

Planning Committee

Tuesday, 19th May, 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 and McCann.

Also attended: Councillors Bower and Collins.

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

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Whyte.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 21st 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 5th May, 2026.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Committee Site Visits

The Committee noted the site visits.

Notifications from Statutory Bodies: Listing and De-Listing of Structures

The Committee noted the undernoted notifications from statutory bodies:

- The proposed de-listing of Friar's Bush Graveyard;
- The proposed listing of 51 Malone Park; and

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- The confirmation of listing of the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, Gardner Robb Building and the Former Nurses' Home, Mater Hospital.

Planning Appeals Notified

The Committee noted the appeals decisions.

Planning Decisions Issued

The Committee noted the planning decisions issued in April, 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

Notice of Opinion from the Department for Infrastructure: application SPD/2023/0991/F section 54 application to remove condition 5 (restricting the number of daily Belfast to Dublin train services) on planning permission LA04/2017/1388/F for a new integrated Public Transport Interchange (the Belfast Transport Hub)

The Committee noted the Notice of Opinion and advises DfI that the Council did not wish to appear before or be heard by the Planning Appeals Commission, or a person appointed by the Department for the purposes of a hearing.

Response to NI Assembly Committee for Infrastructure Call for Evidence in respect of the impact of planning on regionally significant and capital infrastructure projects.

The Committee agreed that officers would frame a response to the call for evidence in respect of the impact of planning on regionally significant and capital infrastructure projects.

Planning Committee Review of Implemented Applications 2026

The Committee agreed to the arrangements for site visits to implemented schemes in 2026 and that further suggestions for any other specific schemes would be directed to the Planning Manager (Development Management).

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Local Applications subject to NI Water Objections

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

Planning Applications

LA04/2025/2033/F - Variation of conditions, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 24, 25 and 27 of planning approval LA04/2023/2459/F to allow for phasing of the development - The Maynard Sinclair Pavilion Stormont Estate

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

- Principle of the development; and
- The impact of proposed phasing.

She reported that DfC: HED, DAERA, Environmental Health and BCC Trees had offered no objection to the proposed variation, subject to amendments to conditions. She added that one objection had been received that had raised concerns with regard to parking which had been addressed within the report.

She stated that, having regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies and consultation responses, it was considered that the application for variation of conditions be approved.

The Committee granted planning permission for the variation of conditions 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 24, 25 and 27 of planning approval LA04/2023/2459/F and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the conditions and to deal with any other matters which might arise, provided that they were not substantive

LA04/2026/0393/F - Temporary planning approval for a caravan / campervan / motorhome site, with ancillary facilities including communal recreational spaces, toilets, showers, waste disposal points, food and drink area, site office, waste collection, lights, storage areas and all associated temporary structures and works - Lands at the Titanic Quarter, between Hamilton Road, Queens Road and Sydenham Road. Immediately NE, E and SE of Belfast Metropolitan College, approximately 150m SE of Titanic Hotel, 8 Queens Road

The Principal Planning Officer summarised the report for the Committee and explained that DfI Roads had offered no objections, Environmental Health had requested a future noise assessment and that no third-party objections had been received.

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She stated that the application was compliant with policies TLC1, ENV2, ENV3, ENV5, TRAN1, TRAN2 and TRAN8 and that it was recommended that the application be approved, subject to conditions.

The Committee granted planning permission and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to resolve a final response from Environmental Health, finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any matters which might arise, provided that they were not substantive.

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

The Principal Planning Officer outlined the application to the Committee and highlighted the following key issues for consideration:

- Principle of the proposed use;
- Proposed demolition of dwelling;
- Design;
- Impact on amenity;
- Impact on built heritage;
- Climate change;
- Health impacts;
- Access and transportation;
- Natural heritage;
- Environmental protection;
- Wastewater infrastructure; and
- Trees and landscaping.

She reported that statutory consultees had raised no objections, that the application had been neighbour notified and advertised in the local press and that 24 representations and a petition had been received.

She explained that the main concerns raised were an increase in traffic and deliveries, road safety, noise and light pollution and that a retail impact assessment had not been submitted.

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She stated that the concerns raised had been dealt with in the case officer's report and that, with regards to the traffic and road safety concerns, DfI Roads had confirmed that it was content with the proposal.

The Principal Planning Officer stated that, having regard to the Development Plan and other material considerations, the proposal was considered to be acceptable and it was recommended that planning permission be granted.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Bower to the meeting who attended in objection to the application.

Councillor Bower stated that she was speaking on behalf of a large number of residents who had contacted her with concerns about the application and felt that it raised a number of material planning concerns.

She explained that the proposal required the loss of an existing dwelling and whilst demolition itself would not require planning permission, the loss of housing was a material consideration as it was not a derelict or unusable home.

She stated that there were concerns around residential amenity in that the intensification of commercial activity immediately beside homes would increase vehicle movement, forecourt noise and general activity levels.

She added that pedestrian safety must be considered given that the area around the application site had no pedestrian crossing and DfI had no plans to install one.

She concluded by stating that these were policy relevant concerns that merit significant weight.

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. C. Heatley to the meeting, a local resident speaking in objection to the application.

Ms. Heatley stated that she was speaking on behalf of local residents in the Gilnahirk area who strongly opposed the proposed expansion. She explained that local residents had lodged numerous objections and a petition that highlighted their areas of concern.

She stated that she believed that the following areas of concern should be given further consideration:

- The size of the planned extension;
- Increased levels of traffic, noise and pollution;
- The local demand for the supermarket;
- Installation of five self-service tills would not create additional employment;
- Light pollution; and

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- Retail expansion into a primarily residential area.

Ms. Heatley asked the Committee to reject the planning application.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. E. Loughry from Inaltus and Mr. J. Maneeley, Clarman Architects, to the meeting, who were attending on behalf of the applicant.

Mr. Loughry stated that the applicant, Maxol, had undertaken a voluntary pre-application community consultation exercise and, as a result, had made a number of changes to its application before submission, that included provision of hedging and tree planting along the boundary, removal of previously proposed pedestrian access, deli counter, seating areas, provision of dedicated safer pedestrian access routes and provision of a pitched roof to the extension.

He stated that the proposal was a modest extension to the petrol station and associated shop that would replace the dwelling at 50 Gilnahirk Road. He explained that the extension would be single story with a pitch roof and similar to the height of the existing dwelling.

He stated that Maxol had served the local community for many years and was investing £2million into the proposal for the renewal and improvement of retail services and, whilst he was aware of the objections which had been raised, he didn't think they would support a refusal. He outlined how the proposal would not affect the privacy of any surrounding homes, would not erode residential character, that light spill would be controlled by condition, that the application satisfied planning policy and was supported by technical reports related to retailing, traffic, noise, drainage, ecology, demolition, climate change and design.

Mr. Loughrey asked the Committee to approve the application.

In response to a question from a Member with regard to community consultation, Mr. Loughrey stated that he had undertaken a leaflet drop, advertised in a local newspaper and that representatives from Maxol had attended a consultation event at the Stormont Hotel to address some of the concerns which had been raised by residents.

A number of Members asked questions with regard to increased traffic and parking and its impact on amenity. Mr. Loughrey responded by stating that there was no anticipation of the additional staff parking in the area, rather that they would travel to work by foot or public transport and that additional customers would be those from the local area undertaking additional top-up shops.

A Member asked the Principal Planning Officer how much weight was given to Members who had first-hand experience of the area over parking surveys and stated that it was evident from the recent Committee site visit that there was congestion in the existing traffic network in the area. The Principal Planning Officer responded by explaining that, when DfI undertake the parking assessments, they look at whether the parking within the site is in line with the parking standards within the proposal and that DfI had stated that the proposal met the standards and had no concerns.

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Proposal

Moved by Alderman Lawlor,
Seconded by Alderman Rodgers,

“That the Committee refuses the application on the grounds that the proposal would result in the loss of an existing dwelling and would not be complimentary to the surrounding residential uses, the loss of character and the impact on existing residential amenity, contrary to Policy HOU3 a.”

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

The Committee delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the reasons for refusal.

LA04/2025/1661/F - Installation of a new floating pontoon to replace the existing wooden jetty - River bank approximately 150m north east of Shaws Bridge Car Park

The Planning Manager summarised the application for the Committee and highlighted the following key issues for consideration:

- Principle of development;
- Impact on amenity; and
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area.

He reported that no objections had been received from consultees and that no representations had been received.

He stated that it was recommended that the application be approved, with conditions, subject to an outstanding response from the Historic Environment Division.

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

LA04/2025/2090/F - Creation of hardstanding and widening of vehicular access to front of dwelling. (Retrospective) - 38 Hillhead Avenue

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the application and outlined the following key issues:

- Design and impact on the character of the area;
- Impact on neighbouring amenity;

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- Road safety and car parking; and
- Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

He reported that seven letters of representation had been received from a neighbouring objector and the issues raised had been addressed within the case officer's report. He added that DfI Roads had been consulted and offered no objection to the proposals, subject to condition.

He stated that it was recommended that the application be approved with conditions.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Collins to the meeting, speaking in objection to the proposal.

Councillor Collins stated that the objection neighbour had concerns with regard to water on her property. He explained that it was a health and safety issue as the water had the potential to cause the objectors driveway to become slippery due to excess water or ice.

He suggested to the Committee that it undertake a site visit before it considers the application.

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. A. McParland to the meeting, speaking in objection to the application.

Ms McParland explained that the works carried out had materially altered the ground levels, gradient and drainage pattern of the site which had caused a direct impact onto her property.

She stated that, following the building works, an air vent on the front wall of the house sat flush with the new paving and was a clear indication that the level of the property had been raised significantly.

She stated that an impermeable asphalt area to the side of the property was not included in the submitted plans and that the change in gradient had resulted in direct runoff towards the shared boundary and her property. She explained that there were no proper integrated drainage measures on the site which had resulted in water flowing across the front of her gates and across the public footpath, instead of being managed within the site or directly safely to the road gully.

She refuted DfI's claim that a video she had submitted illustrating runoff problems had been taken during a yellow rain warning and stated that DfI undertaking remedial works was a clear indication that the works carried out by the applicant had caused runoff problems.

She concluded by stating that she had no issue with the applicant improving or enhancing their property, however, the volume of impermeable asphalt and artificially altered gradients had created health and safety concerns. She asked the Committee to refuse the application or defer consideration to allow for the Committee to undertake a site visit to the application site.

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The Committee granted planning permission 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

Draft SPG on Short Term Let Accommodation

The Development Planning and Policy Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the draft Short Term Let Supplementary Planning Guidance which had been developed in response to the challenges faced by short term lets across the city.

The Committee agreed to publish the draft Supplementary Planning Guidance on short term let accommodation for public consultation.

Chairperson