

Planning Committee

Tuesday, 18th August, 2026

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

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

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. P. O'Reilly, Senior Planning Officer; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Councillors Abernethy, McCabe and Whyte.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 16th June were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st July, 2026.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Murphy declared an interest in relation to the item under the heading "Revisions to terrestrial elements of Planning Permission ref. LA04/2016/0421/F (Construction of a new multi-purpose berthing facility at D3) comprising upgrade of existing access track along northeastern boundary of site and installation of associated street lighting/parking area; additional security hut; relocation and extension of main cruise terminal building and associated parking/drop-off areas with covered walkways; additional baggage building; and other associated site works in respect of lighting, landscaping and ancillary infrastructure. Retention of approved cruise quay with minor relocation of mooring dolphins, 25m wide piled relieving slab along quay length, associated hardstanding on hinterland, tower lights (with one to be relocated), security hut, access road adjacent to RSPB lands and other ancillary works" in that he was on the board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners and he left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

Councillor McCullough declared an interest in relation to the item under the heading "LA04/2025/0110/F - Resurfacing and minor extension of existing 3G pitch; replacement floodlighting; 50 seater covered mini-stand (3.8m tall by 7.5m long and 3.3m wide); additional 1.2m fencing enclosure to pitch; replacement dugouts: storage container (3.6m by 2.4m); removal of portacabin and associated minor works/drainage modifications. - Hammer Playing Pitch Agnes Street, Shankill Road" in that his colleagues were associated with the proposal and he left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

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Planning Appeals Notified

The Committee noted the appeals decisions.

Planning Decisions Issued

The Committee noted the planning decisions issued in June and July, 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

**Updating Customers on Live
Planning Enforcement Cases**

The Committee noted the proposed changes to the Planning Service's approach to providing updates on live enforcement cases to customers and elected representatives.

Planning Applications

LA04/2024/2134/F - Mixed use scheme for new community recreational facilities, including basketball court, parkland and residential development comprising 37no social/affordable housing units with landscaping and associated works. - Site of the former Dunmurry Cricket Club, Ashley Park, Dunmurry, Belfast BT17 0QQ, located north of 1-10 Ashley Park and south of 1-20 Areema Grove and Areema Drive

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with a summary of the application and highlighted the following key areas for consideration:

- Principle of housing in the location (including protection of open space);
- Landscape impact;
- Housing density;
- Affordable housing;
- Housing mix;
- Adaptable and accessible accommodation;
- Design and placemaking;
- Climate change;
- Residential quality and impact on amenity;
- Access and transport;
- Environmental protection;

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- Flood risk and drainage;
- Natural heritage; and
- Section 76 planning agreement.

He explained that 16 third-party objections had been received and summarised the concerns which had been raised, that no objections had been received from DfI Rivers, NI Water or Environmental Health and that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive supported the proposal for 100% social housing. He added that consultation responses were still outstanding from DAERA NIEA or Shared Environmental Services.

The Planning Manager outlined the issues for consideration in relation to the proposal, with a particular focus on the issues of loss of protected open space and landscape impact.

He stated that the proposal was considered to be contrary to Policy OS1 in that it would result in the loss of protected open space and that the exception test of the proposal bringing substantial community benefits that decisively outweighed the loss of open space had not been met, furthermore, that the proposal was considered to be contrary Policies LC1 and LC1C in that, if approved, it would significantly erode the character of the Local Landscape Policy Area and would not protect, restore or improve the quality and amenity of the landscape, contrary to Policy LC1, he added that the proposal would have a significant adverse impact on the amenity, character and environmental quality of the area.

He stated that it was recommended that the application be refused, due to the loss of protected open space and adverse landscape impact.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. R. Moore, Ms. G. Jobling and Mr. A. Bunbury to the meeting, attending on behalf of the applicant.

Ms. Jobling explained that the principal issue before the Committee was the loss of designated open space and that Policy OS1 established a strong presumption of protection of lands but also recognised exceptional circumstances where redevelopment can be permitted where substantial community benefits outweigh the loss of open space.

She stated that the decision was one of planning balance and asserted that the proposal represented a unique opportunity to deliver meaningful community development on a site that had not been performing its former recreational function for more than a decade, was inaccessible and had attracted fly tipping and antisocial behaviour.

She stated that the proposal was not to replace open space with housing but rather for housing and open space that would retain more than half of the site as open space that would be transformed into open parkland with walking routes and a children's playpark alongside 37 much needed social and affordable homes in an area of acute unmet housing need.

She further outlined the community benefits within the proposal and how it could contribute positively the area and that the substantial community benefits would greatly outweigh the loss of open space and asked the Committee to approve the application.

In response to a question from a Member with regard to the involvement of housing associations, Ms. Jobling explained that the applicant had engaged with a number of housing associations and discussions were still ongoing.

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Proposal

Moved by Councillor McCann,
Seconded by Councillor Magee,

“That planning permission be granted on the basis that the community benefit greatly outweighs the loss of open space. “

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Groogan,
Seconded by Councillor Bell,

“That consideration of the application be deferred until outstanding consultation responses have been received from DAERA NIEA, Shared Environmental Services and NI Water.”

On a vote, nine Members voted for the Amendment and seven against and it was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the application until outstanding consultation responses had been received from DAERA NIEA, Shared Environmental Services and NI Water.

LA04/2026/0442/F - Revisions to terrestrial elements of Planning Permission ref. LA04/2016/0421/F (Construction of a new multi-purpose berthing facility at D3) comprising upgrade of existing access track along northeastern boundary of site and installation of associated street lighting/ parking area; additional security hut; relocation and extension of main cruise terminal building and associated parking/drop-off areas with covered walkways; additional baggage building; and other associated site works in respect of lighting, landscaping and ancillary infrastructure. Retention of approved cruise quay with minor relocation of mooring dolphins, 25m wide piled relieving slab along quay length, associated hardstanding on hinterland, tower lights (with one to be relocated), security hut, access road adjacent to RSPB lands and other ancillary works. - Land at D3 adjacent to the RSPB Reserve Airport Road West

The Senior Planning Officer summarised the application and outlined the following key considerations:

- Principle of development at the location;
- Design, Placemaking and impact on amenity;
- Landscape impact;

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- Masterplanning approach;
- Built heritage;
- Natural heritage;
- Climate change;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH);
- Environmental protection;
- Waste management;
- Employability and skills; and
- Pre-application Community Consultation.

He reported that no third-party representations had been received in respect of the application and that no objections had been received from consultees and that responses were still outstanding from DAERA NIEA, SES and Waste Management.

He stated that, having regard to the Development Plan and other material considerations, the application was considered acceptable and 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, and to deal with and any other issues that might arise, including the outstanding consultation responses from DAERA NIEA, SES and BCC Waste Management team, provided the issues were not substantive.

**LA04/2026/0282/F - Renewal of application reference
LA04/2020/0659/F - Refurbishment of existing four storey
terrace including alteration, extension to rear, partial
demolition and reinstatement. Part change of use from
art galleries to two cafes at ground floor. Retention of
offices within existing building at second, third and
fourth floor. Erection of new 13 storey aparthotel
building to rear and associated works including
public realm improvements - 29-33 Bedford Street**

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

- Approach to assessing a renewal application;
- Principle of hotel and café use at the location;
- Economic benefits;
- Impact on built heritage and the principle of demolition in the conservation area;
- Scale, height, massing and design;
- Impact on traffic and parking;
- Impact on amenity;
- Climate change;
- Promoting healthy communities;

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- Waste-water capacity;
- Waste management;
- Impact on human health;
- Impact on the amenity of adjacent land users;
- Developer contributions; and
- Pre-Application Community Consultation.

He stated that one representation had been received from the BBC which raised concerns with regard to noise conflict during construction and operations and he stated that the issues had been addressed within the case officer's report. He added no objections had been received from consultees other than from DfC HED and the Council's conservation advice which raised concerns with regard to the height of the 13-storey aparthotel and adverse impact on the setting of Listed Buildings and the Conservation Area.

He explained that policy issues had not been significantly changed since consideration of the previous application, that the height, scale and massing were considered acceptable, having regard to the context of the site and other tall buildings in the vicinity, that the setting of Listed Buildings would not be harmed and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would be preserved.

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

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Groogan,
Seconded by Councillor T. Brooks,

“That the application be refused on the grounds that the application is contrary to the advice of the Council's Conservation Officer and the objection received from DfC HED.”

On a vote, four Members voted for the proposal and ten against and it was declared lost.

The Chairperson put the officer's recommendation to the Committee and upon audible dissent, called for a vote.

On a vote, ten Members voted for the recommendation and four against and it was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Committee approved the renewal of 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 matters that might arise, provided that they were not substantive.

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long and 3.3m wide); additional 1.2m fencing
enclosure to pitch; replacement dugouts;
storage container (3.6m by 2.4m); removal
of portacabin and associated minor works/
drainage modifications. - Hammer Playing
Pitch Agnes Street, Shankill Road**

The Committee considered the case officer's report and granted planning permission, subject to conditions, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the Habitats Regulations Assessment, the wording of the conditions and to deal with any other matters that might arise, provided that they were not substantive.

**LA04/2026/0928/LBC - Building fabric investigation
works prior to restoration - Bank Of Ireland
Buildings, 92-100 Royal Avenue**

The Committee considered the case officer's report and granted Listed Building Consent, 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 matters that might arise, provided that they were not substantive.

Chairperson