

Planning Committee

Tuesday, 16th May, 2017

MEETING OF PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Johnston (Chairperson);
Alderman McGimpsey;
Councillors Armitage, Bunting,
Garrett, Hussey, Hutchinson, Jones,
Lyons, Magee and McAteer.

In attendance: Mr. P. Williams, Director of Planning and Place;
Mr. E. Baker, Development Engagement Manager;
Ms. N. Largey, Divisional Solicitor;
Mr. K. Sutherland, Development Planning and
Policy Manager;
Mr. S. McCrory, Democratic Services Manager;
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Carson, Dorrian and Mullan.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 11th April and 13th April were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd May, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Magee declared an interest regarding item (s) LA04/2016/0006/F change of use to ground floor, from shop to hot food takeaway, at 45 Manor Street, in that he knew the owner of the property.

Councillor McAteer declared an interest regarding item (u) LA04/2016/0051/F-residential building consisting of six apartments at 82 Eglantine Avenue, in that she had facilitated a meeting with the applicant about the proposal.

Matters Referred Back From Council

Notice of Motion - Housing Provision in Belfast

(Councillor Collins attended in connection with this item)

The Committee was reminded that the Council, in accordance with Standing Orders, had referred the following notice of motion, which had been proposed by

Councillor Collins and seconded by Councillor McCabe, to the Committee for consideration:

"This Council recognises the severe shortage in social housing across the City, and the detrimental effect which this is having on many citizens in Belfast. It also notes the important work that Belfast housing rights organisations and campaigners have done to highlight this problem in some of the most socially deprived areas of Belfast, by working with the homeless and people in poor housing to identify solutions to the housing crisis. One such solution is to maximise the use of available land right across the City for new build social housing.

In particular, the Council notes the concentration of housing stress in North Belfast and the ongoing campaign by residents and housing rights activists to ensure that a number of sites in North Belfast reach their full social housing potential. The Council calls for a reconsideration of the zoning of redevelopment sites to reflect the necessity to build social housing in North Belfast, in order to deliver a real reprieve to the acute housing crisis in this part of the City."

The Chairperson advised the Committee that Councillor Collins was in attendance in relation to the motion and he was invited to the table.

Councillor Collins highlighted that a large number of people were in housing stress in Belfast, particularly in the North and West of the city, with many more suffering than what official waiting list figures showed. He outlined that there were numerous suitable sites available in which social housing could be built and that action needed to be taken to address the increasing problem.

The Committee received representation from Mr. S. Brady, Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR). He explained that PPR worked to build bridges between duty bearers and those whose rights were being denied, and, in this case, was seeking to address the housing crisis in Belfast. He outlined that there was a clear need for additional social housing in North Belfast and that land was available in the areas with the highest demand. He requested that elected representatives worked together to alleviate the housing crisis.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Brady for his presentation and he retired from the meeting.

The Development Planning and Policy Manager outlined to the Committee that there were a number of competing demands for a finite resource of development land within the city. He reminded the Members that the creation of a Local Development Plan (LDP) was ongoing and that a review of existing designations would be carried out as part of that process. He explained that current legislation did not permit the Council to carry out a comprehensive review of any existing designations in advance of the completion of the LDP and that individual applications would continue to be assessed on their own merits by the Planning Committee.

After discussion, during which a number of Members acknowledged the difficulties which a large number of people were facing in relation to securing housing, the Committee noted the motion.

Committee Site Visit

Pursuant to its decision of 13th April, it was noted that the Committee had undertaken a site visit on 4th May in respect of planning application LA04/2016/2267/F – Erection of office building (ranging in height from four to six storeys) and associated access road, re-configuration of existing car park and ancillary works – Site C Gasworks Office Park Cromac Place.

Planning Appeals Notified

The Committee noted the receipt of correspondence in respect of a number of planning appeals which had been submitted to the Planning Appeals Commission, together with the outcomes of a range of hearings which had been considered by the Commission.

During discussion, the Director of Planning and Place agreed to submit regular reports which would seek to summarise any emerging trends arising from Planning Appeals.

Planning Decisions Issued

The Committee noted a list of decisions which had been taken under delegated authority by the Director of Planning and Place, together with all other planning decisions which had been issued by the Planning Department between 4th April and 5th May.

Departmental Performance Update

The Development Engagement Manager provided the following information on the Department's performance to date:

Applications:

- 197 applications validated in April 2017.
- This is down 8% compared to April 2016 (241).

Decisions:

- 169 decisions issued in April 2017.
- 94% approval rate
- 94% decisions issued under delegated authority
- 198 decisions issued in April 2016

No. of applications in system by length of time:

- 1023 live apps in system at end of March 2017
- 60% of applications in system less than 6 months

- Outstanding legacy applications is 24. (from 780 at transfer in April 2015).

Performance against statutory Targets (unvalidated management information up to 31 March 2017)

- The statutory target for processing major development planning applications from the date valid to decision issued or withdrawal date is within an average of 30 weeks. In Quarter 4 (1 Jan – 30 April 2017) the average processing time to decide major applications in BCC was 29.8 weeks. This, however, includes legacy applications and those Major applications which have been delayed whilst a Section 76 agreement in put in place.
- Excluding those applications requiring a Section 76 agreement the average processing time for processing a major application between 1 January and 31 March was 22 weeks.
- The statutory target for processing local development planning applications from the date valid to decision issued or withdrawal date is an average of 15 weeks. In Quarter 4, the average processing time to decide local applications in BCC was 18.2 weeks.
- The statutory target is that 70% of all enforcement cases are progressed to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint. In quarter 4, 68.8% of enforcement cases were concluded within 39 weeks.

The Committee noted the update provided.

Proposed Abandonment

The Committee noted the receipt of correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure which related to the proposed abandonment of land at The Manor, Blacks Road, Belfast.

Response to Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Consultation - Preferred Options Paper

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

To present for consideration and comment the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) Local Development Plan Preferred Options Paper (POP). A copy of the POP Summary Paper is available on the Council’s website.

The submissions closing date is 25th May 2017. The proposed draft response from Belfast City Council is available on the Council's website.

2.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee notes the public consultation of LCCC's POP. It is further recommended that the Committee considers the draft written response to the POP and, if appropriate, approve it for submission to LCCC.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

- 3.1** Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) recently published its POP and has written to the City Council seeking our views. The LCCC POP sets out a vision and a number of strategic objectives for the new LDP. It also sets out the preferred options for addressing key issues identified. The main issues of particular interest and relevance to Belfast are summarised below.
- 3.2** The Spatial Growth Strategy seeks to focus growth in accordance with a settlement hierarchy, with Lisburn City, Castlereagh and Dundonald urban areas at the top, followed by the towns of Hillsborough, Moira and Carryduff. Proposed housing growth allocations are based on this hierarchy and are primarily focussed on Lisburn City. LCCC's preferred option is for 13,300 new dwellings (738 per annum) up to 2030, with an additional 10% allowance for market flexibility. This hierarchical approach to growth is considered to be appropriate. However, the POP acknowledges that there is insufficient land zoned or committed for housing, both within the existing urban footprint and within existing designated settlement limits to meet all the planned housing growth during the period of the new LDP. To help address this issue, LCCC proposes to direct significant new housing to a portion of the West Lisburn/Blaris Major Employment Location site. Whilst this may be an acceptable approach, it is considered important that cross-boundary discussion takes place with LCCC and other councils in the Greater Belfast sub-regional area to ensure that individual housing allocations are agreed and implemented consistently to support the Regional Development Strategy.
- 3.3** In terms of retailing, LCCC's preferred option for Sprucefield is to reinforce it as a regional shopping centre. This takes account of the decision to remove the 'bulky goods only'

restriction for additional retail development at the existing centre. As Elected Members will be aware, this is the subject of a separate legal challenge by Belfast City Council and it is not intended to make any detailed comment on this matter in response to the LCCC POP at this time. Nevertheless, it is considered appropriate to comment that any future development at Sprucefield is in accordance with national policy that is based on the 'town centre first approach', as expressed in the Regional Development Strategy and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement.

- 3.4 The POP proposes to extend the area designated as the Forestside District Centre. The proposed extension will include the retail park, DIY unit and adjoining lands, all on the opposite side of the main A24 road from the existing shopping mall. These lands are currently not included in the District Centre boundary. This represents a significant expansion of the District Centre, which is immediately adjoining the local government district boundary with Belfast City and has a catchment area that extends well into Belfast City. The additional area more than doubles the existing designated centre. This could facilitate the full range of retailing activities at this location. The potential impact on existing retail centres in Belfast City, including Connswater and the City Centre, is of concern. It is considered that the proposed expansion of the Forestside District Centre is inconsistent with the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) aim to support and sustain 'town centres' (including city centres) with a town centre first approach for retail and other town centre uses. The significant expansion of retailing activities, particularly for comparison (high street type) retailing, has the potential to adversely impact on the vitality and viability of retailing the Belfast City Council Area, including the city centre and Connswater.
- 3.5 There are a number of other cross-boundary issues that need co-operation between both councils. These include sustainable travel, waste management and environmental protection issues. In the latter regard, it is acknowledged that the Lagan Valley Regional Park and the Belfast Hills are cross-boundary assets that form part of the wider green and blue network. In addition, provision for cemeteries and crematoria is important and the City Council is continuing to explore options for addressing the medium and long term requirements. Continued joint discussion is required throughout all stages of the LDP process to ensure a joined-up and mutually beneficial approach.

3.6 The attached draft response highlights areas of support or concern and issues of mutual interest. The LCCC POP generally represents a positive and proactive approach to future growth and sustainable development. With the exception of the above concerns in relation to retailing at Forestside, there does not appear to be any conflict with our own growth and development aspirations. It forms a basis for continued partnership working with LCCC and we should welcome the POP and the opportunity to comment on it.

3.7 Financial & Resource Implications

There are no resource implications associated with this report

3.8 Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no relevant equality or good relations implications attached to this report.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Miscellaneous Items

Listed Buildings

The Committee was advised that correspondence had been received from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) seeking the Council's views in respect of proposals which had been formulated for the listing of a number of buildings in Belfast.

The Committee was reminded that Article 80 (3) of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 required the Agency to consult with the Council before placing any building on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and supported the proposed listings of the following buildings by the Department for Communities:

- 22 Ashley Avenue, Belfast, BT9 7BT;
- 24 Ashley Avenue, Belfast, BT9 7BT;
- 26 Ashley Avenue, Belfast, BT9 7BT;
- Chapel of Unity, Methodist College, Belfast, BT9 6BQ; and
- All Souls Church Hall (AKA Rosemary Hall), Elmwood Avenue, Belfast, BT9 6AZ

Notification of Delisting of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historical Interest

The Committee agreed that the following two gravings docks would be scheduled rather than listed, as a more appropriate form of protection:

- Graving Dock No. 1, Clarendon Quay, Belfast, BT1 3AL; and

- Graving Dock No. 2, Clarendon Quay, Belfast, BT1 3AL.

Protocol for Planning Appeals Commission Hearings

The Committee noted that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

Update on Preferred Options Paper consultation

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- Update Committee on the POP engagement activity and the number of responses received.
- To request a Member’s workshop on Thursday 18 May 2017 to outline the consultation carried out, provide initial feedback on the issues raised and set out the process for the formal reporting of the results.

2.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee:

- Note the information set out in the report in relation to the responses received and the next stages in the LDP process.
- Agree to the Members workshop on Thursday 18 May 2017.
- Note the proposal for the formal POP consultation report be brought to Committee in June.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Key Issues

Preferred Options Paper (POP)

The Preferred Options Paper is a detailed document with 48 different Preferred Options grouped under the four Strategic Aims and was accompanied by a suite of supporting documents, comprising:

- POP Summary or ‘easy read’ public document (made available in large print and Braille)
- Youth POP
- Information leaflet and pop-ups
- 18 Topic Papers underpinning the preferred options

- Sustainability Appraisal Interim Report (Incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment)
- Non-Technical Summary for the Sustainability Appraisal (Incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment)
- Countryside Assessment
- Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Screening
- Commissioned reports on housing and population growth and economic growth

3.2 Hard copies of the Preferred Options Paper and the POP Summary were printed and used throughout the consultation period. All the additional supporting documents were available online and supplementary publicity materials such as the information leaflet and pop-ups (outlining the four POP themes) were utilised for the consultation events and ongoing engagement activity. Tailored POP presentations were developed and delivered to audiences.

POP engagement

3.3 The Statement of Community Involvement was published in June 2016 and sets out the minimum level of engagement required during the LDP. Given the overlap of the Belfast Agenda and POP consultation periods it was recognised that consistent and clear messages needed to be provided for stakeholders and effort was made to carry out joint consultation events. Whilst the POP had separate contact details for the consultation, the clarity of messages and signposting was in line with wider council activity.

3.4 In total there were 82 consultation events for the POP consultation which consisted of:

- 4 area events (with the Belfast Agenda and Local Investment Fund)
- 52 stakeholder consultations (including meetings with adjacent councils)
- 18 public facing engagement events
- 1 drop in session for Section 75 groups
- 7 internal events
- Regular meetings with the LDP Steering Group and statutory consultees

3.5 In addition to the four area based events the team engaged with communities of interest (Youth Forum, Festival Forum, Senior's Forum); organisations covering specific areas of the city (Belfast Area Partnerships, Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships, Belfast Hills Partnership, Resident Groups);

business organisations (BCCM, Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Harbour Commissioners); professional bodies (RICS, Royal Society of Ulster Architects); and the adjacent councils. There were also 18 public engagement events in which staff set up pop up information booths in busy public areas such as St George's market, Castlecourt, Europa Station, Ulster Museum and the student unions in UU, BMC and QUB.

- 3.6 The LDP Unit worked closely with the Equality Unit within council to develop an engagement programme with Section 75 groups and held a drop-in session, spoke at the S75 Insight Project and at the S75 Consultative Forum and held an event for disability groups in Grosvenor Hall. The POP summary was also produced in large print format and Braille.
- 3.7 The programme of events was effective in both informing the public and facilitating general awareness of the broader plan process whilst encouraging responses and debate. Lessons learned from the POP consultation will inform the ongoing work to plan for the engagement as part of the next stage in the Plan development.

Formal responses to the Preferred Options Paper

- 3.8 Formal responses to the POP were received via email, Citizen Space and hard copy. In total:
- 44 responses were received via Citizen Space
 - 100 responses were received via email
 - 4 hardcopy responses were received
- 3.9 Working with the Youth Forum the Youth POP summary was distributed to 13 schools. This generated an additional:
- 47 Citizen Space responses
 - 58 hardcopy responses

POP communications

- 3.10 A range of communications tools were used throughout the POP consultation period with an aim to reach as many audiences as possible and included:
- Social media: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
 - Online advertising: Facebook - boosted post, Google AdWords and display advertising.
 - Printed press advertising - Belfast Gazette, Irish News, Newsletter, Belfast Telegraph and Belfast Media Group (North Belfast News, Andersonstown News, South Belfast News).

- Belfast City Council website
- Press releases: Launch and close of consultation
- Media coverage (Radio and TV)

3.11 The final data is still being collated but the initial communication analytics reveal the following:

- The Facebook reach for the period running up to the close of the consultation reached 6,500 people.
- There were 18,230 Twitter impressions (the number of times a tweet has been delivered to the Twitter stream) for the period running up to the close of the consultation with an average engagement rate of 1.65% (above 1% is considered a good rate of engagement).
- Between 26 January - 20 April 2017 the POP webpage had 2,433 unique page views, with an average time of 08:26 minutes spent on the page.

Analysis of POP data

3.12 Analysis of the information received from the POP consultation is underway and it is proposed to present the formal consultation report to the June Planning Committee. In order to provide members with the opportunity to explore some of the issues raised in the consultations, it is proposed that a Member's workshop is arranged for Thursday 18 May 2017. The workshop will provide initial feedback on the issues raised, outline the process for the formal reporting of the consultation finding and highlight the main issues raised by respondents.

3.13 Financial & Resource Implications

The resource implications will continue to be kept under review in relation to the five-year plan programme.

3.14 Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications."

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

Development Management Operating Principles

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of report or summary of main issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Planning Committee on on-going improvements to the Development Management (planning applications) part of the Planning Service. Appended to this report are a series of Operating Principles that have been informed by feedback from the development industry at stakeholder workshops in 2016, feedback from staff and best practice from around the UK. The Planning Service will be working to these Operating Principles to support an enhanced service to customers.
- 1.2 The Operating Principles will inform the development of Customer Guidance which will set out to customers how the Development Management service operates.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the 10 Operating Principles and ‘Purpose’ of the Development Management (planning applications) service which are available on the Council’s website. These will underpin Customer Guidance on how the Planning Service operates.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

Members will recall that an Improvement Plan has been prepared for the Development Management (planning applications) part of the Planning Service. An updated copy of the Improvement Plan is available on the Council’s website. The purpose of the Improvement Plan is to identify areas of the service that need enhancing to improve the customer experience.

- 3.2 Two key actions in the Improvement Plan are to review internal processes in line with best practice and to finalise and publish service standards. The Council does not currently publish how it deals with planning applications and what customers can expect. This needs to be rectified and Customer Guidance is required to set out service standards and how the planning process operates.

3.3 A series of engagement events were held with the development industry in Spring 2016. Alongside feedback from staff and good practice from the UK, this has informed the creation of 10 'Operating Principles', which underpin a good planning service. These can be found on the Council's website.

3.4 The Operating Principles represent good practice in how a Development Management service should be provided. The Operating Principles will inform the development of Customer Guidance that clearly sets out to customers how the planning service operates, what the service standards are and what they can expect from the service.

3.5 Key issues

The Improvement Plan is aimed in part at improving application performance. Unofficial figures for 2016/17 show an average processing time of 62.1 weeks for Major applications (target of 30 weeks) and 15.4 weeks for Local applications (target of 15 weeks). Members should note that these performance returns include Legacy applications and permissions subject to a Section 76 planning agreement. These have the effect of increasing average processing times without the ability to agree an extension of the determination period, unlike in England and Wales. Moreover, it should be noted that recent performance has been strong. During 2016/17 Q4, the average processing time for Major applications was 29.8 weeks (within target). Excluding those applications that required a Section 76 planning agreement, the average processing time was 22 weeks.

3.6 The statutory targets are set by the Department for Infrastructure (DFI). A new performance framework is expected from the Department which will create a more level playing field with UK local planning authorities and will further assist the achievement of targets. The Department is due to consult councils on the new performance framework and the consultation will be reported to the Committee in the coming months.

3.7 The Operating Principles will support the following outcomes:

- A customer focused and business approach to delivery of the service;
- Timely and quality decisions by frontloading the application process;
- Good communication with customers;

- Reducing the amount of conflict between what the customer wants and the type of service that is provided;
- Focused decision-making

3.8 The Committee is asked to note the Operating Principles, as well as the suggested 'Purpose' of the Development Management service, available on the Council's website. The Operating Principles will then underpin Customer Guidance on how the Planning Service operates and what customers can expect from the service.

3.9 It is essential that the Planning Service is appropriately structured, and has sufficient resource at the right level, if the Operating Principles are to be effectively implemented. This is under review. Further improvements need to be made including lean-management of detailed processes and introduction of fit for purpose replacement back-office computer software, including the ability for customers to submit planning applications online. Evolution of the Planning Service is a continuous process and further actions will be implemented as part of the on-going improvement programme. Members will receive further updates on the implementation of the Improvement Plan at key milestones.

3.10 Financial & Resource Implications

Implementation of the Operating Principles will ensure that the Planning Service is efficient in its handling of planning applications, creating capacity to provide a better planning service.

3.11 Equality or Good Relations Implications

None identified."

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Update on Major Planning Permissions

The Development Engagement Manager reminded the Committee that the transfer of many planning powers to Local Government had taken place following the Review of Public Administration in April 2015. He advised the Committee that this transfer had included giving Councils the responsibility for preparing a Local Development Plan for each Council area, determining most planning applications and enforcing breaches of planning control.

The officer detailed that over the two year period since the transfer, Belfast City Council had determined approximately 3,300 applications, of which approximately 93%

had been approved. The Council's Planning Committee had determined close to 430 planning applications, which was approximately 13% of all applications, with a delegation rate of 87%.

The Committee was then provided with an overview of the number of planning permissions granted specifically for major developments, all of which having been determined by the Planning Committee as required by statute. It was noted that approximately 80 applications had been received and that the approval rate for 2016/17 had been 97%. The officer stated that this demonstrated the Planning Service's strong commitment to engaging with its customers, working through issues and finding solutions to enable significant development projects to progress.

The Committee noted that these permissions included many major city centre schemes, as follows:

- 17 permissions for hotels (or circa 1,500 beds);
- 21 permission for offices (circa 150,000 sq. m. floor space); and
- 12 permissions for purpose built student accommodation (circa 5,800 beds).

The officer reported that the total construction value of these development was estimated at approximately £400 million, broken down as follows:

- Hotels - £70 million;
- Offices - £165 million;
- Purpose Built Student Accommodation - £175 million.

A Member welcomed the work of the Planning Service and the contribution that the Service was making to development and investment within the city centre, he stated that he would also welcome an update report in respect of major developments that had taken place throughout the other areas of the City.

The Committee noted the update report and that a further report on development across the whole of the City would be submitted to a future meeting.

Planning Applications

THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN PURSUANCE OF THE POWERS DELEGATED TO IT BY THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 37(e)

Withdrawn Items

The Committee noted that two applications, namely (i) LA04/2015/0598/O – Residential development comprising 60 apartments at former Monarch Laundry Site, 451-455 and (w) LA04/2016/1184/F 5 apartments at 63 Houston Park had both been withdrawn from the planning process and as a result had been withdrawn from the agenda.

LA04/2016/0879/F 5 dwellings at 440-446 Ravenhill Road

The case officer outlined the contents of the report and informed the Committee that the application had been withdrawn from the agenda of the meeting of 11th April for the consideration of a late objection which had been received. He outlined to the Committee that, in light of that objection and an additional representation which had been received in the interim, all representations had now been fully considered in the assessment within the amended report. He outlined that the statutory consultees had been contacted once again and had expressed no objections to the proposed development at the site.

The case officer outlined that the application sought planning approval for the demolition of existing semi-detached dwellings and the construction of 5 no. dwellings comprising of 3 no. detached and 2 no. semi-detached houses with associated car parking and landscaping.

The Committee was advised that the proposal had been assessed against the SPPS, Planning Policy Statements (PPS) 3, 7 and the Addendum to PPS 7, and supplementary guidance set out in Creating Places, DCAN 8 and Parking Standards.

He explained that, after assessment, the proposal was considered acceptable and had been recommended for approval.

The Committee received representations from Mrs. Van den Berg and Mr. Lambkin. They outlined a range of objections to the proposal, including:

- whether a site visit had been carried out;
- the case report having omitted objections relating to the loss and invasion of privacy of the private amenity space;
- that a 25ft open aspect would be left as a result of the demolition of the garage;
- that the proposed roundabout would encourage traffic onto privately owned land;
- that the areas in common should be clearly demarcated;
- evidence of previously blocked sewers from statutory agencies;
- the previous presence of Japanese Knotweed on the site of no. 446 and concerns that construction work would disturb the ground; and
- issues regarding the applicant not having submitted the correct certificate and not having full land ownership.

The objectors requested that, if approval was granted, conditions be imposed on the applicant to ensure replacement screening be provided and that the choice of surface abutting the boundary along the passage in common be agreed between the applicant and the neighbouring property owner.

The Chairperson thanked the residents for their presentation and they retired from the meeting.

In response, the case officer clarified a number of the issues which had been raised. He explained that, although it was not a requirement from officers, the developer had stated that he was prepared to use the vacant plot as the access point for construction traffic, and that he would discuss this with the agent before the decision was issued. He confirmed to the Members that the correct certificate had now been produced by the applicant and that due process had been followed.

The Committee approved the application, in line with the recommendation outlined in the case officer's report, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Place to agree and finalise the wording of the planning conditions.

**LA04/2016/2027/F 7.5m telecommunications mast including
3 equipment cabinets on footpath opposite No. 590 Shore Road**

(Alderman McGimpsey had left the room whilst the item was under consideration)

The case officer apprised the Committee of the application for the erection of a 17.5m high telecommunications mast and associated works including 3 No equipment cabinets. He reported that the application site was located on the footpath opposite No 590 Shore Road and adjacent to Loughside Park. Loughside playing fields were situated to the rear of the proposal. The site was designated in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 with land zoned as existing Open Space.

The case officer reported that although the site had been identified as an area of existing open space it was located on a footpath adjoining the Shore Road which was an arterial route. The location of the mast and cabinets would be against a backdrop of trees along the Shore Road which would minimise any visual impact and therefore the proposal was not considered to be obtrusive. In addition, the case officer advised that an International Commission for Non Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) Declaration had been received which demonstrated that the proposal met the ICNIRP guidelines.

The Committee was advised that 246 objections had been received, which included a letter of objection from Mr. N. Dodds, MP and a late written submission from Alderman. G. Spence. The case officer advised that the application had been assessed against relevant planning policy, particularly PPS10 telecommunications. All objections had been considered within the context of the planning policy and all consultees had raised no objections and therefore the proposal was deemed to comply with the development plan regional planning policy.

The Committee received representations from Mr. Samuel, objector, and Mr. L. Ross, agent.

Mr. Samuel advised the Committee that he was representing Loughside Concerned Residents who were opposed to the erection of this mast. He outlined that residents of this group felt that their objections in relation to the impact of the health and wellbeing of local people had been dismissed. He highlighted the number of objections which had been received and also stated that, in his opinion, the consultation process had been very disjointed. He stated that the location of this proposal was near to a play

park, which appeared to also have been ignored within the context of the report, and he highlighted that one of the objections received had been from Playboard NI. The representative proceeded to outline in detail the health and safety concerns of the local community and the specific reasons as to why this proposal should not be permitted to proceed.

Mr. Ross, explained that this application was a joint application between Telefonica (O2) and Vodafone and formed part of a regional rollout of 4G mobile services. He outlined that the main Political Parties, businesses and the general public were all calling for better mobile phone coverage. In addition to this, the Government recognised that high quality communications infrastructure was essential for economic growth and also identified a need for a more efficient telecommunications infrastructure that would give Northern Ireland a competitive advantage. He advised the Committee that this site had been one of 8 possible options considered but each of the others had been ruled out at various stages. He also stated that mast sharing had been explored but there had been no existing masts in the immediate vicinity and he stressed the need for this mast which he suggested would help play a vital role in improving telecommunications coverage for the area.

The Committee granted approval, subject to the imposing of the conditions set out within the case officer's report.

**Z/2014/1083/F 4 semi detached houses, 34 apartments,
basement car park, access road at 733 - 735 Antrim Road**

The Committee was advised that this application sought full planning permission for 4 semi-detached dwellings and 34 apartments. The case officer advised that the principle of development had already been established under Z/2008/1469/F and in the most part it replicated the current application.

The Committee was advised that NI Water, Transport NI, Environmental Health and Rivers Agency had no objections to the proposal. She explained that the area was predominantly residential and, while the proposal would have an impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties, that separation distances and proposed landscaping would mitigate any impact. The Members were advised that there would be basement car parking, with 27 spaces in each block of apartments.

The case officer highlighted to the Committee that the resident of no. 737 had submitted late correspondence raising issues about the shared boundary and a loss of vegetation and that this was included in the late items pack. She confirmed that, if the application was to be approved, a condition would be placed on the applicant to prohibit any loss of vegetation on that boundary.

The Committee granted approval, subject to the imposing of the conditions as set out within the case officer's report and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Place to agree and finalise the wording of the planning conditions.

LA04/2016/2489/F Retail Warehouse Unit with Internal Mezzanine Floor at Shane Retail Park

The case officer explained to the Committee that planning permission was being sought for the erection of a retail warehouse building for the sale of bulky goods, with an internal mezzanine floor and associated general site works.

She outlined that the site was within the designated development limits for the city within the Area Plan (BMAP 2015) and was unzoned white land located within the Boucher Road area of the city.

The Committee was advised that a review of available sites had indicated that sequentially preferable locations which could accommodate the proposal were available within the primary retail core, city centre and district centres and that the proposal therefore failed the sequential test as set out in the SPPS. However, she outlined that the proposal would not significantly impact on Belfast City Centre or other protected centres.

She also outlined that, in relation to the history of the site, two retail units had been approved on the site in 2009 and, whilst the permission had expired in 2014, it was considered material. The case officer also explained that the restriction to 'bulky goods' sales was compatible with the other units in the Retail Park.

The Members were advised that no representations had been received regarding the proposal and no objections had been received from the relevant consultees.

The Committee granted approval, subject to the conditions set out within the case officer's report and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Place to agree and finalise the wording of the planning conditions.

LA04/2017/0562/F 12 Storey Grade A office Demolition of existing cinema building and erection of a 12 storey Grade A office building, basement parking and the refurbishment of Bankmore Square open space and wider public realm improvements at 14 Dublin Road and Bankmore Square

The Committee was advised that the application sought full permission for a 12 storey office development with ground floor retail, basement parking and the refurbishment of Bankmore Square.

The case officer detailed that the site was located within Belfast City Centre as designated in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan and that it was also within the Shaftesbury Square Character Area (CC013) and along a major road proposal. She continued that the site location adjacent to Bankmore Square, whilst not typical in the area, was ameliorated and its impact somewhat reduced by the particular setting of the large open space area of Bankmore Square. The case officer highlighted that the applicant had taken part in a very productive Pre Application Discussion (PAD) process and that the applicant had also agreed to enter into a Section 76 legal agreement in

respect of developer contributions to provide an update to the public open space of Bankmore Square and to provide public realm improvements around the proposed building.

The Committee received a representation from Mr. C. Shanks, agent. Mr. Shanks advised that the proposal sought demolition of the existing cinema building and the erection of a 12 storey Grade A office building comprising 11 floors of offices above a ground floor foyer, along with retails units, basement parking and other ancillary works. He asked the Committee to note that this was a £65 million capital investment for the City which would generate rates revenue and taxes. Mr. Clyde outlined a range of issues in support of the application and concluded that the build would also create work for the local construction industry.

The Committee approved the application, subject to the imposing of the conditions set out in the case officer's report and, in accordance with Section 76 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2015, delegated power to the Director of Planning and Place, in conjunction with the City Solicitor, to enter into discussions with the applicant to explore the scope of any Planning Agreements which might be realised by way of developer contributions and, if so, to enter into such an Agreement on behalf of the Council. The Committee also delegated power to the Director of Planning and Place to finalise the wording of the conditions.

(Meeting adjourned for 10 minutes at this point)

**LA04/2016/1830/F 21 class primary school and nursery unit
at Holy Evangelist Primary School, Glasvey Drive**

The Committee was advised that this application sought full planning permission for the erection of a new 21 class primary school and nursery unit to replace the existing primary school, associated car parking, landscaping, site works and new access arrangements from Glasvey Drive.

The case officer explained that the proposed site was located within an existing primary school complex, with the replacement building mostly two storeys in height, with a separate detached single storey nursery building.

The Committee was advised that the site was located within the development limits of Belfast in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan and was not subject to any zoning. He outlined that the re-configuration of buildings and open spaces/car parking provision would result in a loss of some open space, contrary to PPS 8, but that given the poor condition of the current school it was considered that the community benefit of improved school facilities outweighed the retention of this space.

The Members noted that no objections had been received from any statutory consultees or the public.

The Committee granted approval, subject to the conditions set out within the case officer's report and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Place to agree and finalise the wording of the planning conditions.

LA04/2016/2276/F conversion to ground floor hot food bar and 4 first/second floor apartments at 137 Albertbridge Road

The case officer advised the Committee that the application sought full planning permission for conversion and change of use from a vacant bookmakers (sui generis) premises to a ground floor hot food bar (sui generis) with first/second floor apartments (4 units) above.

The Committee was advised that the conversion would regenerate a vacant building on an arterial route. He outlined that space standards for accommodation did not apply as the site was on an arterial route and was also a conversion. He pointed out that no representations had been received and that Environmental Health had no objections, subject to appropriate noise and odour proofing being provided.

In response to a Member's query regarding apartments above hot food bars, the case officer explained that two previous applications which had been refused had been overturned on appeal. The Director of Planning and Place agreed to submit regular reports to the Committee outlining any trends which had arisen from Planning Appeals decisions.

The Committee granted approval, subject to the imposing of the conditions as set out within the case officer's report.

LA04/2016/0051/F Residential Building Consisting of six Apartments at 82 Eglantine Avenue

(Councillor Lyons had left the room whilst the item was under consideration)

The case officer outlined that the application was for alterations to the internal layout of 82 Eglantine Avenue, facilitating a new residential building consisting of 6 one bedroom apartments. She provided an overview of the site history and explained to the Members that a number of properties in the surrounding area had been granted extensions and alterations, including an extended rear return, and that demolition consents had been granted for the rear portions of buildings and the retention of front facades.

She explained that the application had been assessed against the SPPS, Planning Policy Statement 3, 6, 7, Addendum to 7, DCAN 8 and 15, Malone Design Guide, Creating Places and Supplementary Guidance – Parking Standards.

She highlighted to the Committee that, under PPS 7 Policy QD1, proposed developments should respect the character of the site by way of an acceptable layout and should present an attractive outlook rather than unsightly views of back land areas. She highlighted to the Committee that apartment 2 within the application would have a rear facing outlook to the communal amenity space and bin/storage area, with the lower half of the windows in the apartment proposed to be obscured to prevent overlooking by other residents while using the communal areas. The Members were advised that this was contrary to policy QD1.

The Members were advised that there had been fifteen objections, four of which had been received after the amended plans had been submitted.

The case officer outlined that, after assessment, the application had been deemed unacceptable and was recommended for refusal.

The Committee received representation from Mr. D. Monaghan, planning consultant. In relation to the outlook from the windows in apartment 2, he advised that a new, 800ft² garden would be created to the rear of the property, exceeding the size required under the relevant design guidance, Creating Places. He explained that the view from the kitchen and living area from the apartment would look onto the garden. In relation to privacy, he advised that the use of low-glare, reflective glazing on windows in apartment 2 would enable the residents to see out while preventing those in the communal areas from being able to see in.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Monaghan for his representation and he retired from the meeting.

During discussion, the case officer explained that reflective glazing, as outlined, would not be sufficient as the Policy document stated that apartments should have a lively outlook and apartment 2 was wholly to the rear, with only a view of the garden and bin area.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Garrett, and
Seconded by Councillor Magee,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the application in order to undertake a site visit to allow the Committee to acquaint itself with the location and the proposal at first hand and that additional information on reflective glazing be submitted to the next meeting.

On a vote by show of hands five Members voted for the proposal and four against and it was declared carried.

LA04/2016/0688/F Conversion of existing Scottish Mutual Building to Boutique Hotel

(Councillor Lyons returned to the Committee table at this point)

The Committee was advised that this proposal sought permission for conversion of the existing Scottish Mutual Building to a Boutique Hotel comprising of public bars, restaurants, functions spaces and hotel bedrooms to include internal and external alterations and additions, including cone roofs and corner turrets, and enclosed external seating areas on Bedford Street.

The case officer outlined that this was a revision to a previously approved scheme and he detailed that these revisions included revised ground and first floor layouts and a formal external seating area along Bedford Street.

The Committee noted that, given the site context and the previous approval which remained extant, the proposed hotel and uses were considered acceptable.

The Committee granted approval, subject to the imposing of the conditions as set out within the case officer's report and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Place to agree and finalise the wording of the planning conditions.

LA04/2016/2466/F 3 storey rear office extension at Newsletter Building 55-59 Donegall Street

The Committee considered an application seeking full planning permission for a 3 storey rear extension to the Newsletter Building on Donegall Street.

The case officer advised that the site of the proposal was located within Belfast City Centre as designated in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan. It was also within the Cathedral Quarter Conservation Area and the Scotch and Cathedral Quarters Character Area. The Committee noted that the principle of the office extension and loss of car parking spaces were acceptable given the city centre location.

The Committee granted approval, subject to the imposing of the conditions set out within the case officer's report.

Z/2014/1277/F residential development at 581 Shore Road

The Committee was advised that this application sought full planning permission for a residential development comprising of 31 dwellings (1 no detached, 12 no semi-detached and 18 no townhouses).

The case officer advised that the site was located within the development limits as designated within the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan and that the principle of residential accommodation on the site was considered acceptable. The proposal was located within an established residential area and was compliant with Policy QD 1 of PPS 7 in that it would create a sustainable and quality residential environment. It was reported that the development respected the surrounding context, there was adequate amenity space provided and the form, materials and design were all in keeping with the area. The Committee noted that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of existing and proposed residents.

The Committee granted approval, subject to the imposing of the conditions as set out within the case officer's report and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Place to agree and finalise the wording of the planning conditions.

LA04/2017/0231/F Variation of conditions, Lidl, Connswater Shopping centre

The case officer outlined the contents of the report and informed the Committee that the application sought planning permission for the variation of condition 2 (gross floorspace restriction) and condition 3 (net retail floorspace restriction) of planning permission LA04/2015/0160/F, variation of condition to permit sales of convenience goods and all types of comparison goods. The application sought to remove reference to the approved floor plan and to allow for the reconfiguration of the ground floor layout and an increase to the overall gross floorspace at Units 2, 3 and 4 at Connswater Retail Park.

The Committee was advised that the proposal would not result in any intensification in use over and above that previously deemed acceptable under application LA04/2015/0160/F, and it was therefore considered that this would not result in any detriment to the amenity of neighbouring properties in accordance with the SPPS.

The Committee granted approval, subject to the imposing of the conditions as set out within the case officer's report and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Place to agree and finalise the wording of the planning conditions.

LA04/2015/0685/F 30 student apartments at 89-101 Royal Avenue

(Councillor Bunting had left the room whilst the item was under consideration)

The Committee was advised that full planning permission was sought for a change of use from office to student apartments on the upper floors (4 in total) with a proposed roof top extension to provide student accommodation with a roof terrace. They were asked to note that alterations would also include restoration to the façade, replacement of windows and refurbishment of the entrances to the building. A total of 30 student apartments was being proposed.

The case officer reported that Sinclair House was a Grade B+ Listed Building occupying a prominent site at the north end of Royal Avenue and that an application for listed building consent had also been submitted alongside this full application.

The Committee was advised that it was considered that the proposed alterations, extension and refurbishment would enhance the appearance of the existing building, which in turn would make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area at this location and ensure the restoration of this Grade B+ listed building.

The Committee granted approval, subject to the imposing of the conditions as set out within the case officer's report and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Place to agree and finalise the wording of the planning conditions.

LA04/2015/1160/F 18 apartments at 165-169 Holywood Road

The case officer advised the Committee that the application sought full planning permission for the demolition of the Stormont Inn and the construction of 18 apartments.

The Committee noted that the proposal had been assessed against the relevant planning policy and having regard to the policy context and Development Plan the proposal was considered to be acceptable.

The Committee granted approval, subject to the imposing of the conditions as set out within the case officer's report and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Place to agree and finalise the wording of the planning conditions.

LA04/2016/0868/F additional retail on the first floor with storage on the second floor at 52-54 Boucher Crescent.

The Committee considered an application seeking full planning permission for the proposed alteration and extension to the rear of the existing Creations premises, to provide additional retail on the first floor with storage on the second floor. Ground floor parking would be retained but rearranged around the existing structure.

The case officer advised that the application had been assessed against the relevant planning policies including BMAP, the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS), PPS 3: Access, Movement and Parking, PPS 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage, and associated supplementary guidance. He highlighted that, in accordance with the requirements of the SPPS, a Retail Impact Assessment had been submitted and, on the basis of the information provided, it was considered that the proposal complied with the SPPS.

The Committee granted approval, subject to the imposing of the conditions as set out within the case officer's report and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Place to agree and finalise the wording of the planning conditions.

LA04/2016/1347/F 7 apartments at 16-18 Glen Road

The Committee was informed that the application sought permission for full planning permission for the demolition of the existing building and erection of 7 Apartments in a single two storey block with associated car parking and landscaping. This was an amended scheme to that which had originally been proposed, which had been for 8 apartments comprising of 2 blocks of 4 apartments.

The case officer highlighted that the site was located within the development limits of Belfast in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan and was identified as whiteland.

The Committee granted approval, subject to the imposing of the conditions as set out within the case officer's report and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Place to consider any late representations and to finalise the wording of the planning conditions.

LA04/2016/2275/F playground and fence on open space adjacent to Glenbryn Park

The Committee considered an application to install a playground for public use and erect a 1.2m high fence around the boundary of the open space with pedestrian access.

The Committee was advised that this was a Belfast City Council application. The case officer informed the Committee that the site was currently zoned for housing in BMAP and that this proposal would not compromise the delivery of housing in the area. He reported that the proposal would provide a significant environmental enhancement in the area and provide a valuable community facility where there was a current under provision.

The Committee granted approval, subject to the imposing of the conditions as set out within the case officer's report and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Place to agree and finalise the wording of the planning conditions.

LA04/2017/0362/F change of use from retail to hot food bar at 368 Upper Newtownards Road

(Councillor Magee who had declared an interest in the next application, withdrew from the table whilst it was under discussion and took no part in the debate or decision-making process.)

The Committee considered an application for the change of use from retail premises to a hot food bar with elevation alterations and rear extraction flue.

The Committee granted approval, subject to the imposing of the conditions as set out within the case officer's report.

LA04/2016/0006/F change of use to ground floor from shop to hot food takeaway at 45 Manor Street

The Committee considered an application for the change of use of the ground floor shop to a hot food takeaway.

The Committee granted approval, subject to the imposing of the conditions as set out within the case officer's report.

LA04/2016/0849/F bookmakers and six apartments at 132-134 Ormeau Road

(Councillor Magee returned to the Committee table at this point)

The Committee considered an application for the part demolition of the rear return and alteration and extension to the existing building, creating a bookmakers at ground floor and six apartments at first and second floor.

The case officer outlined that the proposal was essentially the creation of two additional residential units and a reconfigured bookmaker's office.

The Committee granted approval, subject to the imposing of the conditions as set out within the case officer's report.

LA04/2016/0950/F 7 dwellings at 172 - 174 Finaghy Road South

The Committee was informed that the application sought permission for a residential development comprising 7 detached dwellings with associated car parking and landscaping.

The Committee granted approval, subject to the imposing of the conditions set out within the case officer's report.

Chairperson