

Planning Committee

Tuesday, 10th March, 2026

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

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

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

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 17th February 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 March, 2026.

Declarations of Interest

The Chairperson declared an interest in relation to item 9m on the agenda, in that he had been involved in conversations around the erection of the ballstop fencing at the site.

Alderman McLaughlin declared an interest in relation to item 9l on the agenda, in that he had been involved in various projects at the application site.

Councillor Magee declared an interest in relation to item 8a on the agenda, in that he had previously undertaken work at the application site.

Withdrawn Items

The Committee noted that the following three items had been withdrawn from the agenda:

- LA04/2025/0288/F - Retrospective change of use from ground floor taxi passenger terminal, cafe, office

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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;

- 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 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). - 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); and
- 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 (amended plans and description to remove reference to demotion of number 39 Summerhill Park). - Stormont Hotel, 587 Upper Newtownards Road.

Committee Site Visit

The Committee noted the site visits and agreed that consideration of the following three applications would be deferred in order for site visits to take place:

- LA04/2025/0594/F - Change of use from 4 bedroom residential property (C1) with to 5 bed HMO with occupancy of 5 (Sui Generis) - 163 Ballygomartin Road;

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- LA04/2025/1002/F - Change of use from 4 bed residential dwelling (C1) to 5 bedroom HMO (suis generis) with occupancy for 5 people - 24 Rutherglen Street; and
- LA04/2025/1350/F - Change of Use from 3 bed Dwelling (Class C1) to 5-bed, 5-person HMO (sui generis) - 29 Glencairn Street.

Planning Appeals Notified

The Committee noted the appeals decisions.

Planning Decisions Issued

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

Live Applications for Major Development

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

Committee Decisions that have yet to issue

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

Miscellaneous Reports

Planning Performance Framework

The Committee noted the Planning Performance Framework and the intention to bring a performance report to future meeting of the Committee.

Local Applications subject to NI Water Objections

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

**Planning Learning and Engagement Programme
- Request for Nominations**

The Committee agreed to nominate Councillors Groogan and White to the Task and Finish Advisory Group for NILGA's Planning Learning and Engagement Programme.

Planning Applications previously considered

**LA04/2024/0483/F and LA04/2024/0480/DCA -
Proposed change of use from Office (B1) and
restaurant (Sui Generis) to Hotel comprising of**

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88 no. bedrooms, two storey rooftop extension, restaurant and bar offerings, gym facilities, including new dormer windows on roof, internal and external refurbishment and alterations, and all associated site works. Part demolition of existing buildings (stripping back of roof, shopfront and other external alterations to facilitate change of use and extension of buildings to hotel use. - 34-44 Bedford Street and 6 Clarence Street

The Planning Manager explained that the application had been approved by the Committee, at its meeting in October, 2024, subject to a Section 76 planning agreement to secure a Construction Employability and Skills Plan.

He reported that, despite repeated requests, the applicant had still to complete and sign the Section 76 planning agreement and therefore the decision notice could not be issued. He stated that the application was before the Committee for reconsideration.

He outlined the proposal to the Committee and explained that it was an important regeneration scheme that would see the renovation of the existing rundown buildings within the Conservation Area with a new vibrant hotel use. He added that it was considered to be in the public interest for the Council to grant the planning permission in order to increase the chances of the scheme being implemented so that its benefits could be realised and, therefore, it was recommended that the Construction Employability and Skills Plan be secured by condition rather than a Section 76 planning agreement as originally intended.

The Committee granted planning permission and Conservation Area Consent, subject to conditions.

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

LA04/2024/0015/F - Erection of 53 residential units (including 43 dwellings and 10 apartments) including creation of access, internal roads, landscaping and associated works (revised information). - Lands at Cabin Hill, Upper Newtownards Road

The Senior Planning Officer summarised the application for the Committee and explained that the Committee had deferred consideration of the application, at its meeting in February, in order to review additional information following a fire at the application site, prior to the Committee meeting.

He reported that officers had subsequently carried out a further site visit and reported that the fire had been confined to a small area within the auditorium building at the back of the

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site. He stated that the fire incident had no material impact on the assessment of the application.

He provided an overview of the application and highlighted the following key areas for consideration:

- Principle of housing in the location;
- Housing density;
- Affordable housing;
- Housing mix;
- Adaptable and accessible accommodation;
- Design, placemaking and landscape impact;
- New open space;
- Impact on heritage assets;
- Climate change;
- Residential quality and impact on amenity;
- Open space;
- Access parking, and transport;
- Health impacts;
- Environmental protection;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Natural heritage;
- Section 76 planning agreement; and
- Pre-application Community Consultation.

He stated that having regard to the Development Plan and other material considerations, on balance, it was recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. C. Bryson, Gravis Planning Agent, to the meeting.

Mr. Bryson stated that he fully endorsed the officer's recommendation to approve the proposal which would deliver 53 residential units within the settlement limit of Belfast and regenerate an underutilised brownfield site.

He stated that the application site was a sustainable location and that green travel measures had been proposed to offer future residents the option of travel cards, car club membership, bicycle vouchers and Belfast Bikes membership.

He explained that the proposed development had been demonstrated to be in accordance with both regional and local planning policy and as such, the applicant respectfully requested that the Committee endorse the officer's recommendation to approve the application.

In response to a question from a Member, Mr. Bryson provided reassurance that measures were in place at the site of the adjacent listed building to keep it secure.

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Restricted Information

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the Developer’s viability information, as, due to the nature of the information, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

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 finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, and to deal with any other issues that might arise, provided the issues were not substantive.

Planning Applications

LA04/2025/0574/F - 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 - Surface level car park at lands to east of Lanyon Place Station Mays Meadow

The Principal Planning Officer presented the application and provided an overview of the proposed eight-storey office development with associated retail and public realm improvements.

She highlighted the following key considerations:

- Principle of the proposed uses;
- Design and placemaking;
- Impact on heritage assets;
- Impact on amenity;
- Climate change;
- Open space;
- Access and transport ;
- Health impacts;
- Environmental protection;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Natural heritage;
- Waste management; and
- Pre-Application Community Consultation.

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She reported that no third-party objections had been received and that the Council's Environmental Health Service and Urban Design Officer had raised no objections. She explained that NI Water had objected due to network capacity issues but that it was considered unreasonable to withhold planning permission on those grounds as an appropriate planning condition could be imposed to restrict development until a satisfactory agreement was reached with NI Water.

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

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other issues that might arise, including those raised in the further consultation responses from DfI Road Services, provided that the issues were not substantive.

LA04/2025/1272/F - Erection of temporary mobile classroom village to facilitate future refurbishment and extension of existing Harberton North Special School, comprising 3 no. 2-storey blocks of temporary classroom accommodation, temporary hard play areas, temporary staff and visitor parking areas, tree removal and landscaping. (Amended Plans) - Harberton North Special School 29a Fortwilliam Park

The Principal Planning Officer summarised the application for the Committee and highlighted the following key areas for consideration:

- Principle of development;
- The impact of the proposal on the conservation area and setting of listed buildings;
- Trees and landscaping;
- The impact on the amenity of adjacent land users;
- Access, movement, and parking;
- Climate change;
- Drainage and sewage infrastructure;
- Noise, air quality and other environmental impacts including contamination; and
- Ecological issues.

She stated that, having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it was recommended that temporary planning permission be granted, to 30th September, 2030, subject to conditions.

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LA04/2025/1003/F - Proposed use of 300 No. Student Bedrooms/Studios as Short Term Let Accommodation outside of term time - 81-107 York Street

The Principal Planning Officer provided an overview of the application and explained that the key issues for consideration were the principle of the proposed change of use outside of term time and access, movement and parking.

She stated that one representation had been received from the Northern Ireland Hotel Federation siting concern with regard to the definition of term time and clarity of use, monitoring and enforcement issues, neighbourhood amenity, precedent and policy alignment.

She reported that, in addition to the case officer's report, a letter had been received from the University of Ulster in support of the application and that DfI Roads had been consulted and had offered no objection to the application.

The Principal Planning Officer explained that a Section 77 planning agreement, to vary the Section 76 planning agreement, was necessary and agreed in principle with Legal Services.

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

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions, resolve the relevant Section 77 to vary the host Section 76 Planning Agreement, and to deal with any other issues that might arise, provided that they were not substantive.

LA04/2025/0973/F - Retrospective change of use from student accommodation to short term lets accommodation (limited to July & August only) - Bradbury Place 30-44 Bradbury Place

The Principal Planning Officer outlined the application and stated that the key issue for consideration was the principle of the proposed change of use outside of term time which had been approved under LA04/2017/2753/F.

She stated that one representation had been received from the Northern Ireland Hotel Federation which outlined its concern with regard to the definition of term time and clarity of use, monitoring and enforcement issues, neighbourhood amenity, precedent and policy alignment. She added that DfI Roads had been consulted and had no objections.

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The Principal Planning Officer explained that a Section 77 planning agreement, to vary the Section 76 planning agreement, was necessary and agreed in principle with Legal Services.

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

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions, resolve the relevant Section 77, and to deal with any other issues that might arise, provided that they were not substantive.

LA04/2025/0837/F - Demolition of Mount Masonic Hall, erection of 35 no. social housing units in 2 no. blocks with associated private, shared, communal, and public space, 29 no. private car parking spaces, vehicle and pedestrian access from Park Avenue, improvements to pedestrian steps linking Strandburn Drive to Sydenham Park, and demolition of 1no. garage. - Land of the former Mount Masonic Hall, 45 Park Avenue

The Principal Planning Officer summarised the application and explained that the proposal was for 100% social housing which was supported by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and would comprise of two detached blocks and 21 resident parking bays, 8 visitor parking bays, amenity provision, landscaping, cycle parking and associated works.

She reported that three letters of objection had been received and the issues raised had been addressed within the report.

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

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. D. Worthington, Pragma Planning, to the meeting.

Mr. Worthington explained that the proposal would deliver 35 new social housing apartments for people aged over 55, in partnership with Alpha Housing Association that would address a significant unmet need for social housing in the Middle East Belfast Housing Need Area, particularly for accommodation suitable for older residents.

He stated that the scheme represented the redevelopment of a vacant brownfield site within the development limits of Belfast and that the design had been carefully developed to respond to the topography of the site and the surrounding context.

He stated that the proposal would provide wider community benefits beyond the housing itself and included the full replacement and upgrading of the public pedestrian steps which connected Strandburn Drive to Sydenham Park.

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He addressed concerns which had been raised by neighbouring residents and highlighted that the proposal had received support or no objection from key consultees and was compliant with relevant planning policies. He requested that the Committee supported the recommendation to approve the application.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

The Committee delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, to include the requirement for a Construction Environmental Management Plan, and to deal with any other matters that might arise, including resolving final responses from NIEA: NED and Trees, provided that they were not substantive.

LA04/2025/0463/F - Proposed change of use of Vacant Warehouse to indoor Padel Court Facility to include, Cafe, Changing rooms, Gym, Picklecourts and ancillary site development works - Decco Ltd 1-5 Redcar Street

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application and explained that the key issues for consideration were the principle of use, the impact on the character of the area, impact on existing residential amenity, access and transportation, impact on natural and built heritage, wastewater infrastructure, landscaping and environmental matters.

She reported that four representations had been received in objection to the proposal which were detailed and addressed within the case officer's report. She added that an objection from NI Water was to be resolved and that no further objections from consultees had been received.

The Principal Planning Officer stated that it was recommended that the application be approved, subject to conditions.

The Committee granted planning application, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions, resolve a final consultation response from NI Water and to deal with any other issues that might arise, provided that they were not substantive.

LA04/2025/0951/F - Proposed 25m monopole with 6no. antennas, 4no. transmission dishes, 2no. equipment cabinets and ancillary development thereto. - Loughside playing fields, Shore Road

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The Principal Planning officer summarised the application and drew the Committee's attention to an error in the report and clarified that the application had not been made by the Council, however, the application site was Council owned land.

She reported that the proposal was contrary to Policies ITU1 and OS1 of the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2035 as the siting, height, scale and design of the proposal would negatively impact on the area of protected open space and that the application did not demonstrate that community benefits would decisively outweigh the loss of the open space.

She stated that it was recommended that the application be refused.

The Committee agreed to refuse the application and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the refusal reasons and to deal with any other issues that might arise, provided they were not substantive.

(The Chairperson (Councillor Murphy) retired from the meeting, Deputy Chairperson (Councillor Sammy Douglas) in the chair.)

LA04/2025/1692/F - Extension of existing ballstop fencing from 5m to 8m along three sides. This will total 220m in length. (Amended Proposal Description) - Existing soccer pitch at Marrowbone Millenium Park (approx. 25m north of No. 8 Ardoyne Court), Ardoyne Avenue

The Principal Planning Officer outlined the application to the Committee and stated that it was recommended that the application be approved, subject to conditions.

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

Restricted Item

The information contained in the following report was restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following items as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Members were also reminded that the content of 'restricted' reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as 'confidential information' and that no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

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Quarter 3 Finance Report - 2025/2026

The Committee noted the report and associated financial reporting pack.

Chairperson