



Monitoring Report for Planning Agreements

Including Financial Developer Contributions

2020/21 - 2024/25

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

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

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

Planning Agreements

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

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

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

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

Developer Contributions

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

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

Monitoring

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

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

Local Development Plan

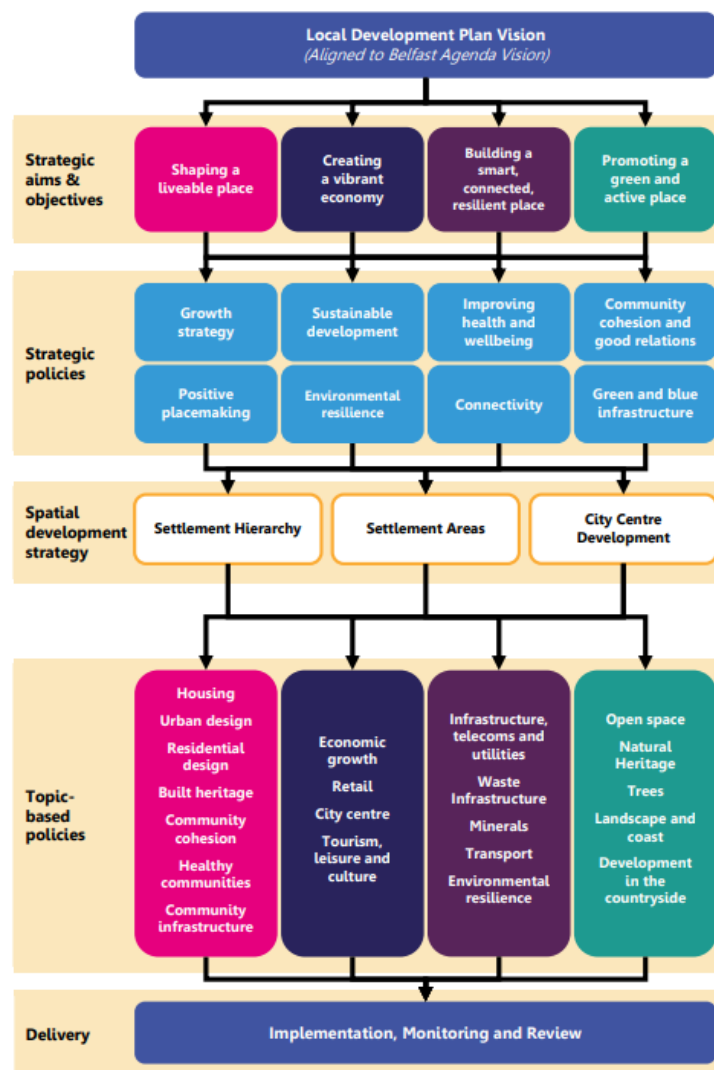
To help deliver the city envisaged in 2035, the LDP identifies a series of strategic aims and related objectives that have been identified below to support the delivery of the vision. The LDP's strategic aims and objectives align with the Belfast Agenda's long-term Outcomes and shorter-term Priorities.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

Figure 1 - Belfast LDP Strategic Aims and Objectives



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

Figure 2 - Belfast LDP Plan Strategy structure

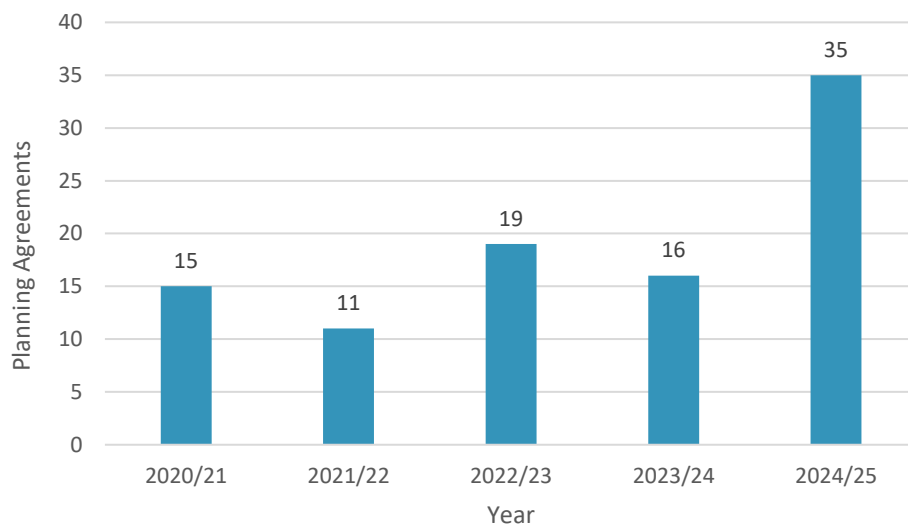


Chapter 2: Planning Agreements

Overview of Planning Agreements

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

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



Overview of Financial Developer Contributions

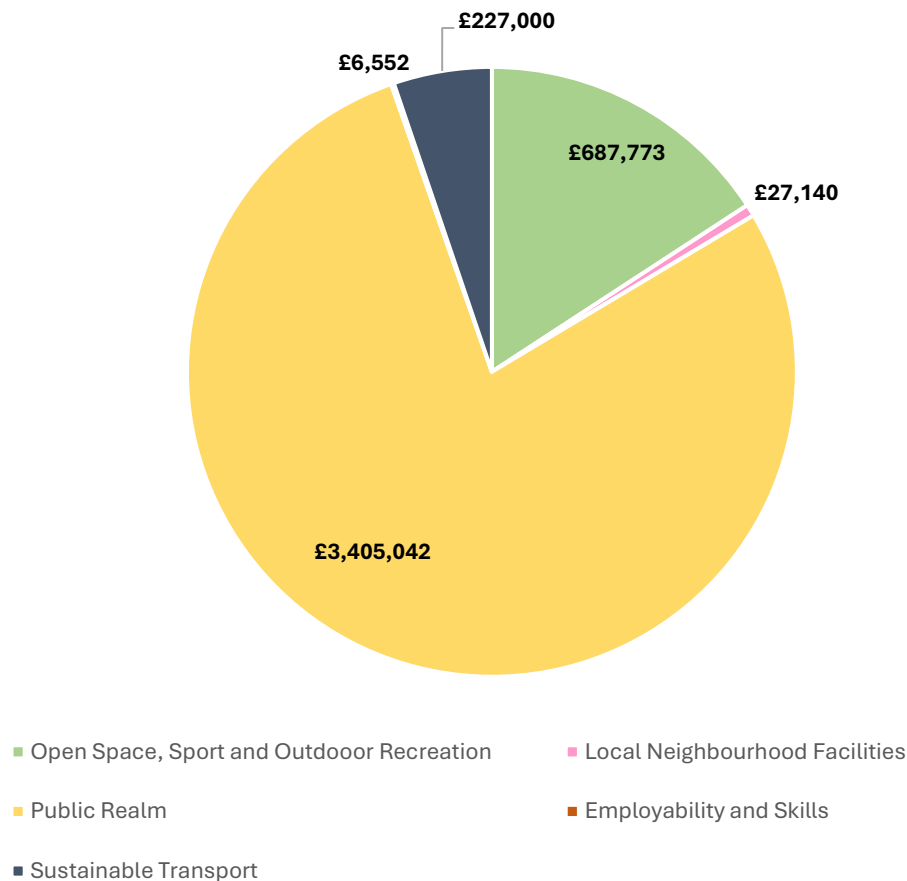
An overview of the Belfast City Council Financial Developer Contributions at 31st March 2025 is provided below:

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Overview of other planning obligations secured through Planning Agreements

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

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

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

Affordable Housing

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

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

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

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

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

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

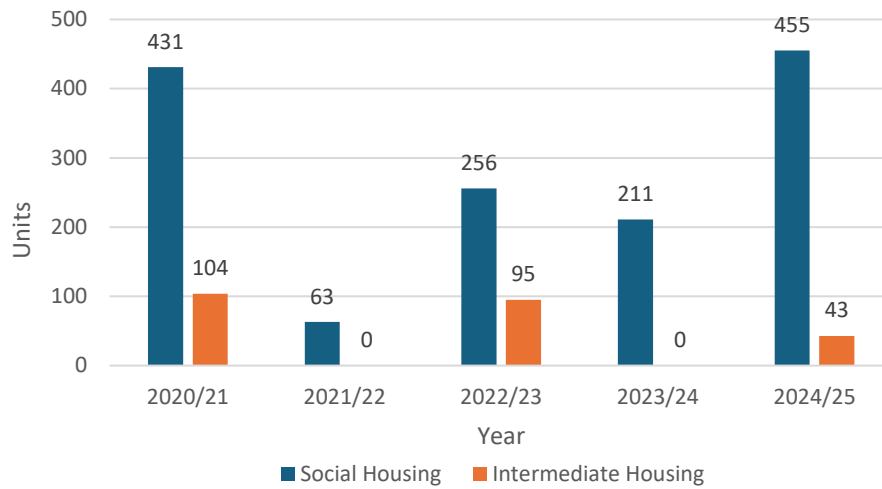
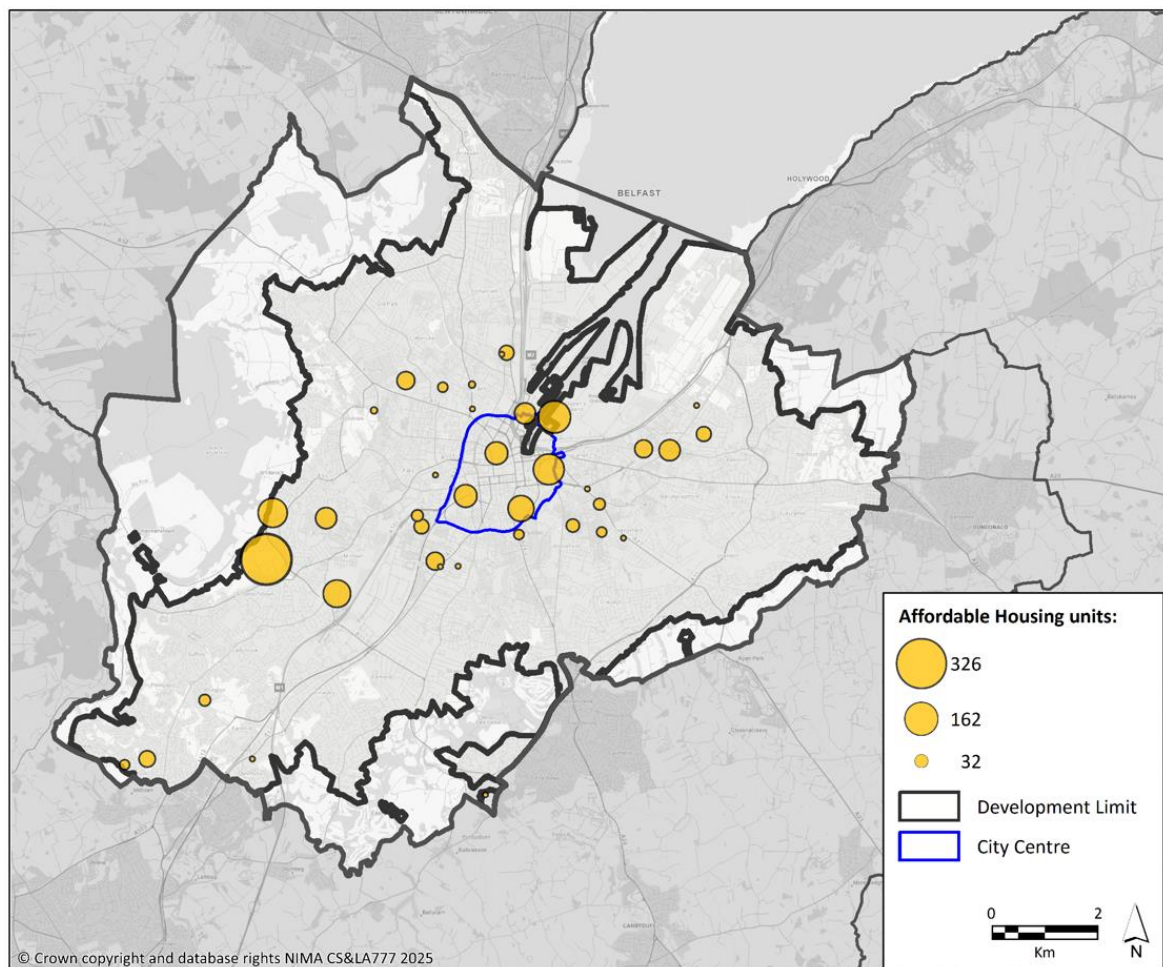


Figure 6 - Distribution of Affordable Housing units secured in principle between 2020/21 – 2024/25



Sustainable Transport

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

- **Travel Plans**

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

- **Travel Cards**

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

- **Bike Offer**

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

- **Car Club**

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

- **Green Travel Measures Fund**

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

- **Public Transport Fund**

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

Chapter 3: Next Steps & Further Information

Next Steps

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

Further Information

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

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

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

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

Appendix 1:

Details of Planning Agreements that require a Financial Developer Contribution

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

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

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

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