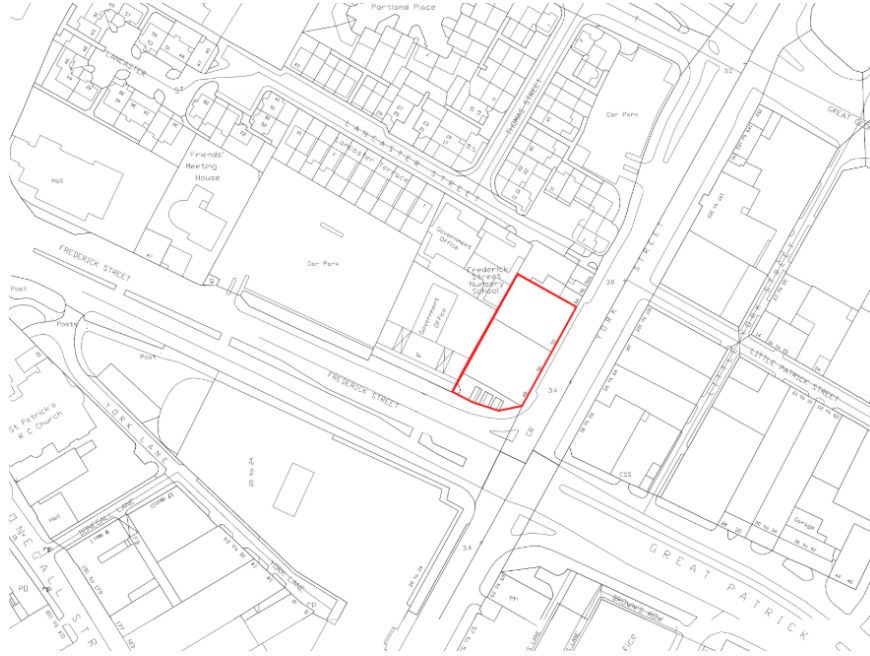
Officer Report

1.0

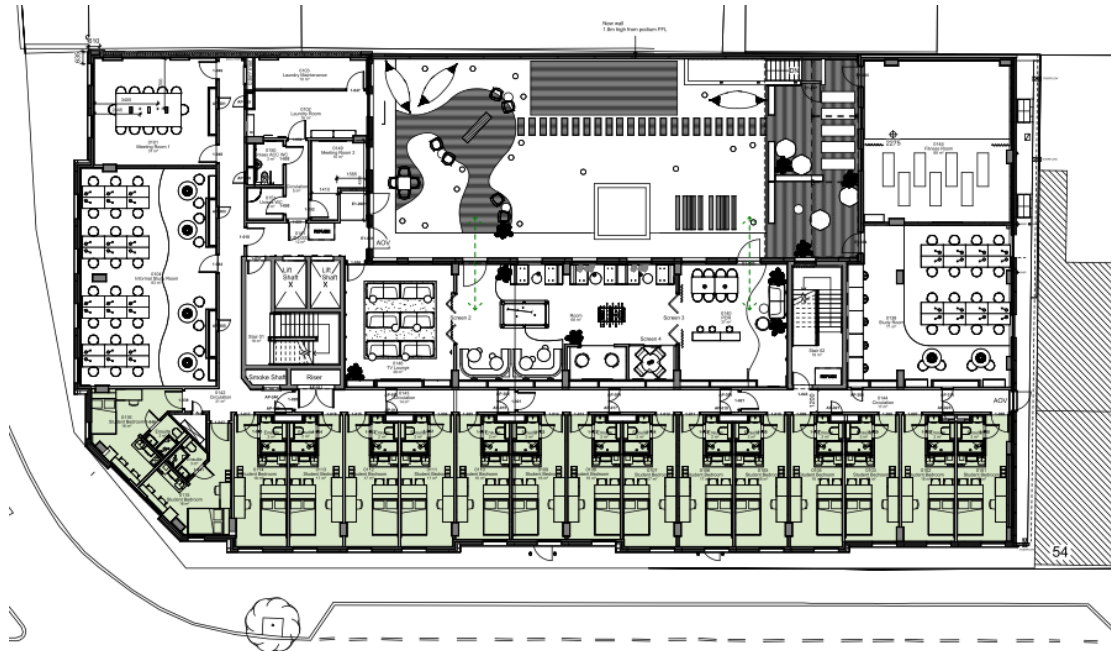
Drawings

1.1

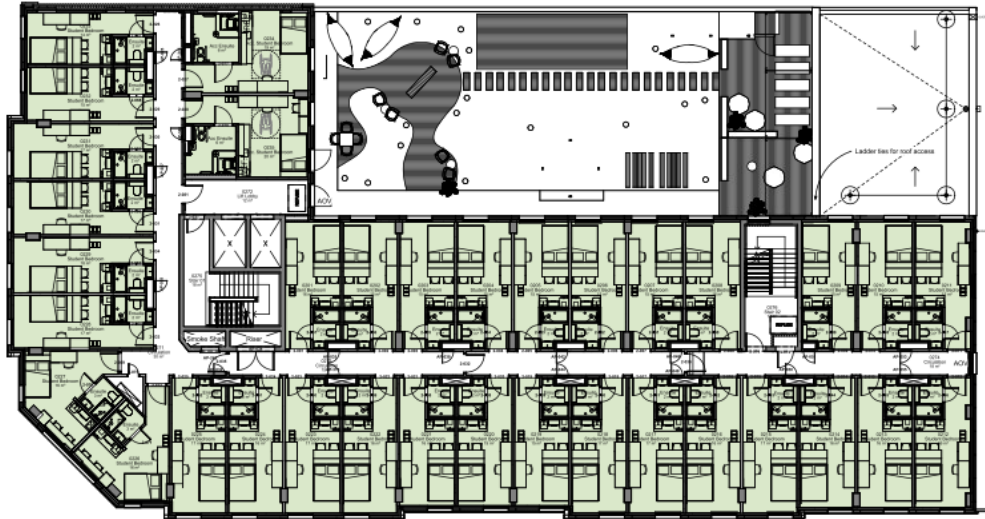
Site Location



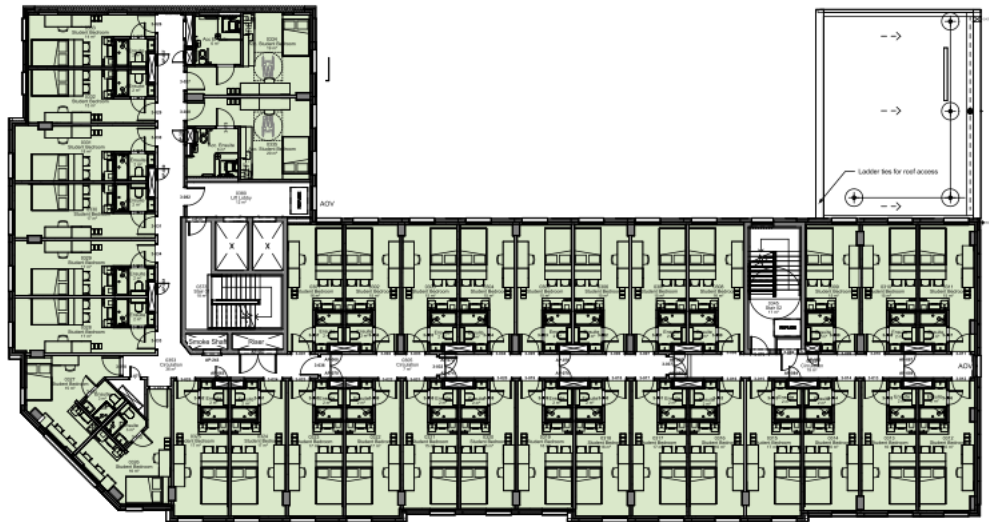
First Floor Plan



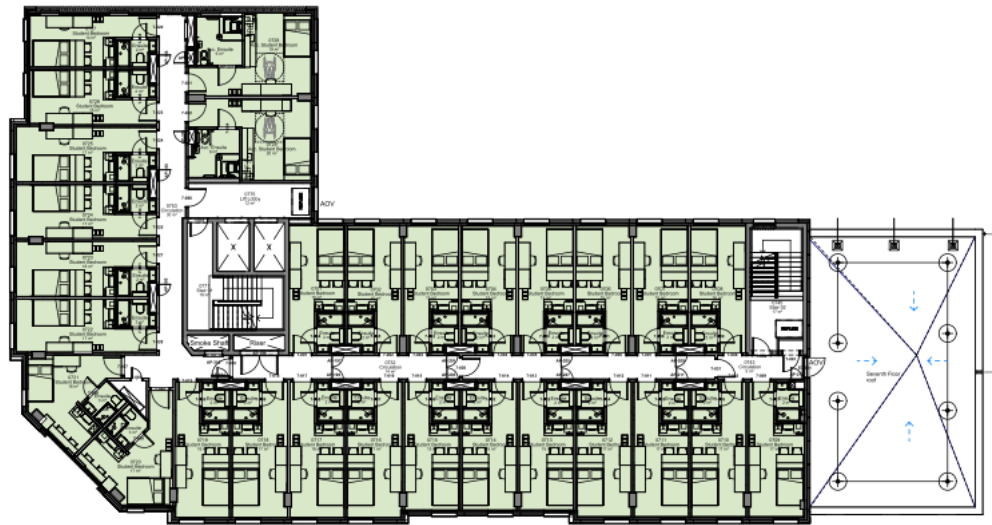
Second Floor Plan



Third Floor Plan



Seventh Floor Plan



Eighth Floor Plan



<p>2.0</p>	<p>Characteristics of the Site and Area</p>
<p>2.1</p>	<p>The application site comprises a Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) which received planning permission under reference Z/2014/0479/O & LA04/2016/1213/RM in October 2017. It contains 307 self-contained units spread across 11 floors with associated communal and amenity facilities.</p>

2.2	The building is located in the northern part of Belfast city in close proximity to Ulster University building, and other PBMSA buildings located on Great Patrick Street, Little Patrick Street and York Street.
3.0	Description of Proposal
3.1	The application is seeking full planning permission for the proposed change of use of 144 no. PBMSA units to short term let accommodation outside of term time only.
3.2	The proposal for short-term let use would be for July and August only, to reduce vacancy rates during these months, and would apply to less than 50% of the overall bedspaces.
4.0	Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations
4.1	Development Plan – Plan Strategy Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035
4.2	<i>Strategic Policies:</i> Policy SP2 – sustainable development
4.3	<i>Operational Policies:</i> HOU13 – Short-term let accommodation TLC1 - Supporting tourism leisure and cultural development TLC3 - Overnight visitor accommodation TRAN 2 - Creating an accessible environment TRAN 4 – Travel Plan TRAN 8 - Car parking and servicing arrangements TRAN 9 – Parking Standards within Area of Parking Restraint Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality
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)
4.6	Relevant Planning History Z/2014/0479/O - 48-52 York Street - Demolition of existing building and construction of new multi storey building with retail units at ground floor and purpose-built student accommodation over. Approved 25 th March 2015.

	<p>LA04/2016/1213/RM – 48-52 York Street - Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 11 storey building comprising of 3 no. ground floor retail units, 307 studios for use as purpose built managed student accommodation with associated communal and amenity facilities, including gym and all associated site and access works. Approved 2nd October 2017.</p> <p>LA04/2024/1869/F – 48-52 York Street - Temporary Change of Use of 92 No. Student Bedrooms to Short Term Let Accommodation. Withdrawn September 2025.</p>
5.0	Consultations and Representations
5.1	Statutory Consultations Dfl Roads – no objections subject to conditions.
5.2	Non-Statutory Consultations None required.
5.3	Representations
5.3.1	<p>The application has been advertised and neighbours notified.</p> <p>One representations was received and is detailed below:</p> <p>Definition of “term time” and clarity of use. The objection states that the absence of a publicly available schedule or period for the short-term letting operation means stakeholders (neighbours, local residents, the city council) cannot scrutinise or monitor the use. <i>Officers can confirm that the Section 77 negotiations pertain to the use of the rooms as Short Term Let during July and August only.</i></p> <p>Impact on the hotel and regulated accommodation sector: The objection states that allowing PBSA stock to convert to short-term lets adds quasi-hotel capacity into an already competitive city-centre visitor market without equivalent regulatory burden, standards, or tax treatment. Hotels operate under strict regulation, incur higher operating costs, and contribute substantially to employment and tourism infrastructure. Introducing additional short-term let supply erodes this regulated framework and risks financial displacement during peak trading months. This accommodation will compete with other certified products including, hotels, hostels, guest accommodation and self-catering accommodation.</p> <p><i>The tourism policies within the Plan Strategy 2035 seek to extend the offer for day and nighttime tourism facilities within the city centre boundary. The proposal complies with relevant policy. Financial impacts on existing tourism provision is not a determining factor in assessment.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on local housing market and student accommodation stock. Allowing a major development to pivot its use into short-term lets sets a precedent which may undermine the supply of dedicated student housing and may misalign with the intended purpose of the original approval. <p><i>The proposal is solely for the use as short term lets during the months of July and August. This will be secured via the planning agreement.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viability and threat to tourist development.

As stated above the tourism policies within the Plan Strategy 2035 seeks to extend the offer for day and nighttime tourism facilities within the city centre boundary. The proposal complies with policy, financial impacts on existing tourism provision is not a determining factor in assessment.

- **Precedent and policy alignment.** Granting this application may create a precedent for other large student housing developments to seek flexible change to tourism use, thereby eroding the supply of student accommodation and undermining local housing policy. The application appears to conflict with the original planning intention (student use) and may not align with strategic objectives for housing mix, neighbourhood.

Any future applications would be assessed on their own merits. The current proposal does not undermine or erode the supply of student housing as the proposed change of use relates solely outside of term time which is defined as July and August.

- **Neighbourhood amenity and local infrastructure.** The objection stated the conversion of significant numbers of student rooms into short-term lets has the potential to change the character of the local neighbourhood.

The proposal relates solely to the Months of July and August, therefore is not anticipated to have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the area.

- **Monitoring and enforcement issues.**

An updated short term let Management Plan has been submitted which details the monitoring and enforcement of those using the short term let. This will be secured via a S77 variation to the host S76 Planning Agreement. In relation to the enforcement and monitoring of the planning approval, any potential breaches of either the original planning approval or that approved under this application would be a matter for the Belfast City Council Planning Enforcement Team.

- **Amenity, management and neighbourhood impact**

Short-term-lets operate with higher turnover, differing visitor behaviour, and reduced stability. This can lead to noise, disturbance and increased comings and goings, which are not consistent with the controlled management protocols typically required for PBSA. The applicant has not demonstrated how they will maintain equivalent standards of oversight during short-term visitor use.

An updated Short Term Let Management Plan has been submitted with the proposal that details how matter such as these may be dealt with and enforced if they arise. This will be secured via the S77 variation to the S76 Planning Agreement.

- **Monitoring and Enforcement**

1) Who will have responsibility for monitoring and verifying that this property operates solely during July and August?

It is the responsibility of the developer/operator to operate in accordance with planning permission, any reported breaches of planning are the responsibility of Planning Enforcement to investigate in line with its Enforcement Charter.

	<p>2) Does the Council have the required resources and statutory powers to effectively monitor and enforce compliance with the two-month change-of-use restriction?</p> <p><i>Yes, a planning enforcement team is in place.</i></p> <p>3) Which agency will be designated as the enforcement authority, and how will breaches of this planning condition be investigated and addressed?</p> <p><i>The planning enforcement team are responsible for investigating any complaints relating to breaches of planning control.</i></p>
6.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT
6.1	Development Plan Context
6.1.1	Section 6(4) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 states that in making any determinations under the Act, regard is to be had to the local development plan, and the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
6.1.2	Section 45(1) of the Act states that in determining planning applications, the Council must have regard to the local development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations.
6.1.3	The Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP), when fully completed, will replace the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 as the statutory Development Plan for the city. The Belfast LDP will comprise two parts. Part 1 is the Plan Strategy, which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 02 May 2023. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan, which will provide the zonings and proposals maps for Belfast and has not yet been published. The zonings and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 remain part of the statutory local development plan (“Departmental Development Plan”) until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.
6.1.4	Operational policies – the Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application, which are set out in the following section of this report.).
6.1.5	Proposals Maps – until such time as the Local Policies Plan is adopted, the Council must have regard to the land-use zonings, designations and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001, both versions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (v2004 and v2014) (draft BMAP 2015) and other relevant area plans. The weight to be afforded to these proposals is a matter for the decision maker. It is considered that significant weight should be given to the proposals map in draft BMAP 2015 (v2014) given its advanced stage in the development process, save for retail policies that relate to Sprucefield which remain contentious.
6.1.6	Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 - The site is located within the settlement development limit in the BUAP and is not zoned for any use.
6.1.7	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004 and 2014) – The site is located within an area of ‘white land’ within Belfast City Centre Development Limits. The site is also located within Belfast City Centre Belfast City Core Area of Parking Restraint.
	Key Issues

6.1.8	The key issues to be considered in this application are:
6.1.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle • Access, movement and parking
Principle of the proposal	
6.2	Policy HOU13 relating to short term lets set out a number of key criteria which must be satisfied.
6.2.1	Criterion a. requires that the proposal <i>strengthens and diversifies the range of short-stay visitor accommodation in the city</i> . As of December 2025, short-term lets comprise 23% of Belfast City Council's tourist accommodation. The proposal is for 144 rooms outside of
6.2.2	term time and therefore would strengthen and diversify the range of short-term visitor accommodation in the city. The provision of short term let accommodation allows visitors to reside for a period of no longer than a consecutive 90-day period.
6.2.3	Criterion b. requires that the proposal <i>is accessible by public transport</i> . The site is located in the city centre and is highly accessible by public transport.
6.2.4	Criterion c. requires that the proposal <i>is sited within an existing tourism cluster or in close proximity to a visitor attraction</i> . The site is within the city centre with several visitor attractions in close proximity, for example Belfast City Hall is 0.8 miles away and a 20 min walk.
6.2.5	Criterion d. requires that the proposal <i>has appropriate management arrangements in place to ensure a positive and safe living environment whilst minimising any potential negative impacts</i> . The applicant has provided a Service Management Plan which details the specific management company; Little Feather Management who will be responsible for the associated management of the short term let of the relevant units and the safety and wellbeing of all residents, including both visitors and students.
6.2.6	Criterion e. requires that <i>the site is not located within a designated HMA (see policy HOU10), unless it can be demonstrated that the development is needed to meet a specific demand in that location</i> . As the site is not located within a designated HMA, this criterion is not applicable.
6.2.7	Criterion f. requires that <i>in the case of a change from permanent residential use, part of the property must be retained as permanent residential housing</i> . The existing building is a PBSA therefore this criterion is not applicable.
6.2.8	Policy TLC1 states that the Council will seek to support tourism, leisure and cultural development that contributes to extending the offer of these forms of development across daytime and nighttime for the visitor. It is also expected that the proposal will lead to improving the quality and accessibility of tourism, leisure and cultural assets to support the city's reputation as an attractive tourism destination.
6.2.9	Policy TLC3 states that planning permission will be granted for tourism development for new overnight accommodation within the city centre boundary. Although the policy advises that short-term lets are considered under policy HOU13, nonetheless it demonstrates that there is a thrust for tourism development to be located within the city centre.
Car Parking	
6.3	

6.3.1	Policy TRAN 2 highlights the importance of providing suitable access for all and that the Council will seek to ensure that access to existing buildings and their surroundings is improved as opportunities arise through alterations, extensions and changes of use.
6.3.2	As outlined above the proposal does not include any external or internal alterations, however the existing building incorporates all necessary design features to ensure that the building remains accessible to those with impaired mobility through ground level access at the main entrance and lift access to all floors within the building. Additionally, a number of the rooms which have been identified for short term use include wheelchair accessible rooms.
6.3.3	Under Policy TRAN 4, the application is supported by a Travel Plan which DfI Roads have been consulted on and have no objection with.
6.3.4	Policy TRAN8 seeks to ensure that there is sufficient car parking and servicing arrangement for all developments. The current student accommodation provides 3 no. disabled parking spaces. The development is car free with cycle parking available for short-term guests. There will be a drop off and loading bay within the site for limited use for delivery and loading/unloading. Short-term guests will therefore be encouraged to use more sustainable means of transport, such as cycling, walking or take advantage of regular local transport facilities.
6.3.5	Policy TRAN 9 applies a parking standard of 1 space per 300m2 of operational floorspace in the city centre core area of parking restraint. As outlined previously, the application site is located within an area of parking restraint and the justification and amplification text under Policy TRAN 9 states there is a presumption against additional car parking in areas of parking restraint. There is no parking proposed as part of the proposal with the exception of 3no. disabled spaces, the proposal therefore complies.
6.4	Section 76 Planning Agreement
6.4.1	Application LA04/2016/1213/RM was subject to a Section 76 agreement which restricted the use to student accommodation or associated use by educational institutions only. As such a Section 77 is required to modify the original S76 to ensure that the student use is compliant with its legal obligations.
6.4.2	A Section 77 to vary the Section 76 of the host approval has been agreed in principle with Legal Services and delegated authority is sought to resolve the finalisation of same.
6.5	Conclusion
6.5.1	The proposal is considered to be an appropriate form of development within the city centre, it will provide additional visitor accommodation within the city centre on a short- term basis, adding to the diversity of visitor accommodation on offer. Approval is recommended.
7.0	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, resolve the Section 77 variation to the host Section 76 planning agreement and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.
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DRAFT CONDITIONS:

1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied or operated unless in accordance with the approved Travel Plan uploaded to the Planning Portal on 3rd April 2026.

Reason: To promote sustainable travel patterns and off-set the demand for vehicular movements and/or parking.

3. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied or operated unless in accordance with the Service Management Plan uploaded to the Planning Portal on 3rd April 2026.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and convenience of road users.

Development Management Report

Committee Application

Committee Meeting Date: 16 th June 2026	
Application Ref: LA04/2026/0716/F	
Proposal: Proposed change of use of 342 no. Student rooms to short term let accommodation outside of term time (July & August).	Location: Alma Place, 16 Library Street, Belfast, BT1 2JB
Referral Route: Paragraph 3.8.2 (d) of the scheme of delegation – change of use application involving student accommodation	
Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions	
Applicant Name and Address: Bluesky Student Alma Place Limited 52 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0AU	Agent Name and Address: Clyde Shanks Ltd 2nd Floor 7 Exchange Place Belfast BT1 2NA
Date Valid: 13.04.2026	
Target Date: 27.07.2026	
Contact Officer: Ciara Reville, Principal Planner (Development Management)	
Executive Summary: The application site is situated at Alma Place, 16 Library Street, Belfast, BT1 2JB. Permission was granted under LA04/2015/0676/F for Demolition of existing warehouse and construction of Managed Purpose-Built Student Accommodation comprising: 78 Apartments containing 408 en-suite Bedrooms with shared living rooms and kitchens and 10 Studio Apartments containing 36 self-contained Studios on ground and 10 upper storey. The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of the proposed change of use outside of term time • Access, movement and parking Four letters of representation have been received. Their concerns are set out below with response. DFI Roads were consulted and had no objections to the proposal.	
Recommendation Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions. Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions, and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.	

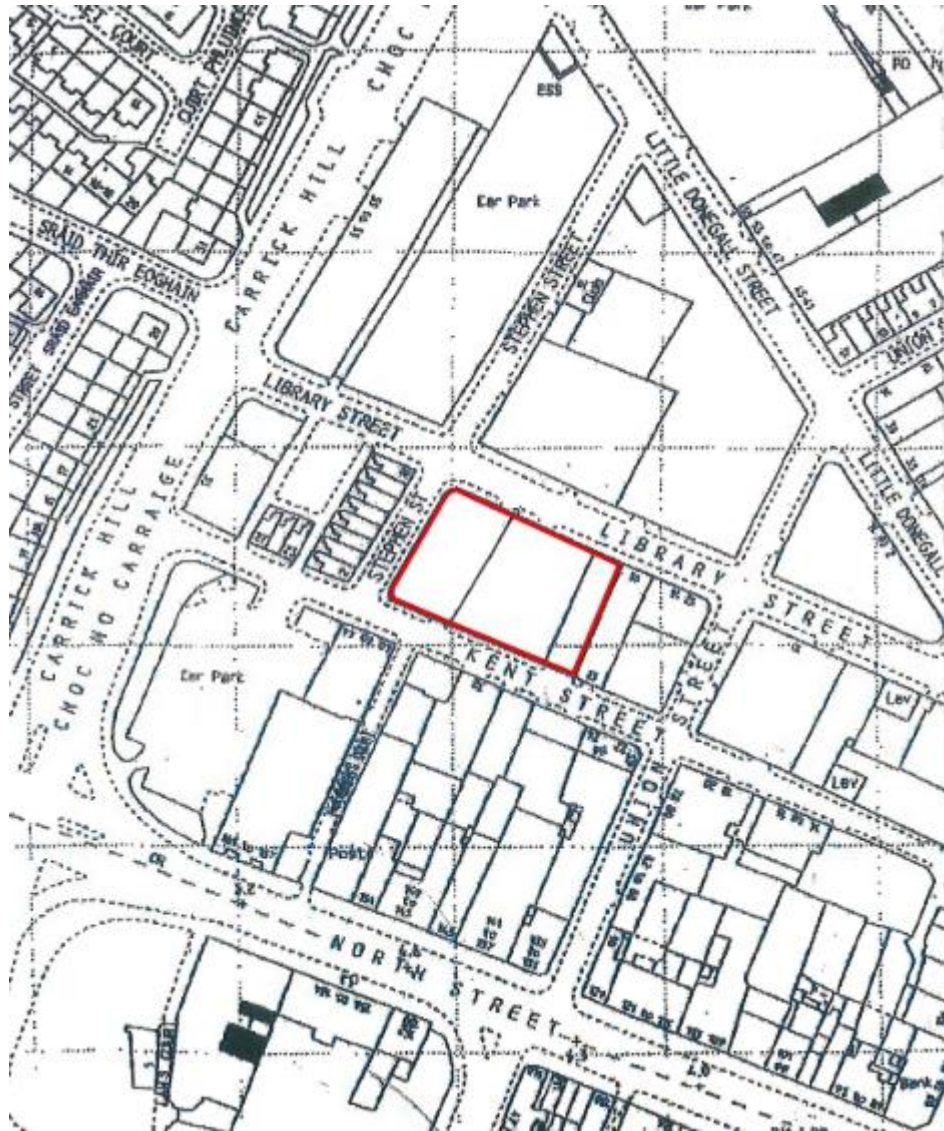
Officer Report

1.0

Drawings

1.1

Site Location



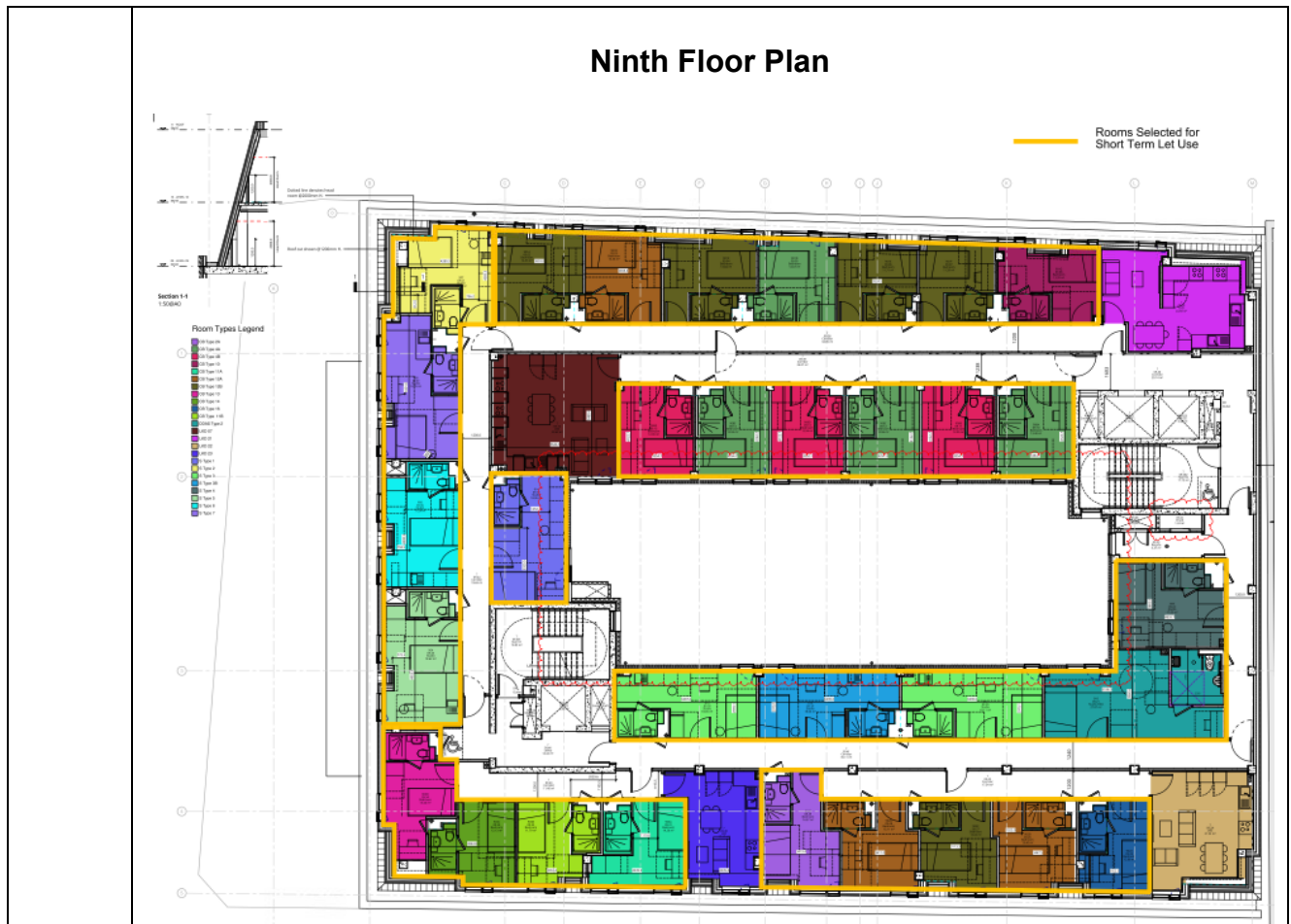
First Floor Plan

Third to Seventh Floor Plan



Eight Floor Plan





2.0	Characteristics of the Site and Area
2.1	The site is a multi-story purpose-built student accommodation on Library Street. The surrounding area is mixed in character with surface level car parks and terrace housing, as well as a number of commercial units.
3.0	Description of Proposal
3.1	Proposed change of use of 342 no. Student rooms to short term let accommodation outside of term time (July & August).
4.0	Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations
4.1	Development Plan – Plan Strategy Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035
4.2	<i>Strategic Policies:</i> Policy SP2 – sustainable development <i>Operational Policies:</i> HOU13 – Short-term let accommodation TLC1 - Supporting tourism leisure and cultural development

	<p>TLC3 - Overnight visitor accommodation</p> <p>TRAN 8 - Car parking and servicing arrangements</p> <p>Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality</p>
4.3	<p>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps</p> <p>Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP</p> <p>Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004)</p> <p>Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014)</p>
4.4	<p>Regional Planning Policy</p> <p>Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)</p> <p>Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</p>
4.5	<p>Relevant Planning History</p> <p>LA04/2015/0676/F - “Demolition of existing warehouse and construction of Managed Purpose-Built Student Accommodation comprising: 78 Apartments containing 408 en-suite Bedrooms with shared living rooms and kitchens and 10 Studio Apartments containing 36 self-contained Studios on ground and 10 upper storeys” at Land bounded by Library Street Stephen Street and Kent Street Belfast. Permission Granted at appeal 27th February 2017</p>
5.0	Consultations and Representations
5.1	<p>Statutory Consultations</p> <p>DFI Roads – No Objections subject to conditions</p>
5.2	<p>Non-Statutory Consultations</p> <p>Northern Ireland Tourist Board – Only comment on major applications.</p>
5.3	<p>Representations</p>
5.3.1	<p>The application has been advertised and neighbours notified. Four letters of objection have been received raising concerns regarding the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on residential amenity: particularly in relation to noise disturbance and inappropriate use of the building’s fire exit area. Increasing turnover and occupancy during July and August will intensify the frequency and scale of disturbance. <i>The proposed use is not considered to impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties due to a robust short term management plan has been submitted and will be conditioned to ensure appropriate management of the property.</i> • Impact of the proposal on Parking in the Area. The proposed change of use to short term let accommodation outside of term time (July & August) is not considered to significantly impact on parking in the surrounding area.

Given the City Centre location the site is highly accessible by a number of public transport options. DFI Roads have been consulted and offer no objection to the proposal. A Travel Plan has been submitted with DFI Roads offering no objections to the proposal.

- **Lack of Clarity regarding the definition of ‘term time’.**
This is defined as July and August as stated in the description for the application and supporting information.
- **Conflict with intended use and approved consent:** The approved consent for this development was for purpose-built managed student accommodation (PBSA) to serve the needs of Queen’s University Belfast and Ulster University students. The proposed change to short-term lets, even if limited to July and August, represents a significant departure from that approved use and creates a precedent for non-student occupancy in PBSA buildings. This undermines the clarity and purpose of the city’s student accommodation strategy.
The proposal will be restricted to July & August months only, a period when the universities are in summer recess. Therefore, the proposal will not significantly impact approved PBSA use. The units to be used are limited to a corner of the building which has controlled access.
- **Impact on the hotel and regulated accommodation sector:** The objection states that allowing PBSA stock to convert to short-term lets adds quasi-hotel capacity into an already competitive city-centre visitor market without equivalent regulatory burden, standards, or tax treatment. Hotels operate under strict regulation, incur higher operating costs, and contribute substantially to employment and tourism infrastructure. Introducing additional short-term let supply erodes this regulated framework and risks financial displacement during peak trading months. This accommodation will compete with other certified products including, hotels, hostels, guest accommodation and self-catering accommodation.
The tourism policies within the Plan Strategy 2035 seeks to extend the offer for day and nighttime tourism facilities within the city centre boundary. The proposal complies with policy, financial impacts on existing tourism provision is not a determining factor in assessment.
- **Impact on local housing market and student accommodation stock.** Allowing a major development to pivot its use into short-term lets sets a precedent which may undermine the supply of dedicated student housing and may misalign with the intended purpose of the original approval.
The proposal is solely for the use as short term lets during the months of July and August. A condition will be placed on the decision to restrict the use to these months, therefore will not set a precedent which may undermine the supply of dedicated student housing.
- **Viability and threat to tourist development.**
As stated above the tourism policies within the Plan Strategy 2035 seeks to extend the offer for day and nighttime tourism facilities within the city centre

boundary. The proposal complies with policy, financial impacts on existing tourism provision is not a determining factor in assessment.

- **Precedent and policy alignment.** Granting this application may create a precedent for other large student housing developments to seek flexible change to tourism use, thereby eroding the supply of student accommodation and undermining local housing policy. The application appears to conflict with the original planning intention (student use) and may not align with strategic objectives for housing mix, neighbourhood.

Any future applications would be assessed on their own merits. The current proposal does not undermine or erode the supply of student housing as the proposed change of use relates solely outside of term time which is defined as July and August.

- **Policy precedent, compliance concerns and the integrity of PBSA planning.** The conversion of student accommodation to short-term visitor use undermines the city's ability to ensure an adequate, predictable supply of student housing. With growing undergraduate numbers and pressure on the private rented sector, safeguarding PBSA for its original purpose is essential.

As stated previously the proposed use will be limited to July & August only when the PBSA will not be in use as student accommodation.

- **Monitoring and enforcement issues.**

An updated short term let Management Plan has been submitted which details the monitoring and enforcement of those using the short term let. The approval will be conditioned to be in accordance with the submitted management plan. In relation to the enforcement and monitoring of the planning approval, any potential breaches of either the original planning approval LA04/2015/0676/F or that approved under this application would be a matter for the Belfast City Council Planning Enforcement Team.

- **Neighbourhood amenity and local infrastructure.** The objection stated the conversion of significant numbers of student rooms into short-term lets has the potential to change the character of the local neighbourhood.

The proposal relates solely to the Months of July and August, therefore is not anticipated to have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the area.

- **Amenity, management and neighbourhood impact** Short-term-lets operate with higher turnover, differing visitor behaviour, and reduced stability. This can lead to noise, disturbance and increased comings and goings, which are not consistent with the controlled management protocols typically required for PBSA. The applicant has not demonstrated how they will maintain equivalent standards of oversight during short-term visitor use.

An updated Short Term Let Management Plan has been submitted with the proposal that details how matter such as these may be dealt with and enforced if they arise. This has been conditioned to the approval.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and Enforcement <p>1) Who will have responsibility for monitoring and verifying that this property operates solely during July and August?</p> <p><i>It is the responsibility of the developer/operator to operate in accordance with planning permission, any reported breaches of planning are the responsibility of Planning Enforcement to investigate in line with its Enforcement Charter. .</i></p> <p>2) Does the Council have the required resources and statutory powers to effectively monitor and enforce compliance with the two-month change-of-use restriction?</p> <p><i>Yes, a planning enforcement team is in place.</i></p> <p>3) Which agency will be designated as the enforcement authority, and how will breaches of this planning condition be investigated and addressed?</p> <p><i>The planning enforcement team are responsible for investigating any complaints relating to breaches of planning control.</i></p>
6.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT
6.1	Development Plan Context
6.1.1	Section 6(4) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 states that in making any determinations under the Act, regard is to be had to the local development plan, and the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
6.1.2	Section 45(1) of the Act states that in determining planning applications, the Council must have regard to the local development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations.
6.1.3	The Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP), when fully completed, will replace the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 as the statutory Development Plan for the city. The Belfast LDP will comprise two parts. Part 1 is the Plan Strategy, which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 02 May 2023. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan, which will provide the zonings and proposals maps for Belfast and has not yet been published. The zonings and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 remain part of the statutory local development plan (“Departmental Development Plan”) until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.
6.1.4	Operational policies – the Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application, which are set out in the following section of this report.).
6.1.5	Proposals Maps – until such time as the Local Policies Plan is adopted, the Council must have regard to the land-use zonings, designations and proposals maps in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001, both versions of the draft Belfast

	Metropolitan Area Plan (v2004 and v2014) (draft BMAP 2015) and other relevant area plans. The weight to be afforded to these proposals is a matter for the decision maker. It is considered that significant weight should be given to the proposals map in draft BMAP 2015 (v2014) given its advanced stage in the development process, save for retail policies that relate to Sprucefield which remain contentious.
6.1.6	Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 - The site is located within the settlement development limit in the BUAP and is not zoned for any use.
6.1.7	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004 and 2014) – The is located within the city centre and is unzoned whiteland.
6.1.8	Key Issues
6.1.9	The key issues to be considered in this application are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle • Access, movement and parking
6.2	Principle of the proposal
6.2.1	Policy HOU13 relating to short term lets set out a number of key criteria which must be satisfied.
6.2.2	Criterion a. requires that the proposal <i>strengthens and diversifies the range of short-stay visitor accommodation in the city</i> . As of December 2025, short-term lets comprise 23% of Belfast City Council’s tourist accommodation. The proposal is for additional rooms outside of term time which would strengthen and diversify the range of short-term visitor accommodation in the city.
6.2.3	Criterion b. requires that the proposal <i>is accessible by public transport</i> . The site’s city centre location is highly accessible by public transport, therefore the proposal meets this criteria.
6.2.4	Criterion c. requires that the proposal <i>is sited within an existing tourism cluster or in close proximity to a visitor attraction</i> . The site is within the city centre with several visitor attractions in close proximity. City Hall, University of Ulster, the MAC and St Annes Cathedral are all within walking distance.
6.2.5	Criterion d. requires that the proposal <i>has appropriate management arrangements in place to ensure a positive and safe living environment whilst minimising any potential negative impacts</i> . The applicant has provided an appropriate management plan to the council for consideration, which will be conditioned. The management plan also addresses the property security, management, booking and vetting and the key operational policies including noise / anti-social behaviour, waste disposal and transportation.
6.2.6	Criterion e. requires that <i>the site is not located within a designated HMA (see policy HOU10), unless it can be demonstrated that the development is needed to</i>

	<i>meet a specific demand in that location.</i> As the site is not located within a designated HMA, this criterion is not applicable.
6.2.7	Criterion f. requires that <i>in the case of a change from permanent residential use, part of the property must be retained as permanent residential housing.</i> The existing building is a PBSA therefore this criterion is not applicable.
6.2.8	Policy TLC1 states that the Council will seek to support tourism, leisure and cultural development that contributes to extending the offer of these forms of development across daytime and nighttime for the visitor. It is also expected that the proposal will lead to improving the quality and accessibility of tourism, leisure and cultural assets to support the city's reputation as an attractive tourism destination.
6.2.9	Policy TLC3 states that planning permission will be granted for tourism development for new overnight accommodation within the city centre boundary. Although the policy advises that short-term lets are considered under policy HOU13, nonetheless it demonstrates that there is a thrust for tourism development to be located within the city centre.
6.2.10	Car Parking Policy TRAN8 seeks to ensure that there is sufficient car parking and servicing arrangement for all developments. The development has parking for 18 cars in the basement, 7 motor cycles and 112 bicycles. This was approved under application LA04/2023/2936/F. Also, Beryl bike docking stations are located on Royal Avenue and at Ulster University that are a short walk from the site. Short-term guests will therefore be encouraged to use more sustainable means of transport, such as cycling, walking or take advantage of regular local transport facilities. For short-term guests who do need parking, there is on-street paid parking within the general area of the site.
6.2.11	Whilst the approved scheme is not subject to a Travel Plan, a Travel Plan was submitted for this application. The Travel Plan supports the proposal and outlines all travel options available to staff, guests and visitors to the proposed short-term let units i.e. multiple forms of public transport such as Metro, Glider, and Ulsterbus bus services alongside Translink Train services, as well as the pedestrian and cycle infrastructure in the surrounding area. It also addresses private car usage in that it will still be a mode of travel to some, with street pay and display parking and other longer duration car parks.
6.2.12	DFI were consulted and offered no objection to the development's Travel Plan.
6.2.13	Conclusion The proposal is, on balance, an appropriate form of development within the city centre, it will provide additional visitor accommodation within the city centre outside of term time, adding to the diversity of visitor accommodation on offer, during peak times. It will also assist with vacancy rates within the building. Approval is recommended.

7.0	Recommendation
7.1	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.
7.2	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.

DRAFT CONDITIONS:

1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2. This planning permission has effect from the date which the development hereby approved was carried out.

Reason: As required by Section 55 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

3. The short-term let use hereby permitted, shall only operate between 1st July and 31st August each year. Accordingly, the short term let use will cease on the 31st of August and not recommence until the 1st July the following year.

Reason: To ensure the premises are retained as permanent student accommodation during the academic year, 1st September to 30th June.

4. The development shall operate in accordance with the Travel Plan dated April 2026 and uploaded to the Planning Portal.

Reason: To encourage alternative modes of transport to the private car.

5. The Development shall operate in accordance with the Short Term Let Management Plan dated May 2026 and uploaded to the Planning Portal

Reason: To ensure appropriate management of the short term let and protect neighbouring amenity

Committee Report

Development Management Report	
Application ID: LA04/2026/0306/F	Date of Committee: Tuesday 16 th June 2026
Proposal: Section 54 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 for non-compliance with planning conditions 15 and 16 of planning permission LA04/2021/0516/F (relating to junction improvements and provision of disabled parking spaces)	Location: 140 Donegall Street, Belfast, BT1 2FJ
Referral Route: Section 54 application to remove conditions from a previously approved Major Application.	
Recommendation: Approval	
Applicant Name and Address: LDS Devco Ltd. Hannaway CA The Gasworks 12 Cormac Place Belfast BT7 2JB	Agent Name and Address: Eilis Turley Turley Hamilton House 3 Joy Street Belfast BT2 8LE
Date Valid: 19 th February 2026	
Target Date: 17 th September 2026	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe, Principal Planning Officer (Development Management)	
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>Planning permission was previously granted for the erection of a purpose-built managed student accommodation (PBSA) development comprising 724 no. units, courtyards, ancillary accommodation and facilities, cycle and car parking and all other associated site and access works (LA04/2021/0516/F) on 21st April 2023. The application was approved with a Section 76 Planning Agreement securing Employability and Skills interventions during the construction and operational phases, a Management plan, Travel plan, Green Travel Measures fund of £75000, Travel Cards and Belfast Bike Membership. The development is substantially complete and the building is referred to as 'The Biscuit Factory'.</p> <p>The application seeks planning permission for non-compliance with planning conditions 15 and 16 of LA04/2021/0516/F, originally recommended by DFI Roads. These conditions relate to junction improvements and provision of disabled parking spaces.</p> <p>The applicant has advised that a detailed design for the improvement of the Royal Avenue, York Street and Donegall Street junction was submitted (LA04/2024/0238/DC) as required by condition 15 of planning approval LA04/2021/0516/F. As a result of the assessment of that proposal, it was determined by the Council and DFI Roads that the funds allocated towards the localised</p>	

improvements of the junction could be reallocated towards supporting green travel measures such as the provision of a new Beryl bike docking station. The provision of financial contribution of £47,000 for the new bike docking station would be in addition to the Green Travel Fund of £75,000.

The additional developer contribution i.e. the provision of a new Beryl bike dock on Carrick Hill would be delivered through a variation to the existing Section 76 Planning Agreement.

An application to discharge Condition 16 of planning approval LA04/2021/0516/F was received by the Council (LA04/2023/4319/DC) which identified three existing on-street lay-by spaces to be designated to function as accessible parking spaces. DfI Roads raised no objection and the condition was discharged. In the intervening period, DfI Roads have expressed that given that disabled drivers are able to avail of rights under the blue badge scheme which would include provision to park on-street in restricted locations along both Little Donegall Street and Donegall Street and within existing surface level Council car parks on Little Donegall Street in close proximity, directly adjacent to The Biscuit Factory, they do not wish to proceed with the licence process that is required to designate and deliver the parking spaces in accordance with the approved details.

DFI Roads offer no objections to the proposed non-compliance with Condition No.15 of planning application LA04/2021/0516/F provided the installation of the Beryl Bike docking station and contribution to the Green Travel Fund are completed prior to the operation of the proposed development. DFI Roads also offer no objections to the proposed non-compliance with Condition No.16.

The key issue relevant to consideration of the application is:

- Principle of the development
- Impact on traffic and parking.

Recommendation

Having had regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies, and consultation responses it is considered that non-compliance is acceptable subject to modification of the Planning Agreement under Section 77 of the Planning Northern Ireland Act 2015.

Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the conditions and the S77 Modification and deal with any other matters which may arise provided these are not substantive.

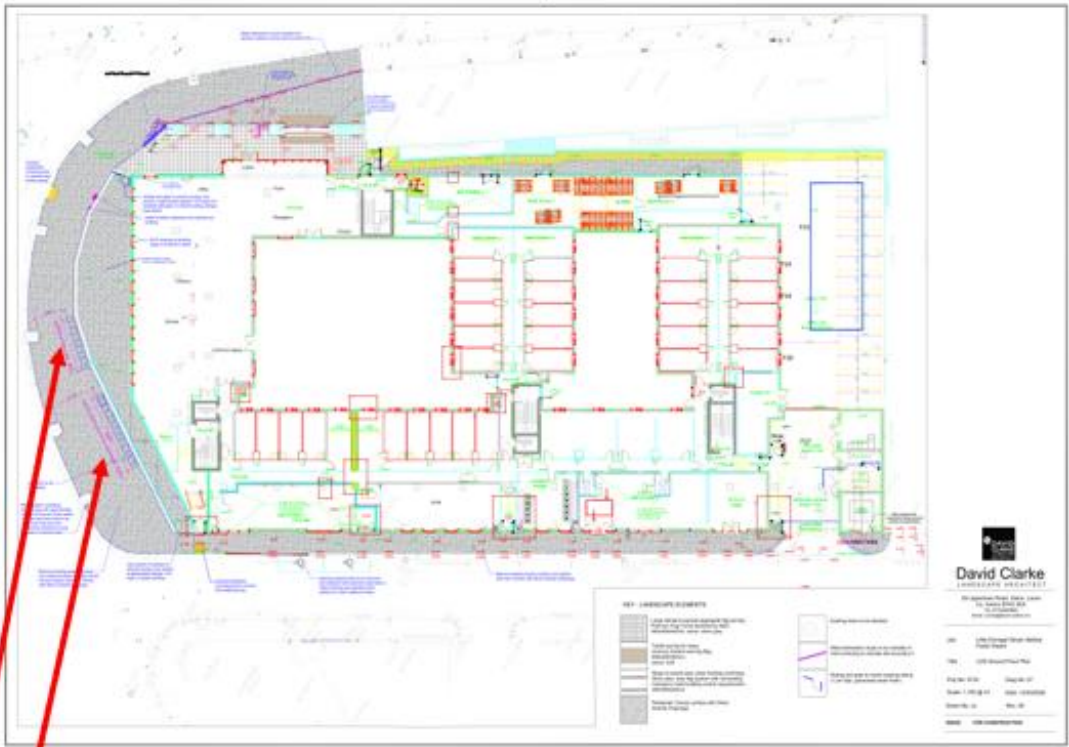
Case Officer Report

1.0 Drawings

Site Location Plan



Landscape Plan



Beryl Bike Dock Location

Characteristics of the Site and Area	
2.0	Description of Proposed Development
2.1	The application seeks permission under Section 54 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 for non-compliance with planning conditions 15 and 16 of planning permission LA04/2021/0516/F (relating to junction improvements and provision of disabled parking spaces)
2.2	<u>Condition 15 of LA04/2021/0516/F states:</u> <i>Prior to the operation of the building hereby approved, a detailed design of junction improvements (in general conformity with Drawing No. 17 (21-002_SK001) at the junction of Royal Avenue, York Street and Donegall Street shall be to be submitted to the Council for approval and completed in accordance with the approved details. The building shall not be occupied until the approved junction improvements have been implemented in full.</i> <i>Reason: In the interests of vehicular and pedestrian safety.</i>
2.3	The applicant submitted a detailed design for the improvement of the Royal Avenue, York Street and Donegall Street junction under application LA04/2024/0238/DC as required by condition 15. During the processing of the application DFI Roads and Planning determined that the funds allocated towards the localised improvements of the junction would be more appropriately used towards supporting green travel measures such as the provision of a new Beryl bike docking station. The applicant seeks to remove this condition.
2.4	The applicant proposes an additional developer contribution for the provision of a new Beryl bike dock on Carrick Hill to offset junction improvements which would be delivered through a variation to the existing Section 76 Planning Agreement. The provision of a financial contribution of £47,000 for a new bike docking station will be in addition to the Green Travel Fund of £75,000 (secured through the existing S76 agreement).
2.5	<u>Condition 16 of LA04/2021/0516/F states:</u> <i>Prior to occupation of the building, a minimum of three disabled parking spaces shall be provided in accordance with details including an access and parking layout which shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The disabled spaces, access and parking layout shall be retained in accordance with the approved details at all times.</i> <i>Reason: To ensure appropriate parking provision for disabled users.</i>
2.6	The applicant seeks to remove this condition.
3.0	Description of Site
3.1	The site measures approximately 0.4 ha in size and comprises a former surface level carpark situated between Donegall Street and Little Donegall Street. The approved PBMSA has been constructed and is substantially complete. Carrick Hill bounds the site to the north and north-west. The site is bounded by Little Donegall Street to the west/southwest. A large four-storey building lies adjacent and north-east of the site along the Donegall Street frontage.
3.2	There is a row of listed buildings opposite and north-east on the opposite side of Donegall Street comprised of several terraced Georgian dwellings, St Patrick's Church, and the Christian Brothers School building.
3.3	The site occupies a mixed-use area with various shops and commercial premises further along Donegall Street to the east of the site. Opposite and north is the Carrick Hill housing area on the other side of a four-lane orbital road. To the west on the opposite side of Little Donegall Street is a four-storey social housing block and to its rear another surface level car park.

Planning Assessment of Policy and other Material Considerations	
4.0	Planning History
4.1	<p>LA04/2021/0516/F – Erection of a Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation development comprising 724 no. units, courtyards, ancillary accommodation and facilities, cycle and car parking and all other associated site and access works. (Amendment to planning approval LA04/2015/0609/F), 140 Donegall Street, Belfast BT1 2FJ. Permission granted 21.04.2023</p> <p>LA04/2023/3973/NMC - Non-material change to LA04/2021/0516/F, 140 Donegall Street, Belfast, BT1 2FJ. NMC approved 28.11.2023</p> <p>LA04/2020/1602/PAN - Purpose built student accommodation, 140 Donegall Street Belfast, BT1 2FJ. PAN Acceptable 08.09.2020</p> <p>LA04/2015/0606/F - Purpose built managed student accommodation comprising 620 no. units with associated amenity and ancillary support accommodation with 54 no. lower ground floor parking spaces, 140 Donegall Street, Belfast, BT1 2GX. Appeal allowed 21.11.2017.</p> <p>LA04/2024/0238/DC – Discharge of Condition 15 LA04/2021/0516/F - Junction layout design, 140 Donegall Street, Belfast, BT1 2FJ. Application withdrawn 03.02.26</p> <p>LA04/2023/4319/DC - Discharge condition 16 LA04/2021/0516/F - Disabled Parking Provision Plan, 140 Donegall Street, Belfast, BT1 2FJ. Condition discharged 20.12.2023.</p>
5.0	Policy Framework
5.1	Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001
5.2	<p>Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004 and v2014) Following the recent Court of Appeal decision on BMAP, the extant development plan is now the BUAP. DBMAP (both v2004 and v2014 versions) is a material consideration. The weight to be afforded to dBMAP is a matter of judgement for the decision maker. Given its advanced stage in the Development Plan process, it is considered that dBMAP (v2014) carries significant weight.</p>
5.3	<p>Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035 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.</p>
5.4	Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)
5.5	<p>Operation Policies Policy BH1 Belfast Local Development Plan Draft Plan Strategy</p> <p>Policy TRAN 1 – Active travel – walking and cycling Policy TRAN8 – Car Parking and servicing arrangements ENV1 - Environmental Quality ENV2 - Mitigating Environmental Change</p>

6.0	Statutory Consultees Responses DFI Roads – No objection.
6.1	Non-Statutory Consultees Responses None
7.0	Representations
7.1	The application was advertised on 13/03/2026 and 27/03/2026. Neighbour notifications issued on 06.03.2026 and 25.03.26. To date no third party representations have been received.
9.0	Assessment
9.1	Principle of development
9.1.1	The principle of the development of the erection of the purpose built managed student accommodation at this location has already been established through the previous approval LA04/2021/0516/F. Development has commenced on site and the building is substantially complete.
9.2	Impact on traffic and parking
9.2.1	The application seeks planning permission for the non-compliance of conditions 15 and 16 of planning approval LA04/2021/0516/F. Each of the conditions are considered below.
9.2.2	<u>Condition 15</u> <i>Prior to the operation of the building hereby approved, a detailed design of junction improvements (in general conformity with Drawing No. 17 (21-002_SK001) at the junction of Royal Avenue, York Street and Donegall Street shall be to be submitted to the Council for approval and completed in accordance with the approved details. The building shall not be occupied until the approved junction improvements have been implemented in full. Reason: In the interests of vehicular and pedestrian safety.</i>
9.2.3	DFI Roads who recommended condition 15, offer no objections to the proposed non-compliance with Condition No.15 of planning application LA04/2021/0516/F provided the installation of the Beryl Bike docking station and contribution to the Green Travel Fund (in lieu of the proposed road junction improvement works), as referenced in the letter from Turley dated 30 January 2026, uploaded to the Planning Portal 5 March 2026, are completed prior to the operation of the proposed development.
9.2.4	The applicant in a statement accompanying the application has stated that the ‘ <i>Belfast bike dock was previously in situ at this location but was not identified as a priority location by BCC in the first phase of new Beryl bike dock installations. The proposed developer contribution will therefore re-instate access to this key form of active travel in this part of the city. The enclosed Landscape Plan (Dwg No. 02) which was previously discharged under Condition 2 (LA04/2023/4006/DC) is for information purposes only and shows the proposed location of the bike dock.</i> ’
9.2.5	The applicant is committed to the provision of a Beryl Bike Dock Station for a maximum of 20 bikes at Carrick Hill adjacent to the building. The applicant proposes a ‘Belfast Bike Contribution’ of £47,000 to facilitate the implementation of the new dock station in lieu of junction improvements previously required under condition 15 of planning approval LA04/2021/0516/F. The ‘Belfast Bike Contribution’ would be secured through an amendment to the S76 Planning Agreement approved under application LA04/2021/0516/F. Section 77 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 makes provision for a modification to a planning agreement provided that there is agreement between the planning authority and the person or persons against whom the agreement is

	<p>enforceable and that the agreement continues to serve a useful purpose, and would serve that purpose equally well if it had effect subject to the modifications specified in the application.</p> <p>9.2.6 Officers consider that the proposed bike contribution in lieu of junction improvements would support a modal shift from private car to active travel, helping to reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality and encourage healthier lifestyles. This would contribute to wider sustainable transport objectives and long-term environmental benefits. The proposed amendments are considered in accordance with Policy TRAN 1 [Active travel – walking and cycling] and ENV2 [Mitigating environmental change] of the Plan Strategy.</p> <p>9.2.7 <u>Condition 16</u> <i>Prior to occupation of the building, a minimum of three disabled parking spaces shall be provided in accordance with details including an access and parking layout which shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The disabled spaces, access and parking layout shall be retained in accordance with the approved details at all times.</i> <i>Reason: To ensure appropriate parking provision for disabled users.</i></p> <p>9.2.8 DFI Roads who recommended condition 16 offer no objections to the proposed non-compliance with Condition No.16 of planning application LA04/2021/0516/F.</p> <p>9.2.9 Officers consider that retaining spaces potentially indicated for disabled parking for general parking preserves parking capacity for all users while continuing to allow access by disabled users who hold a blue badge in accordance with relevant regulations. Given the availability of existing accessible parking provision and the ability of disabled users to utilise standard parking spaces where appropriate the proposal maintains flexibility in parking management while ensuring accessibility needs continue to be met. The proposed non-compliance of condition 16 is considered in accordance with Policy TRAN 8 [Car parking and servicing arrangements] of the Plan Strategy.</p> <p>9.3 Pre-application Community Consultation</p> <p>9.3.1 Given that this application is for the non-compliance of conditions to a previously approved major application, the applicant can rely on the pre-application community consultation that was submitted alongside application LA04/2020/1602/PAN.</p>
<p>10.0</p> <p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p>	<p>Summary of Recommendation:</p> <p>Having regard to BCC LDP Plan Strategy and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable and approval of planning permission is recommended without compliance with conditions 15 and 16 of planning approval LA04/2021/0516/F. This will create a standalone permission and as such all conditions from planning approval LA04/2021/0516/F must be replicated on any decision notice, albeit with conditions 15 and 16 removed.</p> <p>Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions and the modification to the S76 Planning Agreement (approved under application LA04/2025/0516/F) to secure an additional 'Bike Station Contribution' of £47,000 to facilitate a new Beryl Bike dock Station at Carrick Hill.</p>

11.0 Draft Conditions and Informatives

Draft Conditions:- Amendments/Reference to details approved under discharge of condition applications in bold.

1. The development hereby permitted must be begun by 20th April 2028.
Reason: The application seeks to amend the conditions relating to the original planning permission, dated 21st April 2023.

2. Notwithstanding the submitted details, no development shall commence on site unless full details of the public realm improvements to the footway bounding the site in the areas shown on Drawing No. 100-03 have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The details shall include:

1. Surface materials; and
2. The design and provision of underground ducting.

The development shall not be occupied unless the public realm improvements have been carried out in accordance with the approved details **under discharge of condition application LA04/2023/4006/DC.**

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, the setting of the Listed Building, and to enhance connectivity to and from the development.

3. No works shall commence on the approved building until materials samples of the walls, roofs and glazing system have been submitted to and agreed in writing with the Council. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details **under discharge of condition applications LA04/2023/3989/DC & LA04/2023/4533/DC.** Samples shall be retained on site until completion of the works.

Reason: To respect the character of the setting of the building and ensure the proposal is compliant with Policy BH11 (Development affecting the Setting of a Listed Building) of Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage.

4. If during the development works, new contamination and risks are encountered which have not previously been identified, works should cease and the Council shall be notified immediately in writing. This new contamination and risk shall be fully investigated in accordance with the Land Contamination: Risk Management (LCRM) guidance available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/land-contamination-how-to-manage-the-risks>. In the event of unacceptable risks being identified, a remediation strategy shall be submitted and approved in writing the Council before any works recommence. Development shall not thereafter proceed unless in accordance with the updated remediation strategy.

Reason: Protection of environmental receptors to ensure the site is suitable for use.

5. No development or piling work shall commence on this site until a piling risk assessment has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

This Condition only applies if a piling foundation is being used at the site. Piling risk assessments should be undertaken in accordance with the methodology contained within the Environment Agency document on "Piling and Penetrative Ground Improvement Methods on Land Affected by Contamination: Guidance on Pollution Prevention" available at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140329082415/http://cdn.environmentagency.gov.uk/scho0501bitt-e-e.pdf>

No piling shall take place unless in accordance with the details so approved **under discharge of condition application LA04/2023/3622/DC.**

Reason: Protection of environmental receptors to ensure the site is suitable for use

6. After completing any remediation works required under Condition 4 and prior to occupation of the development, a verification report must be submitted to and approved in

writing by the Council. This report should be completed by competent persons in accordance with the Land Contamination: Risk Management (LCRM) guidance available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/land-contamination-how-to-manage-the-risks>. The verification report should present all the remediation and monitoring works undertaken and demonstrate the effectiveness of the works in managing all waste materials and risks and in achieving the remedial objectives.

Reason: Protection of environmental receptors to ensure the site is suitable for use.

7. Prior to the occupation of any part of the approved development, a Verification Report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. This Verification Report must demonstrate that the final site layout has building, hardstanding or equivalent across the site in order to ensure that no direct contact, ingestion or inhalation of dust or fibre pathways are present on the developed site. **The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details submitted under discharge of condition application LA04/2026/0763/DC.**

Reason: Protection of Human Health.

8. Prior to installation, an Air Quality Impact Assessment for any centralised combustion sources (boilers/CHP, biomass), resulting in a single or combined NOx emission rate of more than 5mg/sec are proposed as part of this development, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The assessment shall include a specification for the combustion plant to be installed, to include emission rates and flue termination heights of the proposed combustion systems and must sufficiently demonstrate that there will be no unacceptable ambient air quality impacts on human health receptors. The equipment shall not be installed unless in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: For protection against adverse air quality.

9. Prior to installation, a window schedule detailing the glazing configuration and sound reduction performance of windows to habitable rooms on all facades of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The window specification for habitable rooms shall be in accordance with recommendations in the Peter Lloyd and Associates Report dated February 2016 for achieving suitable internal noise levels in a habitable room **and with the details approved under discharge of condition application LA04/2024/2045/DC**. The development shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained as such.

Reason: Protection against adverse noise impact.

10. Prior to installation, the specification of alternative means of ventilation to habitable rooms shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The specification shall be capable of providing at least the equivalent sound reduction of the window. The ventilation shall be installed in accordance with the approved details **under discharge of condition application LA04/2024/2045/DC**.

Reason: Protection against adverse noise impact.

11. The rating level (dBLAr,T) from the operation of all combined plant and equipment shall not exceed the existing representative daytime and night-time background noise level (dBLA90) as presented in the Peter Lloyd & Associate acoustic report dated February 2016 at the nearest noise sensitive premises, when measured or determined in respectively accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 'Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound'.

Reason: Protection against adverse noise impact.

12. Prior to the commencement of development, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The CEMP shall examine all stages of construction and identify methods to be employed to minimise adverse impact associated with noise, vibration and demonstrating the use of 'best Practicable means'. The plan must pay due regard to BS 5228:2009+A1:2014 Code of practice for Noise and vibration on construction and open sites, and IAQM Guidance on the Assessment of dust from demolition and construction 2014.

The CEMP should identify nearby sensitive premises likely to be impacted and identify also include arrangements for communicating and liaising with occupants of those premises. The approved Construction Environmental Management Plan shall be implemented throughout the entire construction phase **in accordance with the details approved under discharge of condition application LA04/2023/3735/DC.**

Reason: Protection of the amenity of nearby premises.

13. Access to the external amenity area at ground floor Carrick Hill façade shall not be permitted outside 0700 to 2300 hours.

Reason: Protection of residential amenity.

14. Commercial deliveries to and collections from the hereby approved development shall not be permitted outside of 0700 to 2300 hours.

Reason: Protection of residential amenity.

15. None of the external doors hereby approved will open out onto the public footpath.

Reason: In the interests of pedestrian safety.

16. The appointed contractor must ensure that extant storm drainage in Little Donegal Street is protected from pollutant ingress prior to and for the duration of the construction phase.

Reason: To avoid adverse effects on the integrity of any European site.

17. No development shall commence until a drawing showing the visibility splays and landing area at the main vehicular access (in general conformity with drawing No. 100-03) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The visibility splays and landing area shall be provided in accordance with the approved details, **under discharge of condition application LA04/2023/3636/DC**, prior to occupation and shall be maintained as such at all times.

Reason: In the interests of vehicular and pedestrian safety.

Development Management Report

Summary	
Committee Date: 16 th June 2026	
Application ID: LA04/2024/1195/F	
Proposal: Proposed residential development comprising 20 no. dwelling units, including 8 no. semi-detached 2 storey dwellings, 1 no. detached 2 storey dwelling, 2 no. 3-bed apartments (2 storey building) and 9 no. 2-bed apartments (3 storey building) with associated car parking, landscaping and associated works.	Location: Lands south of nos. 7-14 Wolfhill Manor, east of no.42 Mill Avenue and west and northwest of 100 Mill Avenue, Ligoniel, Belfast, BT14 8EL
Referral Route: Scheme is for over 12 units and objections received which conflict with officer recommendation to approve	
Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions and Section 76 planning agreement	
Applicant Name and Address: Braidwater Land Ltd 25f Longfield Road Eglinton BT47 3PY	Agent Name and Address: Gemma Jobling, JPE Planning Unit 1a Ledcom Business Park 100 Bank Road, Larne
Date Valid: 4 th July 2024	
Target Date: 17 th October 2024	
Contact Officer: Lisa Walshe, Principal Planner (Development Management)	
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>The application proposes a residential development comprising 20 no. dwelling units, including 8 no. semi-detached 2 storey dwellings, 1 no. detached 2-storey dwelling, 2 no. 3-bed apartments (2 storey building) and 9 no. 2-bed apartments (3 storey building) with associated car parking, landscaping and associated works.</p> <p>The proposal is for 100% social housing.</p> <p>The scheme also includes in-curtilage parking, private and communal amenity provision and landscaping. The site transverses across Mill Avenue with the 3-storey apartment building on the northern side (units 12-20), and remaining proposed units (1-11) on the southern side. The northern portion of the site is relatively flat whereas the southern side falls steeply towards to the rear. There are 37 car parking spaces (2 of which are for disabled user parking at plots 5 and 6) within the site.</p>	

The key issues for consideration of the application are set out below.

- Principle of housing in this location
- Housing density
- Affordable housing
- Housing mix
- Adaptable and accessible accommodation
- Design and Placemaking
- Impact on amenity
- Impact on built heritage
- Flood risk and drainage
- Waste-water infrastructure
- Climate change
- Access and transport
- Health impacts
- Environmental protection
- Natural heritage
- Trees and landscaping
- Waste management
- Section 76 planning agreement

In the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP 2001), the site is un-zoned “white land”. In the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (dBMAP) (versions 2004 and 2014), the site is also located within un-zoned “white land”.

The site benefits from extant planning permission for residential development as part of a larger overall scheme assessed under Z/2003/0475/O, Z/2004/0427/O and Z/2010/1315/RM.

The site is considered a suitable and sustainable location for housing; the proposal would make effective use of previously developed land in an accessible location.

The provision of 20 social housing units that respond to local housing need is welcomed.

Following negotiations and amendments, the design of the scheme is considered to be of good quality and appropriate to its context, with no negative impact on neighbouring residential amenity.

The proposed access and parking arrangements are acceptable.

NIHE is supportive of the on-site social housing proposals. No objections have been received from statutory consultations, subject to conditions, informatives and Section 76 planning agreement.

There are no objections from non-statutory consultees, however a response is outstanding from BCC Waste Management.

Following advertisement in the local press as well as neighbour notification, objections have been received from 88 local residents (including a petition), raising issues which are detailed in the main report. 1 comment (neither supporting nor objecting) was also received from The Belfast Hills Partnership.

The Section 76 planning agreement required to secure the development as 100% social housing has been agreed in principle.

Recommendation

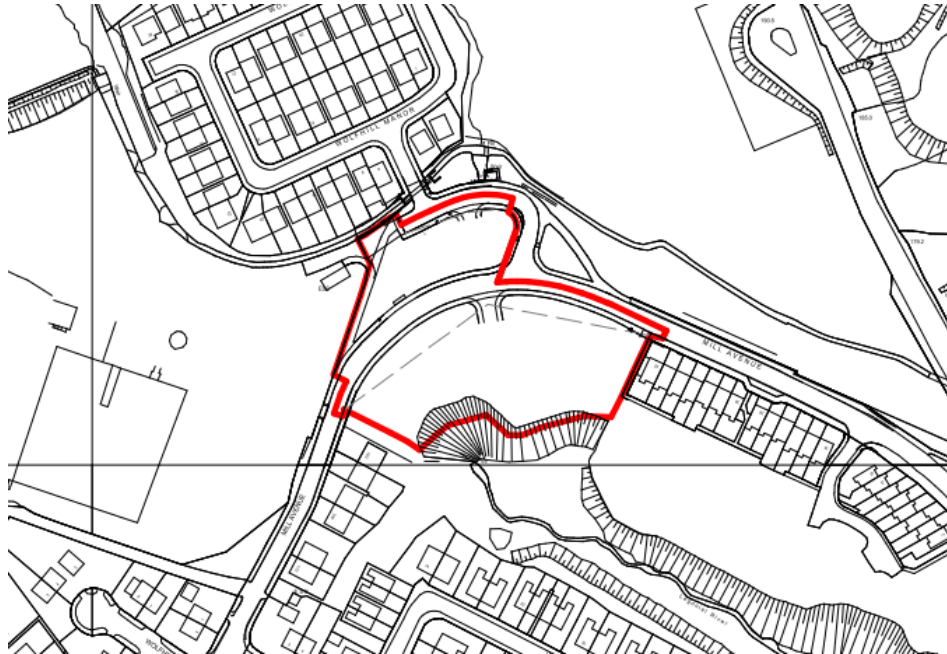
Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to resolve a final response from the BCC Waste Management team and Shared Environmental Services, finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, and deal with any other matters that arise, provided that they are not substantive.

Case Officer Report

DRAWINGS AND IMAGERY

Site Location Plan:



Landscaping proposals:

-  - Indicates 1.8m Timber Close Boarded Fence.
 -  - Indicates 900mm & 1100mm High Metal Railings
 -  - Indicates Private Amenity Area.
 -  - Indicates Existing Hedges
 -  - Indicates Existing Planting/ Trees to be retained
 -  - Indicates Proposed Specimen Tree Planting (a mixture of Acer, Sorbus, Prunus & Betula)
 -  - Indicates Amenity Shrub Planting
 -  - Indicates Proposed Open Space, Grass Seeded Areas.
 -  - Indicates Native Wild Flower Mix Planting Area.
 -  - Indicates Entrance
 -  - Indicates Shared Private Driveway
 -  - Indicates Concrete Path
 -  - 900mm wide = Private, 1200mm wide = communal (max 2 dwelling to share)
- All Service Strips to be clear of Shrub Planting etc.
Specimen trees/ planting to be clear of service strips and any underground cables etc.



- Blackthorn
 - Spindle Elm
 - Guelder Rose
 - Holly Ilex
 - Hazel Coryl
 - Alder Alnus
- Proposed S
- Silver Birch
 - Downy Birch
 - Rowan Sorb
 - Pedunculat
 - Wild Cherry

Streetscape (southern portion of the site facing Mill Avenue):



Elevation (northern portion of the site facing Mill Avenue):



1.0	Characteristics of the Site and Area
1.1	The site crosses Mill Avenue forming two areas. It can be accessed directly on the south from Mill Avenue, and to the north via the existing roadway to Wolfhill Manor, an existing residential development north of the site. The site slopes downwards slightly downwards and then steeply to the most southern boundary. The site is defined by a mix of trees and mature vegetation.
1.2	The surrounding area is residential. Dwellings are mainly a mix of semi-detached and bungalows.
Description of Proposed Development	
1.3	The application seeks full planning permission for a residential development comprising 20 no. dwelling units, including 8 no. semi-detached 2 storey dwellings, 1 no. detached 2 storey dwelling, 2 no. 3-bed apartments (2 storey building) and 9 no. 2-bed apartments (3 storey building) with associated car parking, landscaping and associated works. The proposal is for 100% social housing.
1.4	The scheme also includes private and communal amenity provision and landscaping, 37 car parking spaces (2 of which are for disabled user parking at plots 5 and 6) within the site.
2.0	Relevant Planning History

<p>2.1</p> <p>2.2</p> <p>2.3</p> <p>2.4</p>	<p>Z/2003/0475/O – Housing development with associated Roadways, landscaping - Land adjacent to Mill Avenue (site of former Wolfhill Flax Spinning Mill), Ligoniel, Belfast – Withdrawn 30/01/04</p> <p>Z/2004/0427/O - Housing development with associated roadways and landscaping (previous application Z/2003/0475/O) - Land adjacent to Mill Avenue (Site of former Wolfhill Flax Spinning Mill), Ligoniel, Belfast – Approved 27/09/07</p> <p>Z/2010/1315/RM - Construction of 102 no dwellings comprising of a mix of 21 no detached and 56 no semi-detached (all two storey), 7 no townhouses plus 18 no apartments (in two blocks) all three storey, with associated roads, garages, parking, drainage and landscaping. (Amended Proposal) - Land adjacent to Mill Avenue (site of former Wolfhill Flax Spinning Mill) Ligoniel, Belfast – Approved 10/06/13</p> <p>LA04/2020/1092/LDP - Proposed completion of dwellings on plots 16 and 17 as approved under Z/2010/1315/RM as development has begun before 10th June 2015 as stipulated by condition 1 thereof - Lands adjacent to Mill Avenue (site of former Wolfhill Flax Spinning Mill) Ligoniel – Certificate granted – 26/11/20</p>
<p>3.0</p> <p>3.1</p>	<p>PLANNING POLICY</p> <p>Development Plan – local development plan</p> <p><u>Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035</u></p> <p><i>Strategic Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy SP1A: Managing growth and supporting infrastructure delivery Policy SP2: Sustainable development Policy SP3: Improving health and wellbeing Policy SP5: Positive placemaking Policy SP6: Environmental resilience Policy SP7: Connectivity Policy SD2: Settlement Areas</p> <p><i>Operational Policies:</i></p> <p>Policy HOU1: Accommodating new homes Policy HOU4: Density of residential development Policy HOU5: Affordable housing Policy HOU6: Housing Mix Policy HOU7: Adaptable and accessible accommodation</p> <p>Policy DES1: Principles of urban design Policy RD1: New residential developments Policy BH5: Archaeology Policy TRAN1: Active travel – walking and cycling Policy TRAN2: Creating an accessible environment Policy TRAN4: Travel Plan Policy TRAN6: Access to public roads Policy TRAN8: Car parking and servicing arrangements</p> <p>Policy ENV1: Environmental quality</p>

	<p>Policy ENV2: Mitigating environmental change Policy ENV3: Adapting to environmental change Policy ENV4: Flood Risk Policy ENV5: Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)</p> <p>Policy HC1: Promoting healthy communities Policy OS3: Ancillary open space Policy TRE1: Trees Policy NH1: Protection of natural heritage resources</p> <p><u>Supplementary Planning Guidance</u></p> <p>Affordable Housing & Housing Mix Residential Design Placemaking & Urban Design Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Transportation</p> <p>3.2 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)</p> <p>3.3 Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</p> <p>3.4 Other Material Considerations Developer Contribution Framework (2020) Belfast Agenda (Community Plan)</p>
4.0	<p>CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS</p> <p>4.1 Statutory Consultees</p> <p>DFI Roads – No objection subject to conditions DfC HED Historic Monuments – No objection subject to conditions NI Water – No objection DfI Rivers – No objection DAERA NED – No objection DAERA WMU – No objection subject to conditions DAERA RU – NO objection subject to conditions Northern Ireland Housing Executive – No objection</p> <p>4.2 Non-Statutory Consultees</p> <p>Environmental Health – No objection subject to conditions. BCC Landscape and Planning - No objection subject to conditions. BCC Waste Management – Awaiting response Shared Environmental Services – Awaiting response BCC Urban Design – Agree in principle, some reservations regarding public open space</p> <p>4.3 Representations</p>

4.4	<p>The application has been advertised in the newspaper and neighbours notified. Objections were received from 88 local residents (including a petition), raising issues which are detailed in the main report raising the following issues below (summarised). 1 'comment', that is neither supporting nor objecting, was also received from Belfast Hills Partnership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More development in already overdeveloped area • No public consultation carried out • Lack of open space around apartments • Potential for anti-social behaviour • Increase in already congested traffic, especially with proposed new primary school • Houses vacant in the area so no need • Impact on infrastructure and services • Risk of flooding • Lack of parking • Environmental impact • Loss of open space and potential area for children's play area • Loss of privacy and overlooking from apartments • Bungalows should be built • Hard surfacing therefore increased surface run off • No neighbour notification • Area needs green spaces and shops • Public transport inadequate • Impact on property values • Design is out of keeping with the established area • Noise pollution due to additional residents • Disruption from the build • Difficulty for people born in the area to secure school places nearby • Car and building insurance costs will increase • Impact on quality of life for existing residents • Roads safety • Unsure of who will be living there • Loss of light • Community views not taken into account (amended plans) <p>A number of representations simply stated that they objected to the proposal but did not outline reasons why.</p>
4.5	All relevant planning issues will be considered within the main assessment below.
4.6	A number of the issues raised are not planning considerations however and are therefore outside the remit of planning legislation and guidance. These include alleged impact on
4.7	property prices; current house vacancies in the area and car and building insurance costs.
4.8	The proposal development does not fall under the category of Major development and therefore the applicant is not under statutory duty to consult with the public prior to making any application. Neighbour notification and advertisement was carried out in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance.
5.0	Planning Assessment
5.1	The main issues relevant to consideration of the application are summarised below.

- Principle of housing in this location
- Housing density
- Affordable housing
- Housing mix
- Adaptable and accessible accommodation
- Design and Placemaking
- Impact on amenity
- Impact on built heritage
- Flood risk and drainage
- Waste-water infrastructure
- Climate change
- Access and transport
- Health impacts
- Environmental protection
- Natural heritage
- Trees and landscaping
- Waste management
- Section 76 planning agreement

5.2 **Development Plan Context**

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.

5.3 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.

5.4 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.

Operational Polices

5.5 The Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These have been listed at paragraph 3.1.

Proposals Maps

5.6 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 maps 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.

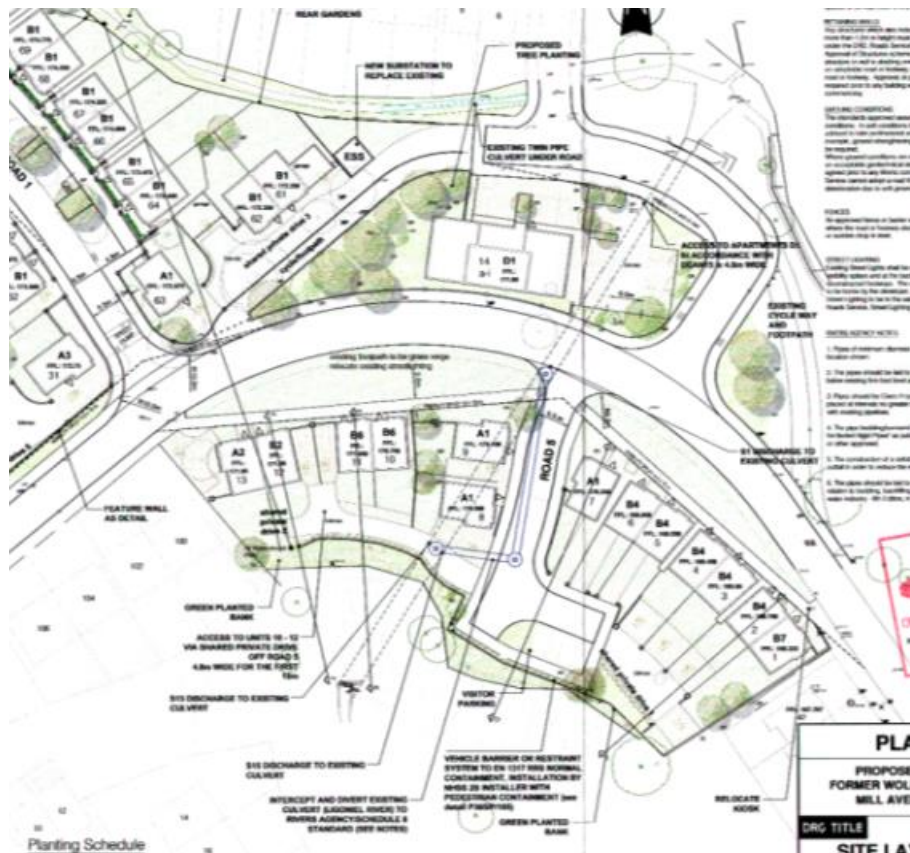
In the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP); and both version of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004 and v2024), the site is within the development limits of the city and is un-zoned “white land.

Principle of housing in this location

5.7

The site is located within the development limit in the various relevant Development Plans. Extant planning history on the site exists for residential development and the site is surrounded by residential properties. A Certificate of Lawful Development certified that development had lawfully commenced and that scheme therefore remains a tangible fallback position in planning terms.

The approved layout for the extant approval is shown below:



The site is a sustainable location for new housing. Mill Avenue, off Ligoniel Road, provides access to relevant local services and facilities as well as to a main route to the City Centre. An existing Metro Bus Stop is located adjacent to the site boundary as detailed within the Transport Assessment Form submitted. The Metro Service 11E & 11F provides a frequent and convenient link from the city centre and surrounding areas.

5.8

In respect of the above, the site is considered a suitable and sustainable location within the development limits and suitable in principle for housing. Suitable infrastructure is in place and no additional measures would be required.

5.9

The principle of residential development of the site is considered acceptable and in accordance with Policies HOU1 and HOU2 of the Plan Strategy, and SPPS.

Housing density

5.10

5.11	<p>Policy HOU4 seeks to promote appropriate housing densities to ensure effective use of land, a finite resource, in sustainable locations. The application site is located within Outer Belfast, with Policy HOU4 recommending a target density band of 25-125 dph in this area.</p> <p>With a site area of approximately 0.8 hectares, the proposed density equates to 25 dwellings per hectare (dph). This is within the recommended density for the Outer City Area. The proposal is less than the extant permission which this site area permitted the construction of 13 no. dwelling houses and a block of 9 no. apartments, therefore a density of 27.5 dph. Having regard to these considerations, the density is considered acceptable.</p>
	<p>Affordable housing</p>
5.12	<p>Policy HOU5 of the Plan Strategy requires housing schemes of 5 units or more, or sites of 0.1 hectares or greater, to deliver a minimum 20% affordable housing. The proposed scheme is for 100% social housing with a partner Housing Association in place. NIHE has confirmed it is supportive of the mono tenure scheme in line with Policy HOU5, SPG and the SPPS. It considers that there are exceptional circumstances that support a single tenure scheme, in that there is acute housing need in this area of North Belfast and lack of available housing sites.</p>
5.13	<p>The provision of affordable housing would be secured by way of a Section 76 Planning Agreement.</p> <p>The proposal accords with Policy HOU5.</p>
5.14	<p>Housing mix</p>
5.15	<p>Policy HOU6 requires that provision should be made for small homes across all tenures to meet future household requirements and that the exact mix of house types and sizes will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. The scheme proposes a range of units consisting of 8 no. semi-detached 2 storey dwellings, 1 no. detached 2 storey dwelling, 2 no. 3-bed apartments and 9 no. 2-bed apartments.</p>
5.16	<p>The proposed mix is considered to provide a satisfactory range of size and type and is targeted to meet social housing need. The proposed housing mix is considered acceptable having regard to Policy HOU6.</p>
	<p>Adaptable & accessible accommodation</p>
5.17	<p>Policy HOU7 requires that all new homes should be designed in a flexible way to ensure that housing is adaptable throughout all stages of life. Policy HOU7 sets six criteria (a.) to (f.) to be met in order to help deliver adaptable and accessible homes. The policy also requires that at least 10% of units in residential developments of 10 units or more to be wheelchair accessible and provides an additional nine criteria (g.) to (o.) which these units must meet. With the scheme proposing 20 no. units, 10% would equate to 2 accessible units, which the proposal provides at plots 5 and 6, two semi-detached dwellings.</p>
5.18	<p>'Lifetime homes' standards are a nationally recognised set of criteria to make new dwellings adaptable enough to accommodate a household's changing lifetime needs and enable them to be lived in and visited by a wide range of people. All units have been designed with flexibility in mind for various stages of life. Criteria (a) to (f) of Policy HOU7 has been met in that all parking spaces are on a firm hardstanding surface which is either level or gently sloping. All main entrances display overhead shelter and all living, dining and kitchen space, as well as a WC, are proposed at entrance level. There is clear outlook from the main living</p>

	spaces and an accessible bathroom is proposed on the same floor as the principle bedroom for each unit. Each wheelchair accessible unit is then designed to comply with criteria (g) to (o) of Policy HOU7 also.
	Design & placemaking
5.19	The proposal has been assessed against Policies SP5, DES1, and RD1 of the Plan Strategy, the SPPS and Creating Places. Policies SP5 and DES1 promote good placemaking, high quality design and the importance of proposals responding positively to local context addressing matters such as scale height, massing, proportions, rhythm, and materials avoiding any negative impact at street level. Policy DES1 states that planning permission will be granted for new development that is of a high quality, sustainable design that makes a positive contribution to placemaking and goes onto list 11 criteria, (a.) to (k.).
5.20	As proposed, the scheme consists of 20 no. dwelling units, including 8 no. semi-detached 2 storey dwellings, 1 no. detached 2 storey dwelling, 2 no. 3-bed apartments (2 storey building) and 9 no. 2-bed apartments (3 storey building) with associated car parking, landscaping and associated works.
5.21	The main apartment block consisting of 9no 2 bed apartments, to the north of the site, south of Wolfhill Manor is 3 storeys in height, with a hipped roof and finished in red brick. The front elevation and main entrance faces north, towards the Wolfhill Manor development. The rear elevation faces onto Mill Avenue with first and second floor apartments containing balconies. Proposed parking is to the eastern side of the building. Plans show soft landscaping and open space throughout the site which is discussed in more detail in paragraphs 5.28 – 5.33.
5.22	The proposed height of the building responds to the topography of the site with a slight decline towards Mill Avenue, and contextually, the height of the block is considered sympathetic in its wider context and would provide an appropriate addition to the streetscape.
5.23	The proposed semi-detached dwellings, single detached dwelling and block with 2 apartments are all sited on the southern side of the site and set back from the road. They all display front and rear gardens with incurtilage parking.
5.24	The orientation of fenestration and separation distances are acceptable and this is explored in more detail when assessing the impact on neighbouring amenity.
5.25	The proposed external materials include red brick and flat black tiles, and some dwellings with feature white render which are all acceptable for the site and surrounding area.
5.26	BCC Urban Design Officer initially raised concern in relation to the proposed layout in that there was a dominance of hard standing on the southern side of the site. Their comments referenced the extant approval layout in that incurtilage parking was preferable. Amendments were submitted to reflect that however this resulted in the removal of shared spaces. The private amenity spaces for each dwelling on the southern portion are well within that recommended and therefore on balance this is considered acceptable. Whilst the Urban Design response welcomes the amendments, it highlights that the amended layout has inadvertently created a pinch point when accessing plots 8 and 9 that detract from the quality of the residential environment. The amended layout is considered, on balance acceptable.
	It is considered that the scale, massing and design of the building are appropriate to the site and surrounding buildings and the proposal accords with RD1 and DES1 of the Plan Strategy.

	Impact on amenity
	<i>Open space and amenity space:</i>
5.27	Policy OS3 requires that all new development proposals make appropriate provision for open space, including hard and soft landscaped areas and outdoor amenity areas, to serve the needs of the development. The precise amount, location, type and design of such provision
5.28	will be negotiated with applicants taking account of the specific characteristics of the development, the site and its context.
5.29	The supporting information notes that the proposal is less than 25 units outlined in Policy OS3 and as such 10% open space requirement is to be assessed on its individual merits. The Urban Design Officer notes however that for a quality residential environment a normal expectation is at least 10% of the total site area and it should form an integral part of the development which is accessible, clearly defined and benefit from passive surveillance. Following the submission of amendments this has not been met, the overall provision falls below this requirement with open space abutting the road and adjacent to areas of vegetation, as well as surrounding the large area of hardstanding to the south. The site is however located adjacent to large swathes of open space which residents can readily access.
5.30	The Urban Design Officer noted the general planform of the dwellings as acceptable along with the provision for private amenity space. The use of private balconies on the upper floors of the apartment block was welcomed however no private amenity/defensible space and means of enclosure had been provided to ground floor apartments. Amendments were received showing a concrete path around the building with amenity shrub planting.
5.31	In addition, the apartments facing Mill Avenue now benefit from 900mm high metal railings to provide a means of enclosure for their private space. These railings have been provided along the boundary of this upper section of the site and continued to the rear. This along with 1.8m closed boarded timber fencing help to delineate between private and shared space and assist in ensuring the privacy and security of the residents.
5.32	The site plan provides for 126 sqm of private communal open space within a communal garden at the NE of the site, also serving 9 units (14 sqm per apartment). Creating Places, published in 2000, recommends that private communal open space should range from 10 sqm to around 30 sqm. The individual units all however benefit from private amenity to the rear ranging from 60-114 sqm on the south of the site. It is acknowledged the site declines in level here so not all of this will be usable however, the proposed amenity provision is considered generous.
5.33	It is considered the requirements of Policy OS3 are met.
5.34	<i>We just got an Impact on neighbouring amenity:</i> The Council's SPG 'Residential Design' states that suitable separation is required between properties to ensure all residents benefit from adequate daylight and sunlight, and to achieve sufficient outlook and privacy. It recommends that a minimum of 20m should be maintained between facing windows of habitable rooms and 10m between blank gable walls or non-habitable rooms.
5.33	In this instance, the point of the proposed apartments to the nearest existing neighbouring dwelling at Wolfhill Manor will achieve a minimum separation distance of approximately 26.5m. This distance is considered sufficient to prevent impact on neighbours and in line with the guidance.
5.34	

5.35	<p>The proposed separation distance between the gable wall of plot 1 and and No 42 Mill Avenue is approximately 5m at its closest point. Due to the orientation of the proposed dwelling however this is considered acceptable.</p>
5.36	<p>Due to the orientation, separation distances and fenestration there will be no impact on residential amenity due to overlooking. The proposal would not cause an unacceptable degree of overshadowing to neighbouring dwellings, unacceptable loss of outlook, overbearing or other harmful impacts on amenity.</p>
5.37	<p>In these regards, the proposal is considered to satisfy Policies DES1 and RD1, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
5.37	<p>Impact on built heritage</p>
5.38	<p>The site is located close proximity to the Wolfhill Mill complex, IHR 10309:002, (Wolfhill Flax Spinning Mill) and IHR 10309:003 (Wolfhill Mill). This complex represents some of the earlier industrial era mill sites in the Belfast area. Accordingly, an Archaeological Baseline Assessment was submitted and comments were invited from HED (Historic Monuments).</p>
5.39	<p>They responded with no objections to the proposal subject to conditions for the agreement and implementation of a developer-funded programme of archaeological works, which may require an Industrial Archaeology survey and a mitigation strategy focussing on the industrial archaeological remains of the site. This is to identify and record any industrial archaeological remains in advance of new construction, or to provide for their preservation in situ. Therefore, the proposal complies with Policy BH5 of the Plan Strategy.</p>
5.40	<p>Flood risk and drainage</p>
5.40	<p>DfI Rivers has reviewed the Drainage Assessment, correspondence from the Rivers Directorate Area Office dated 7th December 2024 which states they are satisfied with the proposed working strip for the culverts traversing the site; Schedule 6 consent from the Area Office in relation to constructing a retaining wall over the line of the culvert traversing the site; and Proposed Drainage Layout Plan, and accepting the applicant's logic and has no reason to disagree with the conclusions. Accordingly, it offers no objection to the proposal.</p>
5.41	<p>The proposal complies with Policy ENV4 and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
5.42	<p>Waste-water infrastructure</p>
5.42	<p>Policy SP1A requires that necessary infrastructure is in place to support new development. NI Water has no objection to the application on grounds of network drainage capacity concerns.</p>
5.42	<p>Climate change</p>
5.43	<p>Policy ENV2 states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to mitigate environmental change and reduce greenhouse gases by promoting sustainable patterns of development. Policy ENV3 states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to adapt to environmental change.</p>
5.43	<p>Policy ENV2 states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to mitigate environmental change and reduce greenhouse gases by promoting sustainable patterns of development. Policy ENV3 states that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to adapt to environmental change.</p>

5.44	<p>Water butts are to be fitted in all properties to make use of roof water run-off for external use in the garden areas. All units will however incorporate solar panels on the rooftops which will feed into the internal heating system of the property to reduce energy use and costs. All dwellings have south-facing rear gardens with the 3-storey apartments having south-facing balconies to maximise solar gain.</p>
5.45	<p>All units will include a mix of the following features to comply with the Energy Efficiency standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-performance insulation, LED lighting, and energy-saving appliances. • Low carbon energy and heating solutions have been considered as part of the overall design and planning of the proposed development, including the provision of photovoltaic panels (PV) along the south facing roof • Prioritising the use of sustainable materials during construction, focusing on those with low embodied energy and a minimal carbon footprint sourced locally where possible.
5.46	<p>The proposed development shall be resilient from flood risk with the Drainage Assessment detailing the sustainable drainage, which will adapt to climate change, by limiting run off during times of heavy rainfall to limit the discharge to the hydrological regime.</p> <p>The proposal is considered to accord with Policies ENV2 and ENV3.</p>
5.47	<p>Policy ENV5 states that all built development shall include, where appropriate, SuDS measures to manage surface water effectively on site, to reduce surface water run-off and to ensure flooding is not increased elsewhere. The application proposes SuDS features such as the provision of oversized pipes and hydro breaks to delay discharge; smart water butts, and some additional tree planting. These measures should be secured by condition. The proposals are considered to satisfy Policy ENV5.</p>
5.48	<p>Access and transport</p>
5.49	<p>The proposal is in an accessible location adjacent to a bus stop, with good access to public transport. Secure covered bike storage is proposed. The site is accessible and provides good opportunities for active travel, including walking and cycling, through excellent linkages with the City Centre and its shops, services and amenities. Policy TRAN 8 states that development proposals will be required to provide adequate provision for car parking and appropriate servicing arrangements. The proposal contains 37 parking spaces including 2 disabled spaces (i.e. more than 1 space per residential unit), which is acceptable).</p>
5.50	<p>Road safety and traffic are concerns raised by objectors. DfI Roads Service are the authoritative body to advise on road safety and traffic and they responded to consultation with no objection subject to conditions should approval be granted.</p> <p>The access to public roads would not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of road users in accordance with Policy TRAN 6.</p> <p>A Travel Plan has been submitted and found to be acceptable by DfI Roads; it will further promote alternatives to the private car. The Travel Plan includes the provision of Travel Cards for a period of three years and this will be secured via the Section 76 Planning Agreement.</p>
5.51	<p>The scale of development and transport implications of the proposal were assessed by DfI Roads and considered to be acceptable. The proposal is considered acceptable having</p>

	regard to Policies TRAN1, TRAN2, TRAN6, and TRAN 8, and relevant provisions of the SPPS
5.52	Health impacts
5.53	Policy SP3 requires new development to maximise opportunities to improve health and wellbeing. Policy HC1 seeks to ensure that all new development maximise opportunities to promote healthy and active lifestyles. New developments should be designed, constructed and managed in ways that improve health and promote healthy lifestyles. This will include supporting active travel options, improving accessibility to local service centres, reducing the use of private car travel, adequate provision of public open space, leisure and recreation facilities, high quality design and promoting balanced communities and sustainable neighbourhoods.
5.54	
5.55	The site is a sustainable location with good access to public transport. The proposed buildings are considered to be of a high-quality design with good quality hard and soft landscaping. This will provide a pleasant and attractive environment for prospective occupants of the building and people in housing need. The proposal would promote green travel. It is considered compliant with Policy HC1 and SP3.
	Environmental protection
	Policy ENV1 states that planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protects communities from materially harmful development. The proposed development has been assessed by Environmental Health in terms of contaminated land, air quality, lighting, odour and noise.
5.56	The contaminated land reports provided with the application conclude that remediation is required. Environmental Health therefore advises conditions relating to the submission of a Verification Report detailing the remediation measures. Additionally, should the developer discover any new contamination risks work shall cease immediately and a further Remediation Strategy submitted to the Council for consideration.
5.57	In relation to noise and air quality, Environmental Health had no concerns. The conditions advised by Environmental Health and DAERA Regulation Unit are recommended. The proposal is considered to accord with Policy ENV1, and relevant provisions of the SPPS.
	Natural heritage
5.58	DAERA Water Management Unit cited concerns over the potential impact on sewage loading to the Belfast waste-water treatment works. However, NI Water has confirmed that there is available capacity and as such there is no issue in this regard.
5.59	DAERA NED noted the application site is hydrologically connected to Belfast Lough Ramsar site / Special Protection Area (SPA) and Belfast Inner Lough Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) which are of international and national importance and are protected by the Habitats Regulations and the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002. There are watercourses outside of the site boundary along with mature trees.
5.60	The watercourses have been noted as being within 50m of the site. These watercourses are hydrologically connected to the designated sites. NED requested updated plans to show the distance between the watercourses and the proposed development, and highlighted that if a 10m buffer was not achievable and any works are to be carried out within 10m of the watercourses a Construction Method Statement (CMS) should be submitted.

	<p>In addition to this they requested an amended Landscape Plan to provide the details of the tree, shrub, and grass species to be planted on site. They recommended inclusion of native and/or pollinator-friendly species to help compensate for the loss of native species on site at present.</p>
5.61	<p>Following the submission of an Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP), and updated landscape drawing numbers PA-06 and 003. Upon assessment of the methodology and pollution prevention measures detailed within the oCEMP, NED are content with the mitigation proposed. NED notes that section 4.6 of the oCEMP states that in river channel works will be required and that further details on the methodology should be provided within a final CEMP (which shall be conditioned). NED agrees with this recommendation and advises that provided works comply with GPP5: Works and Maintenance in or near water, the proposal is unlikely to significantly impact NIPH or designated sites. Having assessed the updated Landscape Plan they welcome the native species planting to be provided on site.</p>
5.62	<p>A letter was received from Belfast Hills Partnership making comment stating they do not wish to object but highlight a number of concerns relating to impact on natural heritage. DAERA NED are the authoritative and advisory body on these matters and accordingly offer no objection to the proposal. Alongside all other technical information submitted a Biodiversity Checklist was submitted and forward to NED for review. Shared Environmental Services have been consulted in order to undertake a Habitats Regulation Assessment on behalf of the Council. Delegated authority is requested to resolve a final response. The proposal is considered compliant with Policy NH1 and the relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
5.63	<p>Trees and landscaping</p> <p>To help comply with Policy TRE1 and secure a net gain in tree cover within the site for future years, a proposed detailed landscaping has been submitted as part of the application. 11 x existing trees are to be retained.</p> <p>Proposed landscaping includes a native wildflower garden and a mix of acer, sorbus, prunus and betual trees to be planted. A total of 21 are proposed throughout the site which will contribute to site amenity value, biodiversity and species resilience within the site should the trees establish in a natural manner.</p> <p>The Council's Landscape team were consulted and welcomed the proposal. They requested the submission of a Landscape Management Plan be conditioned, including design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscape works. The proposal is considered compliant with TRE1 of the Plan Strategy.</p> <p>Waste management</p>
5.64	
5.65	<p>In accordance with Policy RD1, new residential development should be provided with adequate space for daily segregation of recyclable materials and waste before it is moved to the communal waste storage area. Bin storage is shown to the side of the main apartment building and rear of all others. The bin storage allocation should be in line with the Local Government Waste Storage Guide for NI 2010 and BS 5905:(2005).</p>
5.66	<p>The application is supported by a Waste Management Plan (WMP) which outlines the operational waste management measures, and the council has consulted with BCC's City & Neighbour Services Department, but at the time of writing comments are outstanding.</p>
5.67	<p>Section 76 Planning Agreement</p>

<p>5.68</p> <p>5.69</p> <p>5.70</p> <p>5.71</p>	<p>A draft Section 76 planning agreement to secure the following planning obligations has been agreed in principle with Legal Services. These are considered necessary to make the proposed development acceptable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social rented housing – all 100% of the residential units constructed at the property shall be occupied as Social Housing Units; • Green travel measure – secure implementation of Travel Plan and green travel measures (travel co-ordinator and travel cards). <p>The Section 76 planning agreement has been agreed in principle.</p>
<p>6.0</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p>	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>Having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.</p> <p>Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, and deal with any other matters that arise including the further consultation responses from BCC Waste Management and Shared Environmental Services, provided that they are not substantive.</p>
<p>7.0</p>	<p>Draft Conditions</p> <p>Time:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

Climate change:

2. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied unless the climate change measures described in the application have been implemented. The climate change measures shall be retained in accordance with the approved details at all times.

Reason: To mitigate and/or adapt to climate change.

3. The development here permitted shall not be occupied unless the SuDS measures [described in the application] have been implemented. The SuDS measures shall thereafter be retained and maintained.

Reason: In the interests of minimising impact on climate change.

Trees and landscaping:

4. All landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the completion of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council. Any trees or plants indicated on the approved scheme which, within a period of five years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged, diseased or dying shall be replaced during the next planting season with other trees or plants of a location, species and size, details of which shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

5. All trees and planting within the site shall be retained unless shown on the approved drawings as being removed. Any retained trees or planting indicated on the approved drawings which become seriously damaged, diseased, or dying, shall be replaced during the next planting season (October to March inclusive) with other trees or plants of a location, species and size to be first approved in writing by the Council.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

6. Prior to any work commencing, protective barriers (fencing) and ground protection shall be erected and installed as specified in British Standard 5837: 2012 (section 6.2) on any trees / hedging to be retained within the site and must be in place before any materials or machinery are brought onto site for demolition, development, or soil stripping. The protective fencing must remain in place until all work is completed, and all associated materials and equipment are removed from site.

Reason: To ensure the protection of, and to ensure the continuity of amenity afforded by any existing trees to be retained within the site and on adjacent lands.

7. No development (other than site clearance, site preparation, demolition and the formation of foundations and trenches) shall commence unless a Landscape Management Plan has been submitted to and agreed in writing with the Council. The Management Plan shall include all design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscape works.

Thereafter, the Landscape Management Plan shall be implemented and permanently adhered to in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the protection of, and to ensure the continuity of amenity afforded by any existing trees to be retained within the site and on adjacent lands.

8. No storage of materials, parking of vehicles or plant, temporary buildings, sheds, offices or fires within the Root Protection Area of trees within the site and adjacent lands during the construction period.

Reason: To safeguard trees of amenity and biodiversity value.

Contamination

9. Prior to the occupation of the proposed development, a Verification Report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. This report must demonstrate that the remediation measures outlined in the RSK Environment Ltd report titled 'BW Homes and Construction Limited, Preliminary Risk Assessment and updated Generic Quantitative Risk Assessment, Mill Avenue, Ligoniel, Belfast, 604704-R3(01), LA04/2024/1195/F, May 2025' have been implemented.

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 residential with plant uptake. It must demonstrate that the identified human health contaminant linkages are effectively broken.

The Verification Report shall be in accordance with current Environment Agency and CIRIA guidance C733 Asbestos in Soil and Made Ground: A Guide to Understanding and Managing Risks, and British Standards. In particular, the Verification Report must demonstrate that:

- a) The final site layout is as per Figures 3 and 4 of the submitted report 604704-R3 (01), which outlines the areas of capping and hardstanding.
- b) excavations to a proven depth of 600mm bgl in communal areas and 800mm bgl in private gardens
- c) a minimum 600mm capping system has been emplaced in all communal landscaped areas and 800mm in residential gardens, formed from material that is demonstrably suitable for use (residential with plant uptake) at a sample rate of 1 per 100m³ of imported soil.
- d) The placement of a membrane barrier in all areas of capping and excavation. The selected membrane is water permeable, rot-proof and chemically resistant and has a high tensile strength, applied across the total surface and extend beyond the boundary and laid in parallel layers either suitably secured together or overlapped by at least 20 cm.

Reason: To demonstrate that the required remedial measures have been incorporated into the development, in the interests of human health

10. 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.

11. 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.

Reason: To ensure that any contamination within the site is appropriately dealt with, in the interests of human health.

12. After completing all required monitoring and remediation works, and prior to occupation of the development, a Verification Report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. This report must demonstrate that the remediation measures outlined in the Remediation Strategy/GQRA Report have been implemented.

- The Verification Report shall demonstrate the successful completion of remediation works and that the site is now fit for end-use. It must demonstrate that the identified human health contaminant linkages are effectively broken. The Verification Report shall be prepared in accordance with up-to-date Environment Agency, British Standards and CIRIA industry guidance. In particular, the Verification Report must:
- Include all identified potential source-pathway-receptor contaminant linkages and the remedial measures required to break them;
- Contaminating activity removal/treatment (if required) e.g. all fuel storage tanks, and associated infrastructure have been fully decommissioned and removed from the site in line with Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPP2) and the Pollution Prevention Guidance (PPG27) (or any standard that reproduces or replaces this standard).
- Soil source removal or treatment (if required). All remaining soils (or base and side-walls of all excavations) to be proven suitable for the proposed end-use.
- Pathway interruption methods (if required).
- Gas protection measures (if required) as per BS 8485:2015+A1:2019 (or any standard that reproduces or replaces this standard), which must include (level of detail required may depend on Characteristic Situation).
- Gas protection measures must be verified in line with the requirements of CIRIA C735 (or any standard that reproduces or replaces this standard). VOC vapour protection measures shall be installed and verified in accordance with the requirements of CIRIA C748 (or any standard that reproduces or replaces this standard).

Reason: To demonstrate that the required remedial measures have been incorporated into the development, in the interests of human health.

Natural heritage

13. No development shall commence on site (including demolition, site clearance and site preparation) unless a Final Environmental Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The Final Environmental Construction Management Plan shall include measures to control noise, dust, vibration and other nuisance during the demolition/construction phase. The CEMP shall contain all the appropriate environmental mitigation as detailed in the DAERA NED response dated 01/05/25 and oCEMP by O Sullivan Macfarlane Environmental Consulting dated 2nd December 2024.

No development (including demolition, site clearance and site preparation) shall be carried out unless in accordance with the approved Final Environmental Construction Management Plan.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the area. Approval is required upfront because construction works have the potential to harm the amenities of the area.

Transport:

14. The vehicular accesses, including visibility splays and any forward sight distance, shall be provided in accordance with Private Streets Determination drawing No.007 Rev.A uploaded to the Planning Portal 16th February 2026, prior to the commencement of any other works or other development hereby permitted

Reason: To ensure there is a satisfactory means of access in the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.

15. The area within the visibility splays and any forward sight line shall be cleared to provide a level surface no higher than 250mm above the level of the adjoining carriageway before the development hereby permitted is commenced and such splays shall be retained and kept clear thereafter.

Reason: To ensure there is a satisfactory means of access in the interests of road safety and convenience of road users.

16. Any existing street furniture or landscaping within the visibility splays as conditioned above shall, after obtaining permission from the appropriate authority, be removed, relocated or adjusted at the applicant's expense.

Reason: To ensure there is a satisfactory means of access in the interests of road safety and convenience of road users.

17. The Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980 as amended by the Private Streets (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1992. The Department hereby determines that the width, position and arrangement of the streets, and the land to be regarded as being comprised in the streets, shall be as indicated on drawing No.007 Rev.A bearing the Department for Infrastructure Determination date stamp 25th March 2026.

Reason: To ensure there is a safe and convenient road system to comply with the provisions of the Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980.

18. No dwelling shall be occupied until that part of the service road which provides access to it has been constructed to base course. The final wearing course shall be applied on the completion of each phase of the development.

Reason: To ensure the orderly development of the site and the road works necessary to provide satisfactory access to each dwelling.

19. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until hard surfaced areas have been constructed in accordance with Private Streets Determination drawing No.007 Rev.A uploaded to the Planning Portal 16th February 2026 to provide for parking within the site. No part of these hard surfaced areas shall be used for any purpose at any time other than for the parking and movement of vehicles in connection with the approved development.

Reason: To ensure adequate provision has been made for parking within the site.

20. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until sheltered cycle parking facilities have been provided in accordance with Private Streets Determination drawing No.007 Rev.A uploaded to the Planning Portal 16th February 2026.

Reason: To promote the use of alternative modes of transport in accordance with sustainable transportation principles.

21. The development hereby permitted shall operate in accordance with the Residential Travel Plan uploaded to the Planning Portal 16th February 2026.

Reason: To promote the use of alternative modes of transport in accordance with sustainable transportation principles.

22. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until any retaining structure requiring Technical Approval, as specified in the Roads (NI) Order 1993, has been approved and constructed in accordance with CG300 Technical Approval of Highways Structures: Volume 1; Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

Reason: To ensure that the structure is designed and constructed in accordance with CG300 Technical Approval of Highways Structures: Volume 1; Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

Archaeology

23. No site works of any nature or development shall take place until a programme of archaeological work (POW) has been prepared by a qualified archaeologist, submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by Belfast City Council in consultation with Historic Environment Division, Department for Communities. The POW shall provide for:

- The identification and evaluation of archaeological remains within the site;
- Mitigation of the impacts of development through licensed excavation recording or by preservation of remains in-situ;
- Post-excavation analysis sufficient to prepare an archaeological report, to publication standard if necessary; and
- Preparation of the digital, documentary and material archive for deposition. Historic Environment Division
Causeway Exchange

1-7 Bedford Street
Town Parks
BELFAST BT2 7EG
Email: HEDPlanning.Consultation@communities-ni.gov.uk
Planning ref: xxx
Date of response: xxx

Reason: to ensure that archaeological remains within the application site are properly identified and protected or appropriately recorded.

24. No site works of any nature, or development shall take place other than in accordance with the programme of archaeological work approved under condition 23

Reason: to ensure that archaeological remains within the application site are properly identified and protected or appropriately recorded.

25. A programme of post-excavation analysis, preparation of an archaeological report, dissemination of results and preparation of the excavation archive shall be undertaken in accordance with the programme of archaeological work approved under condition 23.

These measures shall be implemented and a final archaeological report shall be submitted to Belfast City Council within 12 months of the completion of archaeological site works, or as otherwise agreed in writing with Belfast City Council.

Reason: To ensure that the results of archaeological works are appropriately analysed and disseminated and the excavation archive is prepared to a suitable standard for deposition.

Development Management Officer Report

Committee Application

Summary	
Committee Meeting Date: 16 th June 2026	
Application Ref: LA04/2026/0066/F	
Proposal: Erection of 2.4m high perimeter fencing around 1 No. existing soccer pitch and internal 1.2m high spectator rail. Additional tree planting (Amended proposal)	Location: Existing soccer pitches at Wedderburn Park Playing Fields (approx. 20m east of Orpen Ave. and 10m west of Wedderburn Gdns), Belfast, BT10 0BT
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	
Applicant Name and Address: Michael Small Cecil Ward Building 4-10 Linenhall Street Belfast BT2 8BP	Agent Name and Address: Michael Small Cecil Ward Building 4-10 Linenhall Street Belfast BT2 8BP
Recommendation Approval	
Date Valid: 21/01/2026	
Target Date: 06/05/2026	
Contact Officer: Ciara Reville, Principal Planner (Development Management)	
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a 2.4m high fence around 1 No. existing soccer pitch and an internal 1.2m high spectator rail. There will be 2no. trees removed and 7no. trees will be planted.</p> <p>It is an amended scheme from the initial proposal for a 2.4m high fence around 2 No. existing soccer pitches, 6m high ballstop fencing behind each goal unit and fencing, including pedestrian and vehicular access gates.</p> <p>The site is located within Wedderburn Park Playing Fields, accessible via Orpen Park and Wedderburn Gardens. The playing fields are a Council operated site with two grassed soccer pitches, within a larger area of open space. The wider Wedderburn Park includes a large area of open space, bowling pavilion and clubhouse, gravel tennis courts, playground and car parking. A car park is adjacent to the pitch in this proposal.</p> <p>Wedderburn Park is surrounded by residential development. There are dwellings to the north of the proposal site, at Orpen Avenue and Orpen Drive. A fence and hedge marks the boundary between the pitch and these dwellings. Dwellings at Rathmore Gardens and Wedderburn Gardens are</p>	

adjacent to the southern boundary of the wider Park. A line of trees marks the southern boundary of the Park.

The site is within the Hunterhouse/Wedderburn/Rathmore Local Landscape Policy Area and is situated within the development limit as designated under both versions of dBMAP (2004 & 2014).

The Key Issues relevant to consideration of the application are:

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

Belfast City Council Trees requested surveys in relation to the mature trees adjacent to the southern pitch. However, the proposal has been amended to omit fencing around this pitch. These trees will be unaffected. There were no objections from other Consultees.

There have been 262 representations received in respect of this application – 89 objections and 173 letters of support.

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.

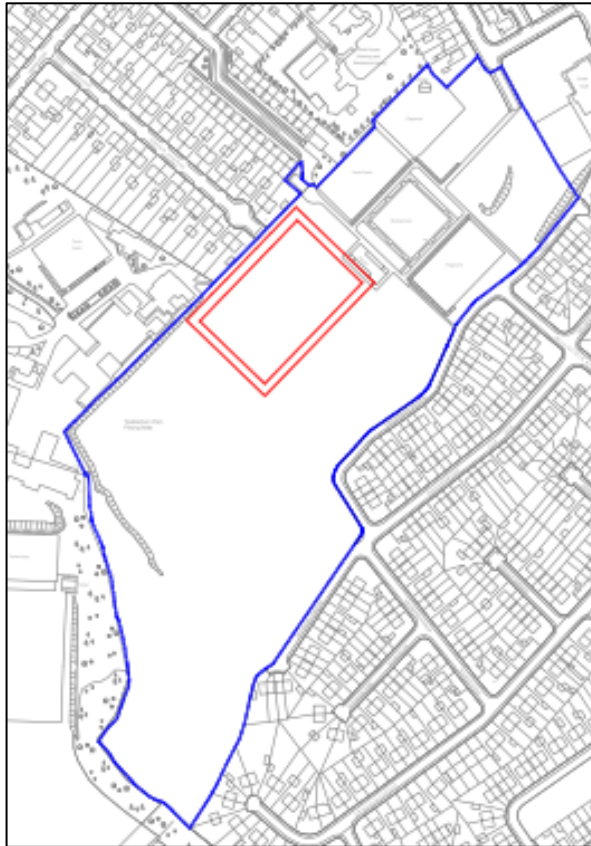
Case Officer Report

1.0

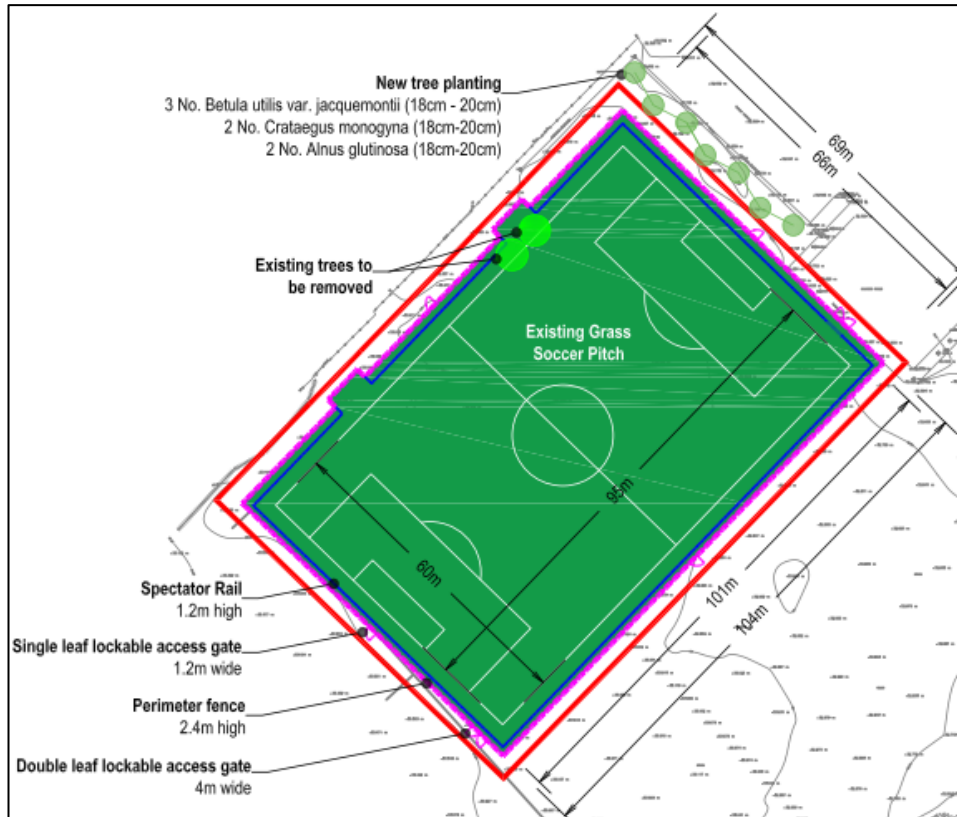
Drawings

1.1

Site Location



Block Plan



Proposed Elevations	
Proposed Perimeter Fence - Section / Elevation	
1:20	
Proposed Spectator Rail - Section / Elevation	
1:10	
2.0	Characteristics of the Site and Area
2.1	The site is located within Wedderburn Park Playing Fields, off Finaghy Road South. The playing fields are a Council operated site with two grassed soccer pitches, within a larger area of open space. The wider Wedderburn Park includes a large area of open space, bowling pavilion and clubhouse, gravel tennis courts, playground and car parking. A car park is adjacent to the pitch in this proposal.
2.2	The site is approximately 0.8 Hectares (Ha). The wider Park site is 7.6 Hectares (Ha) and relatively flat. The area of the pitch site represents approx. 10.5% of the overall park.
2.3	Wedderburn Park is surrounded by residential development. A fence and hedge marks the boundary between the pitch and dwellings to the north. Dwellings at Rathmore Gardens and Wedderburn Gardens are adjacent to the southern boundary of the wider park. A line of trees marks the southern boundary of the park.
2.4	In dBMAP 2015 and v2004, the site is designated as Local Landscape Policy Area. The site is designated a Landscape Wedge in Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) (BUAP).
3.0	Description of Proposal
3.1	The planning application is seeking permission for the erection of a 2.4m high perimeter fencing around 1 No. existing soccer pitch and internal 1.2m high spectator rail. Additional tree planting (Amended proposal).

4.0	Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations
4.1	Development Plan – Plan Strategy Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035
4.2	Policies in the Plan Strategy relevant to the application include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy GB1 - Green and Blue Infrastructure network. - Policy HC1 – Promoting Healthy Communities - Policy CI1 – Community Infrastructure - Policy TRE1 – Trees - Policy LC1 – Landscape - Policy LC1C – Local Landscape Policy Areas - Policy LC1A – AONBs - Policy LC1D – Landscape wedges - 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) Edition 2
4.5	Relevant Planning History Z/2008/0644/F - Replacement fencing and gates at Orpen Park and Orpen Drive. Address: Wedderburn Playing Fields adjacent to 39 Orpen Park, Ballyfinaghy, Finaghy, BT10 0BN Decision Approval Date: 11/08/2008. Z/2007/0301/F- Alterations to vacant garage/machinery store to provide disabled staff shower, changing and kitchen facilities and a smaller machinery store. Address: Wedderburn Park, Adj 53 Orpen Drive, Belfast, BT10 0BT. Decision Approval Date: 22/05/2007.
5.0	Consultations and Representations
5.1	Statutory Consultations DFI Roads – No objection.
5.2	Northern Ireland Environment Agency (Natural Environment Division) – Requested that the NI Biodiversity Checklist is completed, and if the Planner considers that surveys are to be carried out, the applicant should be referred to the relevant up to date survey specifications. From the checklist, Planning has determined that Designated Sites, Priority Habitats, and Protected and Priority Species will not be affected by the proposal and no surveys are to be carried out. NIEA NED were not reconsulted.
5.3	Non-Statutory Consultations BCC Trees – Requested surveys of the existing line of mature trees on the southern boundary of the park, details of construction measures, a Landscape Plan and a Tree Protection Plan. However, the proposed scheme has been reduced. The line of mature trees will be unaffected. Just 2 no. semi-mature trees are to be removed to facilitate the fence under the amended proposals. However, 7 no. trees will be planted, resulting in a net gain of trees under this proposal.

	<p>Representations</p> <p>5.4 The application has been advertised in the newspaper and neighbours notified. A total of 262 representations were received, 89 of which were objections. The following issues were raised (summarised):</p> <p>5.5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on character of the area / visual impact <p>It is considered that the proposed fences would have a negligible visual impact on the locality. Public views of the fences would be screened by existing planting and development. New trees are proposed to the east which will aid integration.</p> <p>5.6 The structures are of a scale and character that would be reasonably expected at a sports pitch. The proposed scale, form, massing, design and materials are considered acceptable and will not adversely impact on local character. On balance, the proposal would not result in adverse impact on the character of the area.</p> <p>5.7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on public access and community use <p>The area of the pitch site to be fenced off represents approx. 10.5% of the overall park. An adequate provision of recreational and open space remains in the park that is accessible to the public, and can be used by the community.</p> <p>5.8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss or reduction of open space <p>The proposal does not result in a loss of open space. The proposal seeks to enhance the existing recreational use in terms of managing the pitch. The proposal retains the use as existing open space and supports the continued use as a pitch as per Policy OS1. The principle of use is therefore acceptable.</p> <p>5.9 Fencing off the pitch will not negatively impact the availability of public open space to a great degree – approx. 89.5% of publicly accessible open space remains.</p> <p>5.10 Policy OS5 relating to intensive sports facilities states that planning permission will be granted for the provision of new and extended intensive sports facilities where it is located within settlement limits, is accessible and there are no unacceptable impacts on the amenity of people living near-by.</p> <p>5.11 The proposal complies with this policy, it is located within an accessible location within a settlement and will not impact on the amenity of near-by residents as for the reasons previously stated.</p> <p>5.12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on traffic and parking <p>The proposal was assessed by DFI Roads and considered to be acceptable. There are 2no. existing car parks accessible to the east of the site. There are approx. 64 existing spaces, 4 of which are for disabled parking. It is also noted the proposal does not change the nature of the existing use as a football pitch.</p> <p>5.13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise <p>Policy OS5 (intensive sports facilities) requires proposals to ensure there is no unacceptable impact on the amenities of people living nearby by reason of the siting, scale, extent, frequency or timing of the sporting activities proposed, including any noise or light pollution likely to be generated.</p> <p>5.14 There should be no unacceptable impact on the amenities of people living nearby by reason of the siting, scale and extent of the proposal. The pitch is already in use. The proposal will formalise the current situation.</p>
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5.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on wildlife <p>An NI Biodiversity Checklist was completed in respect of the proposed development, concluding that Designated Sites, Priority Habitats, and Protected and Priority Species will not be affected by the proposal and no surveys are to be carried out. Following review, NIEA NED were not reconsulted.</p>
5.16	<p>Furthermore, a number of representations stated they were opposed to the proposal but did not outline specific reasons why.</p>
6.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT
6.1	Development Plan Context
6.2	<p>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.</p>
6.3	<p>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.</p>
6.4	<p>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.</p>
6.5	<p>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.).</p>
6.6	<p>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.</p>
6.7	<p>Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 - The site is designated as a Landscape Wedge in the BUAP.</p>
6.8	<p>Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004) - The site is located within the settlement development limit and is zoned as Local Landscape Policy Area.</p>
6.9	<p>Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) - The site is located within the settlement development limit and is zoned as Local Landscape Policy Area.</p>
6.10	<p>Key Issues 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 • Landscape Designations • Other considerations
6.11	<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>
6.12	<p>Impact on Amenity</p> <p>The proposed ball stop fencing is around the perimeter of the northernmost soccer pitch. The closest residential dwellings are at Orpen Avenue, 25m to the north. There is intervening planting at the boundary of the park here. The residential dwellings at Wedderburn Gardens are 80m to the south, accessible by crossing the lower grassed pitch.</p>
6.13	<p>This pitch with the proposed fencing is adjacent to a carpark to the east. There is also a larger carpark within Wedderburn Park 80m further east, accessible by foot.</p>
6.14	<p>The proposed structures are 2.4m (boundary fence) and 1.2m (spectator railing) in height. It is considered that the separation distances to existing residential properties assist in mitigating noise impacts. Officers consider that noise levels will not increase as there is already a football pitch in situ.</p>
6.15	<p>There are no concerns regarding light, shadow, privacy etc.</p>
6.16	<p>In summary, the proposal would not have an adverse impact on amenity of the existing residents in the area.</p>
6.17	<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 fencing is considered appropriate for the operation of this pitch. The design of these structures will result in limited visual impacts. Public views of the ball stop fencing would largely be limited. Near distance views from Orpen Avenue will be limited due to boundary planting. Long range views from Wedderburn Gardens to the south, 80m away, will be limited due to a line of trees at the southernmost boundary of the Park. It is also considered that the existing trees around the Park will filter views of the fencing and on balance, the proposal would not result in detrimental visual impacts.</p>
6.18	<p>Landscape Designations</p> <p>The site is within the Hunterhouse/Wedderburn/Rathmore Local Landscape Policy Area and is situated within the development limit as designated under both versions of dBMAP (2004 & 2014). The site is located to the north of the designated Lagan Valley Regional Park and the Lagan Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (BMAP v2004 & 2014). It is not within or adjacent to a designated Landscape Wedge in either version of BMAP.</p>
6.19	<p>Policy LC1 of the Plan Strategy (Landscape) states that new development should seek to protect and, where appropriate, restore or improve the quality and amenity of the landscape. The policy goes on to say the council will adopt the precautionary approach in assessing development proposals in any designated landscape and lists eight policy considerations/requirements. The proposed fence is considered to not adversely impact</p>

<p>6.20</p> <p>6.21</p> <p>6.22</p> <p>6.23</p>	<p>on landscape character and visual amenity of the area due to its small scale, particularly considered within the wider Park context. New trees will be planted and there will be no adverse impact on natural heritage and biodiversity, due to the scale of the proposal. The 173 letters of support clearly show that the proposed fence (which will formalise an existing pitch), will bring substantial community benefits that outweigh any potential landscape impacts. For these reasons, the proposal complies with Policy LC1 of the Plan Strategy.</p> <p>Policy LC1C of the Plan Strategy (LLPAs) states that development proposals that have a significant adverse impact on the amenity, character, environmental quality or natural, built & cultural heritage features (including their settings and views) of LLPAs will not be supported by the LDP. The small scale of the proposed fence around 1 pitch, with existing and proposed screening from hedges and trees, will not have an impact of the features listed above.</p> <p>The proposal will not have an adverse impact on the character, quality and natural & built heritage value of the Lagan Valley AONB and will integrate with this sensitive landscape, for the reasons stated in para. 6.19 & 6.20. The proposal complies with Policy LC1A of the Plan Strategy (AONBs).</p> <p>Policy LC1D of the Plan Strategy (Landscape wedges) does not apply as the proposal is not within the Colin Glen Urban Landscape Wedge.</p> <p>Other Considerations</p> <p>The proposal necessitates the removal of 2 no. trees, however 7 no. additional trees are proposed to be planted. The proposal would result in a net gain in tree numbers, therefore is compliant with policy TRE1.</p>
<p>8.0</p>	<p>Recommendation</p>
<p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p>	<p>Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.</p> <p>Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that they are not substantive.</p>
<p>DRAFT CONDITIONS:</p> <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>	

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Planning Committee Development Management Report

Summary	
Application ID: Full: LA04/2026/0659/F & LBC: LA04/2026/0505/LBC	Committee Date: 16 th June 2026
Proposal: Full: Fenestration changes to include insertion of new windows at first floor level on north facing elevation and creation of new access door and new windows at ground floor level on north elevation. LBC: Fenestration changes to include insertion of new windows at first floor level on north facing elevation, creation of new access door and new windows at ground floor level on north elevation and internal alterations.	Location: 2 Royal Avenue, Belfast, BT1 1DA
Applicant Name and Address: Siobhan Daly Belfast City Council 9-21 Adelaide Street Belfast BT2 8DJ	Agent Name and Address: Duncan Jamieson Taggarts 23 Bedford Street Belfast BT2 7EJ
Referral Route: The application is made on lands to which the Council has an estate (as per the Scheme of Delegation paragraph 3.8.5 (d))	
Recommendation: Approval subject to condition.	
Date Valid: Full: 15/04/2026, LBC: 15/04/2026	
Target Date: 29 th July 2026	
Contact Officer: Ciara Reville, Principal Planning Officer (Development Management)	
Summary of Issues: These applications seek planning permission and Listed Building Consent for the insertion of new windows at first floor level, creation of new access door and new windows at ground floor level and internal alterations and reconfiguration to accommodate a new internal layout. The site is located at 2 Royal Avenue, Belfast, BT1 1DA. It is a Grade B+ listed building (Historic Buildings Reference: HB26/50/106) which is situated in the City Centre Conservation Area. The property currently operates as a mixed-use community,	

recreational, cultural, retail and café space. The wider area comprises mixed use commercial, retail, banks, offices and restaurant uses.

The key issues relevant to consideration of the application are:

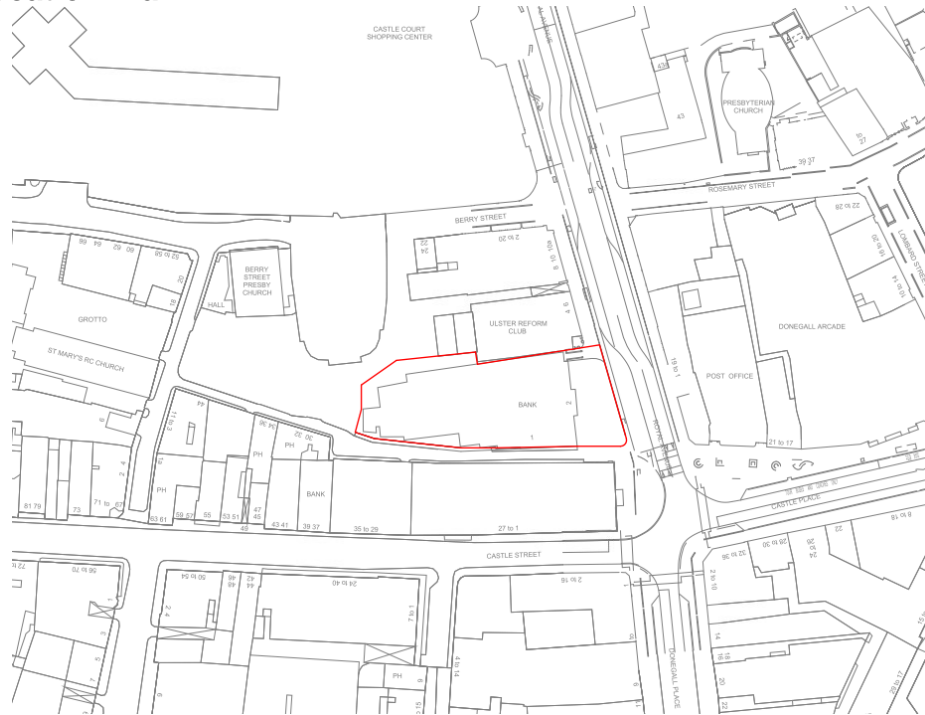
- Scale, massing & design
- Impact on amenity
- Impact on Listed Building
- Impact on conservation area
- Other considerations

Recommendation

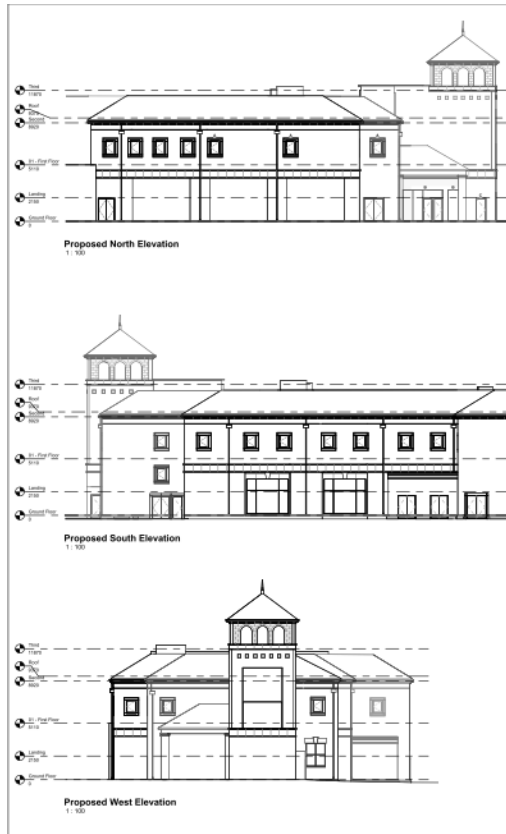
Having regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies, and other material considerations, it is considered that the proposed full planning application and listed building consent should be approved. Delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control is sought to finalise conditions, and deal with any other issues that arise, provided the issues are not substantive.

Main Report

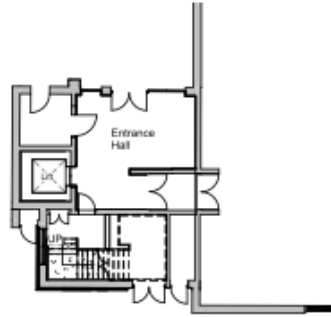
Site Location Plan:



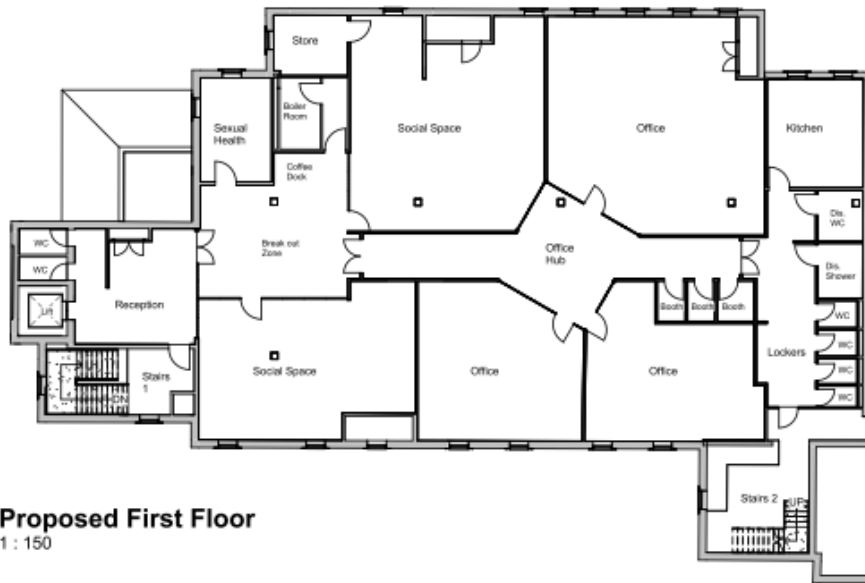
Proposed Elevations:



Proposed Floor Plans:



Proposed Ground Floor
1 : 150



Proposed First Floor
1 : 150

1.0 Characteristics of the site and area

1.1 The site is a Grade B+ Listed Building dating from 1864-69 and originally built for the Provincial Bank (Historic Buildings Reference HB26/50/106). The building is designed in an ornamented style with a painted sandstone façade. The building has a central bay that is set forward of the main body and contains arches, pillars and detailed mouldings. The building is set back from the established building line. It is also located in the City Centre Conservation Area, Primary Retail Core and Primary Retail Frontage.

1.2 The property currently operates as a mixed-use community, recreational cultural, retail and café space. The wider area comprises mixed use commercial, retail, banks, offices and restaurant uses.

2.0 PLANNING HISTORY

2.1 **Planning Reference:** LA04/2023/4101/F

	<p>Proposal: Change of use of the ground floor from A1 Retail to mixed-use community recreational and cultural space for multi-disciplinary uses, including small scale retail and café. Also change of use of the first floor from office use to a mix of office, community, recreational and cultural space to facilitate multi-disciplinary uses. Decision: Permission Granted 01/12/2023</p> <p>Planning Reference: LA04/2023/3787/LBC Proposal: Proposed demolition of lean-to external store. Decision: Permission Granted 06/09/2023</p> <p>Planning Reference: LA04/2022/2019/LBC Proposal: Proposed alterations to a listed building including provision of new structural opening with pedestrian entrance doors, roller shutters, improved boundary treatments and minor internal renovations. Decision: Permission Granted 08/03/2023</p> <p>Planning Reference: LA04/2022/2018/F Proposal: Proposed alterations to a listed building including provision of new structural opening with pedestrian entrance doors, roller shutters, improved boundary treatments and minor internal renovations. Decision: Permission Granted 08/03/2023</p> <p>Planning Reference: LA04/2021/2580/F Proposal: Temporary (2 years) change of use of the ground floor at the former Tesco Metro store on Royal Avenue Belfast from use class A1 to a community, recreational and cultural space to facilitate multi-disciplinary uses under use classes D1 (community and cultural uses) and D2 (assembly and leisure). Decision: Permission Granted 04/01/2022.</p>
<p>3.0</p> <p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p>	<p>PLANNING POLICY</p> <p>Development Plan – Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035</p> <p><i>Strategic Policies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy SP2 – Sustainable development • Policy SP3 – Improving health and wellbeing • Policy SP5 – Positive placemaking <p><i>Operational Policies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy BH1 – Listed buildings • Policy BH2 – Conservation areas • Policy DES1 – Principles of urban design • Policy RD2 – Residential extensions and alterations (<i>Policy BH2 Specifically references RD2</i>). <p>Supplementary Planning Guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Centre Conservation Area Design Guide <p>Development Plan – zoning, designations and proposals maps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast Urban Area Plan (2001) BUAP

3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2004) • Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014) <p>Regional Planning Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) • Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)
4.0	<p>CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS</p> <p><u>Consultations</u></p> <p>4.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DfC Historic Environment Division (HED) – No objection • DfI Roads – No objection • BCC Conservation advice – No objection <p><u>Representations</u></p> <p>4.2</p> <p>The Full application was advertised in the local press on 11/04/2026 and neighbour notified 21/04/2026. The LBC was advertised in the local press on 24/04/2026.</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>No representations were received on the application.</p>
5.0	<p>PLANNING ASSESSMENT</p> <p><u>Main issues</u></p> <p>5.1</p> <p>The main issues relevant to consideration of the application are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scale, massing & design - Impact on amenity - Impact on Listed Building - Impact on conservation area - Other considerations <p><u>Development Plan Context</u></p> <p>5.2</p> <p>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.</p> <p>5.3</p> <p>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.</p> <p>5.4</p> <p>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</p>

	<p>remain part of the statutory local development plan until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.</p>
	<p><u>Operational Polices</u></p>
5.5	<p>The Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These are listed at paragraph 3.1.</p>
	<p><u>Proposals Maps</u></p>
5.6	<p>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 (BUAP), both versions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (v2004 and v2014) (dBMAP) and other relevant area plans. The weight to be afforded to these proposals maps is a matter for the decision maker. It is considered that significant weight should be given to the proposals map in dBMAP 2015 (v2014) given its advanced stage in the development process, save for retail policies that relate to Sprucefield which remain contentious.</p>
5.7	<p>The application site falls within the City Centre Conservation Area, Primary Retail Core and Primary Retail Frontage.</p>
6.0	<p><u>Assessment</u></p>
	<p><u>Scale, massing and design</u></p>
6.1	<p>Policy DES1 states that planning permission will be granted for new development that is of a high-quality sustainable design that makes a positive contribution to placemaking by responding positively to local context and character and urban form that address matters such as height, scale massing, proportion and materials.</p>
6.2	<p>The windows proposed would take the same form as existing windows on the building at first floor level and would ensure a level of visual continuity to the building. The existing windows are aluminium powder coated casement style with raised profile cast stone surround, and the proposed windows would be of same material finish. The doors and windows to ground floor level, open into a service yard area and the proposed amended openings are consistent in height and scale with existing door openings to the building.</p>
6.3	<p>The proposal is considered to comply with Policies DES1 (design) and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
	<p><u>Impact on amenity</u></p>
6.4	<p>Policy DES1 states that planning permission will be granted for new development that is of high-quality, sustainable design that makes a positive contribution to placemaking by ensuring no undue effect on the amenity of neighbouring properties or public spaces.</p>
6.5	<p>Paragraph 4.3.8 of the residential extensions and alterations SPG states that windows in side elevations all have potential to cause overlooking due to position and orientation. The windows to the elevation at first floor level would provide outlook onto an existing car park and are located on the same elevation that existing windows are located and face onto a car park.</p>

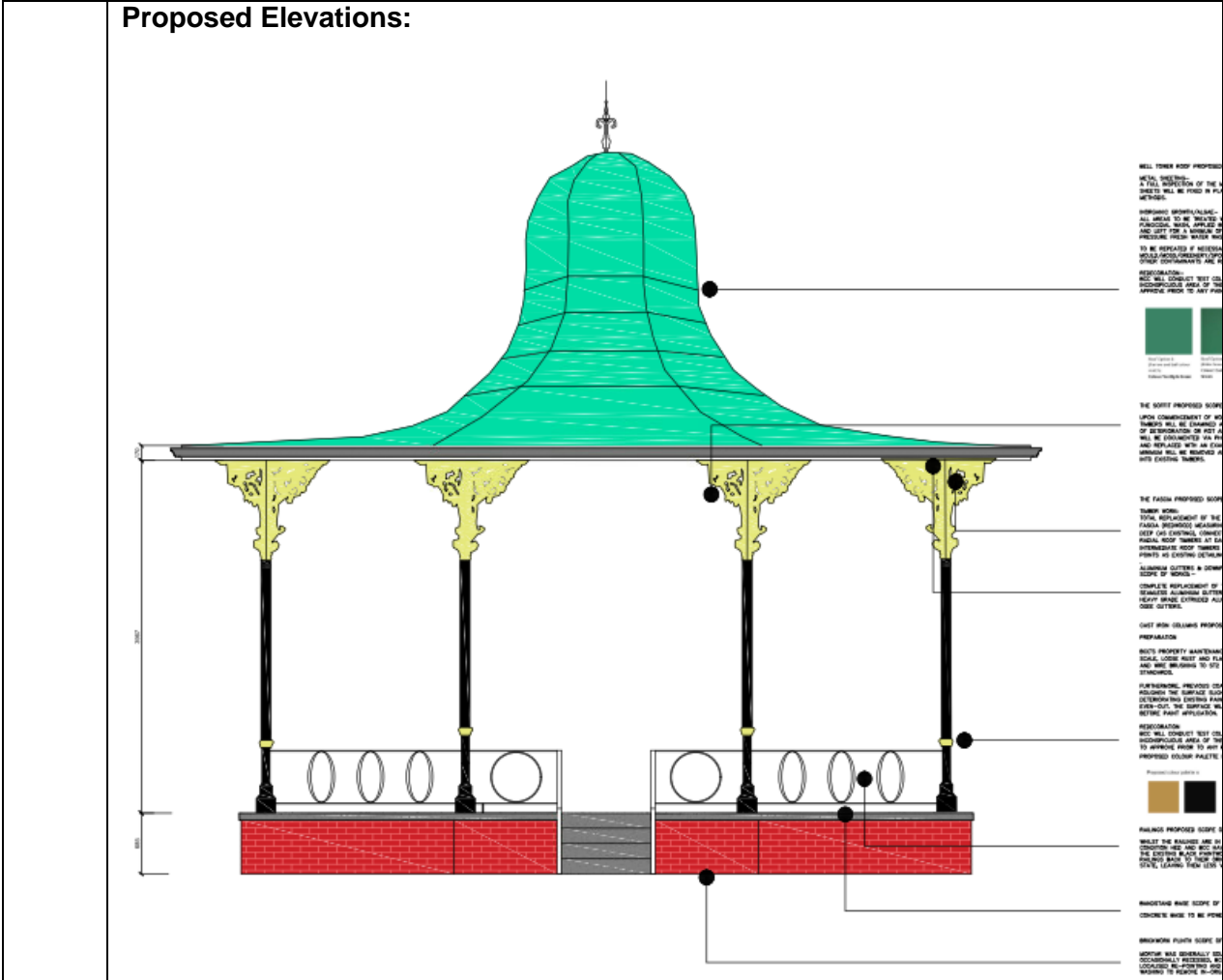
6.6	<p>The doors and windows at ground floor level face into a service yard area. In consideration of the above, there would be no overlooking over and above the existing situation. No private amenity space or public spaces will be overlooked by the any of the proposed works.</p>
6.7	<p>The proposal is considered to comply with Policies DES1 (design) and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
	<p><u>Impact on listed building</u></p>
6.8	<p>Policy BH1 states that planning permission will be granted for the alteration and extension of a listed building where all the following criteria are met:</p> <p><i>f) The works preserve, restore and complement the building's features of special architectural or historical importance to ensure the existing building remains intact and unimpaired,</i> <i>g) The design respects the essential character of the existing building and/or setting,</i> <i>h) The proposal makes use of quality materials and appropriate detailing sympathetic with the existing building and/or setting; and</i></p>
6.9	<p>The proposed windows and doors and internal alterations are to be inserted on a rear return, which is a modern extension to the main listed building. It is considered that the proposed works preserve the building's features of special architectural interest, respects the character of the building and setting and the materials used are sympathetic to the listed building. The windows are consistent with the existing window fenestration to the building, and the door alterations respect the scale of existing door and access to the rear of the building. The internal alterations take the form of the removal and reconfiguration of internal walls to create new spaces. It is considered the proposed alterations respect the essential character of the building and are consistent with the use of the building.</p>
6.10	<p>In terms of the proposed demolition, Policy BH1 states that partial demolition of parts of listed buildings will be exceptional and only acceptable where an alteration or extension proposal has been agreed. The demolition taking place is minor and relates only to the provision of the windows and doors.</p>
6.11	<p>HED were consulted on the proposal and consider that the fenestrations changes are minor and are in keeping with the existing building which is a modern extension to the above-mentioned Listed Building.</p>
6.12	<p>The proposal is considered to comply with Policy BH1 (listed building) and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
6.13	<p>In accordance with Section 91(2) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, special regard has been had to the desirability of preserving the setting of Listed Buildings. For the reasons noted above, the proposal would not result in the significant loss of key views of the listed buildings or have a detrimental impact on the listed building or setting of listed buildings. Furthermore, the nature of the use would respect the character of the setting of the buildings.</p> <p><u>Impact on the conservation area</u></p>

6.14	<p>Policy BH2 states that planning permission will only be given for alterations and extensions within conservation areas where the criteria of Policy RD2 are met and particular regard is given to the following relevant criteria:</p> <p><i>g) The proposal involves retention of and where possible reinstatement of traditional features, and</i></p> <p><i>h) The proposal makes use of traditional and where appropriate reclaimed, recycled/or sympathetic building materials and techniques which match or are in keeping with those found on the building and surrounding area.</i></p>
6.15	<p>The main building is retained and remodelled internally at ground and part of first floor level. Existing features in the form of the window fenestration are replicated in the provision of the new windows which are to be made of the same materials as noted above. These materials are considered sympathetic and are already found on the building.</p>
6.16	<p>In terms of the proposed demolition in conservation area, Policy BH2 states that there will be a presumption in favour of retaining listed buildings and non-listed buildings in conservation areas. Total or partial demolition of a building will only be permitted where:</p> <p><i>i) It makes either a negative or no material contribution to the character and appearance of the area; and</i></p> <p><i>j) The design quality of the proposed building is considered to enhance the overall character of the conservation area paying due regard to viability of retention or restoration of the existing building.</i></p>
6.17	<p>The works involve limited removal of a section of the rear return to the main listed building to accommodate new windows. It is not considered that the minor demolition would result in demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area.</p>
6.18	<p>Belfast City Council Conservation advice was provided and offered no objection. Conservation advice stated that the proposal affects a later addition to the listed building so involves fabric of lesser significance, considered that the windows will provide some relief to blank sections of wall, the windows are consistent with the rest of the elevation, and noted no concerns with the new doors/access.</p>
6.19	<p>The proposal will preserve the established character and appearance of the City Centre Conservation Area, ensuring the form, scale and materials are sympathetic to the surrounding area. It will not detract from the important views, vista or setting of neighbouring listed buildings and will maintain visual integrity of the streetscape within the conservation area.</p>
6.20	<p>The proposal is considered to comply with Policy BH2 (conservation areas) and relevant provisions of the SPPS.</p>
6.21	<p>In accordance with Section 104(11) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and Para 6.19 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement, special regard has been had to the desirability of (a) preserving the character or appearance of the conservation area in cases where an opportunity for enhancing its character or appearance does not arise and (b) enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area in cases where</p>

6.22	<p>an opportunity to do so does arise. In this case, the proposal does not lend itself to enhancement of the conservation area, however for the reasons above its character and appearance would be preserved.</p> <p>Conclusion The proposal is considered acceptable having regard to Policies BH1 (Listed Buildings), BH2 (Conservation Areas), DES1 (Principles of urban design) of the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2035; Sections 91(2) and 104(11) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011; the City Centre Conservation Area Guidance; paragraphs 6.18 and 6.19 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland 2015; and taking account of all relevant material considerations.</p>
7.0	<p>Summary of Recommendation</p>
7.1	<p>Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is approved and listed building consent is granted.</p>
7.2	<p>Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise conditions and deal with any other matters which may arise, provided the issues are not substantive.</p>
8.0	<p>DRAFT CONDITIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission. <p>Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.</p>

Committee Application

Development Management Officer Report	
Committee Date: 16 th June 2026	
Application ID: LA04/2026/0787/LBC	
Proposal: Proposed remedial works to the bandstand	Location: Bandstand, Ormeau Park, Ormeau Rd, Belfast, BT7 3GG
Applicant Name and Address: Sharon Wilson Belfast City Council Duncrue Complex Duncrue Belfast BT3 9BP	Agent Name and Address: Sharon Wilson Belfast City Council Duncrue Complex Duncrue Belfast BT3 9BP
Referral Route: The application is made by Belfast City Council and on lands to which the Council has an estate (3.8.5 (c) and (d) of the Scheme of Delegation)	
Recommendation	Approval
Date Valid:	15 th May 2026
Target Date:	28 th August 2016
Contact Officer:	Jade Haveron
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>The application seeks remedial works to the Brade B1 listed Bandstand located to the south of Ormeau Park.</p> <p>The site is located within Ormeau Park, Ormeau Road, South Belfast which is a Council site consisting of a public park, with eco trails, 2 bowling greens, sports pitches, tennis courts and a playground.. There are a number of mature trees located throughout the overall site.</p> <p>The key issues relevant to consideration of the application are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on historic features <p>There have been no objections from consultees.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>Having regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies, and other material considerations, it is considered that consent should be approved. Delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control is sought to finalise conditions.</p>	



1.0	Characteristics of the Site and Area
1.1	The site is located within Ormeau Park, located in South Belfast. The bandstand is located approximately 300 metres to the east of the existing park entrance at Ormeau Road / Ormeau Embankment.
1.2	The site includes walking trails, sports facilities and a playpark. Heavy vegetation and mature trees are found throughout the site.
1.3	The bandstand is listed as a Grade B1 item of special architectural or historic interest (ref. HB26/03/001A).
2.0	PLANNING HISTORY
2.1	There is no relevant planning history.
3.0	PLANNING POLICY
3.1	Development Plan – Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035

	<p><i>Operational Policies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy BH1 – Listed Buildings <p>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)</p> <p>Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</p>
<p>4.0</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p>	<p>CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS</p> <p>Due to the listed status of the bandstand, Department for Communities Historic Environment Division (HED) were consulted on the proposed remedial works. They offered no objection to the works</p> <p><u>Representations</u></p> <p>The application has been advertised in local press (22/5/2026) and one letter of support from Councillor McKeown has been received in relation to the proposal.</p>
<p>5.0</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p> <p>5.4</p>	<p>PLANNING ASSESSMENT</p> <p><u>Main Issues</u></p> <p>The main issues relevant to consideration of the application are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of Development • Impact on historic features <p><u>Development Plan Context</u></p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p>

	<p>Area Plan 2001 remain part of the statutory local development plan until the Local Policies Plan is adopted.</p> <p><u>Operational Polices</u></p>
5.5	<p>The Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These are listed at paragraph 3.1.</p>
	<p><u>Proposals Maps</u></p>
5.6	<p>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 (BUAP), both versions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (v2004 and v2014) (dBMAP) and other relevant area plans. The weight to be afforded to these proposals maps is a matter for the decision maker. It is considered that significant weight should be given to the proposals map in dBMAP 2015 (v2014) given its advanced stage in the development process, save for retail policies that relate to Sprucefield which remain contentious.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001: The site is located within an area of Existing Open Space. • Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (2004): The site is within an Area of Existing Open Space • Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (v2014): The site is within an Area of Existing Open Space
5.7	<p>It is considered that the proposal is in compliance with the SPPS in that the proposed development will not cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance which are considered below.</p> <p>Impact on the architectural and historic qualities of the listed building</p>
5.8	<p>Section 91 (2) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 applies which states ‘the Department must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.’</p>
5.9	<p>Policy BH1 of the Plan Strategy provides policy for the extension or alteration of a listed building and four criteria are to be met which are:</p> <p>f. The works preserve, restore and complement the building’s features of special architectural or historical importance to ensure the existing building remains intact and unimpaired;</p> <p>g. The design respects the essential character of the existing building and/or setting;</p> <p>h. The proposal makes use of quality materials and appropriate detailing sympathetic with the existing building and/or setting; and</p> <p>i. In the case of extensions, they shall be subservient to the existing building with regard to height, scale, massing, form and alignment;</p>
5.10	<p>Policy BH1 goes on to state that there will be a presumption in favour of retaining listed buildings. Partial demolition of parts of listed buildings will be wholly exceptional</p>

<p>5.11</p> <p>5.12</p> <p>5.13</p>	<p>and only acceptable where an alteration or extension proposal has been agreed and that demolition is required to facilitate it. The Strategic Planning Policy Statement essentially repeats this policy approach.</p> <p>The application does not involve demolition of the bandstand, the remedial works proposed are to return the bandstand as a key feature within the park and ensure it's longevity.</p> <p>The proposal seeks the below remedial actions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Damaged metal sheeting in the roof to be replaced as required - Treatment of inorganic growth / algae - Repainting (HED opted for option 1 Farrow and Ball / Verdigris Green) - Timber support to be replaced if deterioration / rot is identified - Rust to be removed of cast iron columns - Redecoration of colours in black / gold - Total replacement of timber fascia - Complete replacement of existing seamless aluminium guttering system with heavy grade extruded aluminium moulded ogee gutters - Concrete base to be power washed - Re-pointing of mortar - Removal of blank paintwork to railings - Installation of soakaway - 1x downpipe to be removed and replaced with 2x downpipe <p>The proposal is deemed to comply with the SPPS and Policy BH1 of the Plan Strategy. The proposed remedial works are minor in nature, HED noted 'that much of the fabric is not historic.', the Department also offered preference to 'Option 1 - Farrow and Ball –Verdigris Green to the roof finish, however we have no preference regarding the other colour options.' The essential character of the building will be retained. DfC HED were consulted and were content with the proposal.</p>
	<p>Summary of Recommendation</p> <p>Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that Listed Building Consent is granted.</p> <p>Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the conditions and deal with any other matters which may arise including representations which may occur during the statutory advertisement period and up until the point of the issuing of the decision.</p>
	<p>DRAFT CONDITIONS</p> <p>1. The works hereby permitted shall be begun not later than the expiration of 5 years beginning with the date on which this consent is granted.</p> <p>Reason: As required by Section 94 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.</p>

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Development Management Officer Report Committee Application

Summary	
Application ID: LA04/2025/1651/F & LA04/2026/0855/DCA	Committee Meeting Date: 16th June 2026
Proposal: Retention, conversion, refurbishment and change of use of existing office building (Class A2) and 2 no. vacant retails units (Class A1) to hotel accommodation and associated facilities and café (sui generis) and extension of 5th floor (30no. hotel bedrooms in total).	Location: 20 Rosemary Street, Belfast, BT1 1QD
Referral Route: 3.8.2 (a) (vii) of Planning Scheme of Delegation: Hotel development.	
Recommendation: Approval	
Applicant Name and Address: Rosemary Street Limited 8 Demesne Park Holywood BT18 9NE	Agent Name and Address: John Bronte Turley Hamilton House 3 Joy Street Belfast BT2 8LE
Date Valid: 30 th September 2025	
Target Date: 13 th January 2026	
Contact Officer: Ciara Reville, Principal Planning Officer (Development Management)	
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>This application proposes the retention, conversion, refurbishment and change of use of existing office building (Class A2) and 2 no. vacant retails units (Class A1) to hotel accommodation and associated facilities and café (sui generis) and extension of 5th floor (30no. hotel bedrooms in total).</p> <p>The key issues are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principle of a hotel at this location; • Scale, Massing and Design; • Impact on Built Heritage; • Traffic and Road Safety; • Human health/Environmental Considerations; • Flooding and Drainage; • Economic Considerations; • Environment & Communit. <p>The application has been advertised and neighbours notified. The Council has received no objections.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>Having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal is considered acceptable. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.</p> <p>Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise conditions</p>	

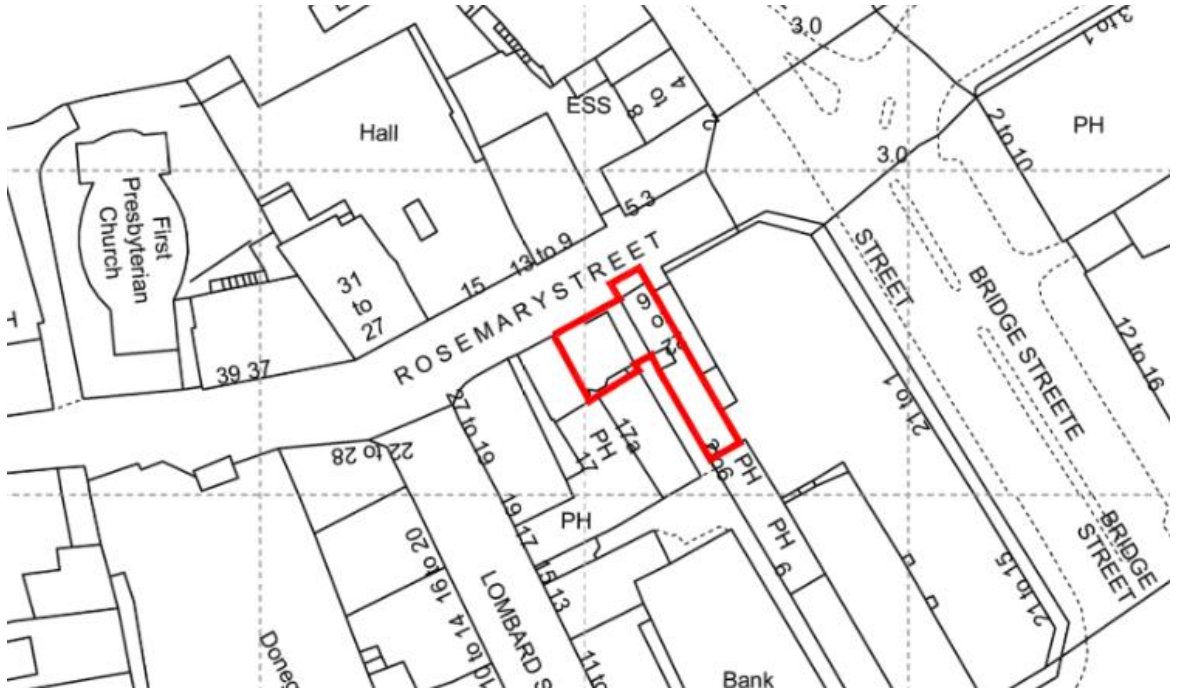
and deal with any issues arising from the outstanding information requested by NIW and SES by way of condition if necessary.

Officer Report

1.0

Drawings

Site Location Plan



Proposed Elevation



PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION 1:100

2.0

Characteristics of the Site and Area

2.1	The site is situated on Rosemary Street, just off Royal Avenue and is within the city's commercial core. The site falls within the city centre conservation area.
2.2	The building is sited in a distinct 'L shape' arrangement presenting as four storeys at its northern elevation to Rosemary Street with a stepped back 5th floor which is of a reduced footprint and comprises plant and storage space. In terms of material treatment, the building is of masonry construction with a rendered base and redbrick finish to the upper floors.
2.3	The established built context is mixed-use in character, with buildings of various scale, form and material treatment; characteristic of the site's location within the Belfast City Centre Conservation Area. The site is bound to the south, west and east by a number of retail and sui generis land uses including public houses, a betting office, cafes and restaurants.
3.0	Description of Proposal
3.1	This application proposes the retention, conversion, refurbishment and change of use of existing office building (Class A2) and 2 no. vacant retail units (Class A1) to hotel accommodation and associated facilities and café (sui generis) and extension of 5th floor (30no. hotel bedrooms in total).
4.0	Planning Policy and Other Material Considerations
4.1	Development Plan – operational policies Belfast Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy 2035
4.2	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)
4.3	Regional Planning Policy Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)
4.4	Other Policies Developer Contribution Framework (BCC) Belfast Agenda Creating Places (DfI)
4.5	Relevant Planning History - None
5.0	Consultations and Representations
5.1	Statutory Consultations DfI Roads – No objection subject to conditions DfI Rivers – Content NI Water – <i>Refusal</i> NIEA WMU – Content Historic Environment Division – Content Shared Environmental Services - <i>Further information requested</i>
5.2	Non-Statutory Consultations BCC Environmental Health – Content subject to conditions BCC Conservation Advice – No objection.
5.3	Representations

	The application has been advertised and neighbours notified. The Council has received no objections.
6.0	PLANNING ASSESSMENT
	Development Plan Context
6.1	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.
6.2	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.
6.3	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.
6.4	Operational policies – the Plan Strategy contains a range of operational policies relevant to consideration of the application. These are listed in the report.
6.5	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 maps 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.
	Relevant Planning Policies
6.6	The following policies in the Plan Strategy are relevant to consideration of the application. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy DES1 – Principles of urban design • Policy TRAN1 – Active Travel • Policy TRAN2 – Creating an accessible environment • Policy TRAN4 – Travel Plan • Policy TRAN8 – Car parking and servicing arrangements • Policy ENV1 – Environmental quality • Policy ENV2 – Mitigating environmental change • Policy ENV3 – Adapting to environmental change • Policy ENV4 - Flood Risk • Policy ENV5 – SuDS • Policy BH1 – Listed Buildings • Policy BH2 – Conservation Areas • Policy TLC1 - Supporting tourism, leisure and cultural development • Policy TLC3 – Overnight visitor accommodation • Policy TLC4 – Evening and night-time economy

6.7	<p>Key Issues</p> <p>The key issues are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle of development • Design • Impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area • Impact on the setting of listed assets • Noise, odour and other environmental impacts • Access and parking • Climate change • Drainage and Waste-Water Infrastructure
6.8	<p><u>Principle of development</u></p> <p>The SPPS advises that planning permission ought to be granted for sustainable development that accords with the area plan and causes no harm to areas of acknowledged importance. The proposal relates to a change of use from offices to a hotel including an extension to the existing building. The SPPS refers to tourism infrastructure provision within paragraphs 6.251 - 6.266. The SPPS aims to facilitate sustainable tourism development in an environmentally sensitive manner, contribute to the growth of the regional economy by facilitating tourism growth and utilise and develop the tourism potential of settlements by facilitating tourism development of an appropriate nature, location and scale. It is noted that the tourism objectives of the SPPS also correlate with the Belfast Agenda which seeks to improve the provision of appropriate tourism infrastructure of various types to maximise the tourism potential of the city.</p>
6.9	<p>In consideration of the Plan Strategy the principle of hotel use within the city centre boundary is acceptable and in line with Policy TLC3 of the Plan Strategy which states planning permission will be granted for development proposals for new overnight visitor accommodation within the city centre boundary.</p>
	<p><u>The impact of the proposal on the City Centre Conservation Area and surrounding listed assets.</u></p>
6.10	<p>The application site is located within the City Centre Conservation area. The proposed development has been sensitively designed with a sympathetic palette of materials. The proposed development respects the built form of the area by way of height, scale, form, legibility and detailing, with the extension to the fifth floor limited to the infilling of space which does not exceed the height of the existing building.</p>
6.11	<p>The proposed development will respond positively to its local context and re-animate Rosemary Street through the retention and conversion of a vacant building in the city centre and the introduction of active ground floor frontage, ensuring vibrancy throughout the day in accordance with the requirements of Policy DES1.</p>
6.12	<p>The proposed demolition is considered to be acceptable. Minor elevational details with no historic value are to be demolished. Therefore, the demolition would comply with Policy BH2.</p>
6.13	<p>BCC conservation have been consulted and have offered no broad objection to the minor demolition or the proposed scheme. Conservation advice did indicate that it would be preferable if the middle portion of the elevation was limited to one facing material, rather than the three proposed and a more traditional façade was proposed, rather than the syncopated arrangement of openings within the central section. Notwithstanding these comments, consideration has been given to the existing building on site to which similar</p>

	<p>comments can be applied. The existing building includes a large plinth at ground floor level, with red brick and curtain walling in the central section.</p>
6.14	<p>HED have been consulted and have identified a number of nearby listed assets that are deemed to be impacted by the application. However, they have concluded that the proposal would have no impact on the setting of listed building/assets subject to a condition. Therefore, compliant with Policy BH1.</p> <p><u>The impact on the amenity of adjacent land users</u></p>
6.15	<p>The site is located within the commercial core bounded by a number of retail and sui generis land uses including public houses, a betting office, cafes and restaurants. It is not considered that the proposed use would have a negative impact on adjacent land uses.</p>
6.16	<p>A number of supporting documents have been submitted in support of the proposal, including a Noise Impact Assessment and Odour Impact Assessment. BCC Environmental Health (EHO) have provided comments and are content that the proposal will not have an unacceptable adverse impact in terms of odour or noise subject to appropriate conditions.</p>
6.17	<p>There are also no concerns in relation to overlooking, overshadowing or natural light. Therefore, compliant with Policy DES1 – Principles of Urban Design.</p>
6.18	<p>In accordance with Policies EC1, TLC1 and TLC4, the proposed development will support the growth of the tourism and hospitality sector in the city, help grow the evening/night-time economy and contribute to the supply of overnight visitor accommodation. Under Policy TLC3 planning permission will be granted for development proposals for new overnight visitor accommodation within the city centre.</p> <p><u>Climate change</u></p>
6.19	<p>The proposal is for the refurbishment of an existing building and therefore avoids full demolition in compliance with policy ENV2.</p>
6.20	<p>With regards to adapting to environmental change (ENV3) and incorporating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) (ENV5), the submitted plan strategy statement states that materials have been selected to reduce overheating and therefore reducing the reliance on air conditioning systems along with the inclusion of an indirect rainwater harvesting system in order to supply recycled water to the WC systems. Rainwater will be collected in an underground storage tank via a leaf filter. It will then be pumped to a break tank in order to supply WCs.</p>
6.21	<p>In relation to flood risk (ENV4), the application falls within the 1 in 200 year climate change coastal flood plain. Planning has considered this application an exception, as the proposal involves the re-use of an existing building. DFI Rivers have been consulted with a submitted flood risk assessment and are content with the proposal.</p>
6.22	<p>With regards to environmental policies, it is considered that the proposal is compliant with policy EN1, ENV2, ENV3 and ENV5.</p> <p><u>Access, movement, and parking</u></p>
6.23	<p>The Transport Assessment Form (TAF) submitted with the application indicates that there will be minimal parking demand with the proposal, resulting in limiting vehicle trips to the city. The proposal also promotes sustainable development through encouraging other active modes of transport. DFI Roads have been consulted and have provided no objection</p>

	with regards to access and transport details. A Travel Plan and Service Management Plan were provided to the satisfaction of DFI Roads.
6.24	<p><u>Sewage Infrastructure</u></p> <p>NI Water (NIW) were consulted and have recommended refusal of the proposal due to insufficient capacity at Belfast WWTW and associated sewer network. NIW have advised there are network capacity issues, resulting in risks to the environment and existing properties. NIW have outlined that the applicant will need to submit an application to NIW for a Wastewater Impact Assessment (WWIA). NIW will assess the proposal to see if an alternative drainage or treatment solution can be agreed.</p>
6.25	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.
6.26	As the proposal would result in clear intensification of the use of the land, the Council has consulted Shared Environmental Services (SES) to assist its consideration of the Habitats Regulations (HRA). SES advises that further information is required to inform the HRA and requires confirmation that a Wastewater Impact Assessment (WWIA) has been agreed by NI Water (in order that the HRA can ascertain the absence of adverse effects on any European site arising during the operational phase of the project). Should the WWIA require an engineering solution to overcome the constraint, SES advise that full details of the agreed solution including the design drawings are required to progress the HRA. This is required in order to assess any significant effects on European designated sites arising during the works required to implement the engineering solution.
6.27	It is recognised that a HRA cannot be completed at this time and therefore delegated authority is requested for officers to deal with the outstanding information and to re-consult with SES to ensure there will be no impact on any designated European site.
6.28	DAERA has been consulted and is concerned that the sewage loading associated with the proposal has the potential to cause adverse environmental impact.
6.29	Given NIW have advised a potential solution exists, it is considered the proposal has the potential to comply with policy NH1 and paras 6.176 and 6.177 of the SPPS. However, the Council is unable to make a definitive assessment until completion of the WWIA, and by extension, completion of the HRA by SES.
7.0	Recommendation
7.1	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.
7.2	Delegated authority is sought for the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise conditions, deal with any issues arising from the outstanding information requested by NIW and SES and deal with any other matters which may arise.
DRAFT CONDITIONS for LA04/2025/1651/F:	

1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2. Prior to the commencement of operation of the restaurant kitchen serving the hereby approved hotel a kitchen extraction and odour abatement system shall be installed to suppress and disperse odours created from operations on the premises which achieves a 'very high' level of odour control in accordance with the current EMAQ+ 'Guidance on the Control of Odour and Noise from Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Systems' (updated in May 2022) and as deemed necessary in the AONA November 2025 Odour Impact Assessment, report ref:ENV9228. The outlet from any extract ventilation ducting shall terminate at a height not less than 1m above the main eaves of the 5th floor roof at a minimum discharge velocity of 15m/sec.

Reason: Protection of nearby amenity.

3. The installed kitchen extraction and odour abatement system must be retained and maintained thereafter.

Reason: Protection of nearby amenity.

4. The rating level (dBLAr,T) from the operation of all combined plant and equipment must not exceed the existing daytime and night-time background sound levels (dBLA90,T) at the nearest noise sensitive premises, when measured or determined in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 'Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound'.

Reason: Protection against adverse noise impact.

5. If contamination is encountered during the carrying out of the development, all related development works shall cease, and the Council shall be notified immediately in writing. No further related development works shall proceed until this 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.

6. Notwithstanding the submitted details, the following external features shall not be installed, implemented or carried out unless in accordance with further details which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

Gable Wall (West) and Proposed Fifth Floor

The details of these external features shall include the following:

- Proposed finishes (Material and colour)

The works shall not be carried out unless in accordance with the details so approved.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building.

7. The development shall operate in accordance with the Service Management Plan.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.

8. The development shall operate in accordance with the Travel Plan.

Reason: To encourage alternative modes of transport to the private car.

DRAFT INFORMATIVES:

1. This Full Application is linked to DCA, reference LA04/2026/0855/DCA
2. Please make sure that you carry out the development in accordance with the approved plans and any planning conditions listed above. Failure to do so will mean that the proposal is unauthorised and liable for investigation by the Council's Planning Enforcement team. If you would like advice about how to comply with the planning permission, you are advised to contact the Planning Service at Belfast City Council at planning@belfastcity.gov.uk.
3. This planning permission includes condition(s) which require further details to be submitted to and approved by the Council. Please read the condition(s) carefully so that you know when this information needs to be provided and approved. It could take a minimum of 8 weeks for the Council to approve the details, assuming that they are satisfactory, and sometimes longer depending on the complexity of the condition. You should allow for this when planning the timeline of your project.
4. The grant of planning permission does not dispense with the need to obtain licenses, consents or permissions under other legislation or protocols. The requirement for other authorisations may have been identified by consultees in their response to the application and can be accessed on the Northern Ireland Planning Portal website. The responses from consultees may also include other general advice for the benefit of the applicant or developer.

DRAFT CONDITIONS for LA04/2026/0855/DCA:

1. The demolition hereby granted must be begun within five years from the date of this consent.

Reason: As required by Section 105 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2. This consent relates only to the walls / structures highlighted in blue on approved drawing numbers 08 and 09 uploaded to the Planning Register on 8th May 2026 and to no other part of the building or buildings on site.

Reason: In the interests of the preservation of the City Centre Conservation Area.

DRAFT INFORMATIVES:

This Demolition Consent Application is linked to the Full Application: LA04/2025/1651/F

ANNEX 1 – LA04/2025/1651/F	
Date Valid	30/09/2025
Date First Advertised	21/11/2025
Date Last Advertised	21/11/2025

ANNEX 1 – LA04/2026/0855/DCA	
Date Valid	08/05/2026
Date First Advertised	22/05/2026
Date Last Advertised	22/05/2026