



3 December 2025

Committee Chair: Councillor R Kinnear

Committee Vice-Chair: Councillor S Flanagan

Committee Members: Aldermen – L Boyle, T Campbell and M Magill

Councillors – J Archibald-Brown, A Bennington, S Cosgrove, H Cushinan, B Mallon, R Foster and AM Logue

Dear Member

MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Planning Committee will be held in the **Council Chamber, Mossley Mill on Monday 8 December 2025 at 6.00 pm.**

You are requested to attend.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Baker".

Richard Baker, GM, MSc
Chief Executive, Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council

PLEASE NOTE: Refreshments will be available from 5.00 pm in the Café

For any queries please contact Member Services:

Tel: 028 9448 1301/ 028 9034 0107

memberservices@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

**REPORT ON BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE ON 8 DECEMBER 2025**

PART ONE

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

AGENDA FOR PLANNING COMMITTEE – 8 DECEMBER 2025

Part One - The Planning Committee has the full delegated authority of the Council to make decisions on planning applications and related development management and enforcement matters. Therefore, the decisions of the Planning Committee in relation to this part of the Planning Committee agenda do not require ratification by the full Council.

Part Two - Any matter brought before the Committee included in this part of the Planning Committee agenda, including decisions relating to the Local Development Plan, will require ratification by the full Council.

- 1 Apologies.
- 2 Declarations of Interest.
- 3 Report on business to be considered:

PART ONE - Decisions on Planning Applications

3.1 Planning Application No: **LA03/2022/1074/F**

Proposed part demolition of Castle Mall and erection of 39no. dwellings (1no. detached, 14no. terrace and 24no. apartments) for social housing and 1no. retail unit including solar panels, parking and amenity spaces. Works to include upgrading of the vehicular access via Railway Street and pedestrian linkages to High Street, and all other associated site and access works at Lands at units 11-27 and 51-58 Castle Mall opposite Central Car Park, extending from Castle Walk/Railway Street (adjacent to No's 1-7) to High Street (adjacent to No's 32 & 38), Antrim.

3.2 Planning Application No: **LA03/2022/1076/DCA**

Partial demolition of Castle Mall, comprising units 11- 27 and 51 – 58 at lands at units 11-27 and 51-58 Castle Mall opposite Central Car Park, extending from Castle Walk/Railway Street (adjacent to No's 1-7) to High Street (adjacent to No's 32 & 38), Antrim.

3.3 Planning Application No: **LA03/2024/0861/F**

Retrospective unit subdivision and proposed change of use from restaurant unit (approved under reference LA03/2018/1006/RM) to amusement arcade/ adult gaming centre and alterations to elevations, addition of external smoking area and plant machinery at Unit 4, The Junction Retail and Leisure Park, Ballymena Road, Antrim, BT41 4LL

3.4 Planning Application No: **LA03/2025/0577/F**

Reconfiguration of an existing service station to facilitate an extension to M&S and rationalisation of the existing 3 no. food and beverage units to provide 2 no. food and beverage units. Development includes external alterations,

provision of a trolley bay and additional external plant area, and all other associated site works AT 15 Airport Road, Aldergrove, BT29 4DW.

3.5 Planning Application No: **LA03/2025/0446/F**

Extension of existing storage and distribution yard for the parking of articulated trailers. Alterations of existing access to Crosskennan Road. Landscaping works associated with the extension of the yard at lands approximately 50m southeast of No. 49 Crosskennan Road, Antrim, BT41 2RB.

3.6 Planning Application No: **LA03/2025/0685/O**

Dwelling approx. 25m East of 122 HydePark Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 4PZ.

3.7 Planning Application No: **LA03/2025/0565/O**

Site for dwelling and garage approx 15m northeast of 21 Loughbeg Road, Toomebridge, Antrim, BT41 3TN.

3.8 Planning Application No: **LA03/2025/0435/F**

Dwelling on a farm (Substitution of approved house on applicant's farm at 121 Ballyrobin Road, Antrim, approved under LA03/2021/0409/F) 110m SE of 4a Laurel Lane, Belfast, BT14 8SQ.

3.9 Planning Application No: **LA03/2025/0584/O**

Site for dwelling and garage on a farm 70m West of 81 Rickamore Road Upper, Templepatrick, Ballyclare, BT39 0JF.

3.10 Planning Application No: **LA03/2025/0557/F**

Erection of a single-storey changing pavilion with associated fencing, landscaping and site works at lands at Three Mile Water Playing fields, Doagh Road, Newtownabbey, BT37 9PA.

PART TWO – Other Planning Matters

3.11 Delegated Planning Decisions and Appeals November 2025

3.12 Proposal of Application Notice for Major Developments November 2025

3.13 Department for Infrastructure PIP – Update of Development Plan Practice Notes

3.14 Local Development Plan – Feasibility of Formulation of a Policy to Consider Future Planning Applications for HMO's

3.15 Any Other Relevant Business

PART TWO – Other Planning Matters - In Confidence

3.16 Legal Update Report

3.17 Update on Departmental Section 14 Direction

COMMITTEE ITEM	3.1
APPLICATION NO	LA03/2022/1074/F
DEA	ANTRIM
COMMITTEE INTEREST	HEAD OF PLANNING REFERRAL
RECOMMENDATION	GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION SUBJECT TO SECTION 76 AGREEMENT
PROPOSAL	Proposed part demolition of Castle Mall and erection of 39no. dwellings (1no. detached, 14no. terrace and 24no. apartments) for social housing and 1no. retail unit including solar panels, parking and amenity spaces. Works to include upgrading of the vehicular access via Railway Street and pedestrian linkages to High Street, and all other associated site and access works.
SITE/LOCATION	Lands at units 11-27 and 51-58 Castle Mall opposite Central Car Park, extending from Castle Walk/Railway Street (adjacent to No's 1-7) to High Street (adjacent to No's 32 & 38), Antrim
APPLICANT	Keneagles Ltd.
AGENT	TSA Planning
LAST SITE VISIT	October 2025
CASE OFFICER	Morgan Poots Tel: 028 903 40401 Email: morgan.poots@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk
Full details of this application, including the application forms, relevant drawings, consultation responses and any representations received are available to view at the Planning Portal https://planningregister.planningssystemni.gov.uk/application/664811	
SITE DESCRIPTION	
<p>The application site is located within the primary retail core of Antrim Town Centre and within Antrim Town Conservation Area (zoning reference 16.8) as defined by the Antrim Area Plan (AAP) 1984-2001.</p> <p>The application site comprises a portion of the existing Castle Mall shopping centre, an associated service yard and a pedestrianised access to Castle Mall from High Street which has been subject to an environmental improvement scheme. The site is relatively flat and utilises the existing access from Castle Walk onto Railway Street.</p> <p>The application site is located in a prominent location within the commercial core of the town. The site is an irregular shape and has two main frontages, primarily fronting the Central car park with a smaller Mall entrance gate fronting High Street.</p> <p>The site is bounded by Central car park to the north and the eastern site boundary is partially defined by a 2-metre-high concrete boundary wall and the western gable elevation of No. 1 Castle Walk. The southern and western site boundaries adjoin the remainder of the shopping centre and the rear of the adjacent units along High Street.</p>	

In terms of the surrounding site context Antrim Castle Gardens is located to the west of the site and to the north is a police station, primary school and some residential use such as that along the Menin Road. East and south of the site is predominantly commercial in nature, with businesses along High Street and a large Tesco store in the vicinity.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Planning Reference: LA03/2022/1076/DCA

Location: Lands at units 11-27 and 51-58 Castle Mall opposite Central Car Park, extending from Castle Walk/Railway Street (adjacent to No's 1-7) to High Street (adjacent to No's 32 & 38), Antrim

Proposal: Partial demolition of Castle Mall, comprising units 11-27 and 51-58

Decision: Current Application

Planning Reference: LA03/2021/0076/DCA

Location: Castle Mall, 26 Market Square, Antrim, BT41 4DN

Proposal: Amalgamation of existing retail units within shopping centre to create larger unit, demolition of c.56m of northeastern façade (facing Council car park) and replacement with new façade and associated hard landscaping work

Decision: Permission Granted (23.06.2021)

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Location: Castle Mall, 26 Market Square, Antrim, BT41 4DN

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Decision: Permission Granted (23.06.2021)

PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Under the provisions of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, all decisions must be taken in accordance with the provisions of the Local Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Development Plan (ANLDP) will comprise of two parts, Part 1 is the Plan Strategy which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 3rd July 2025. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan which will identify the boundaries of settlement limits, local designations and zonings which has not yet been published. As such the settlement limits, local designations and zonings of the extant adopted Development Plans for the Borough (the Belfast Urban Area Plan, the Carrickfergus Area Plan and the Antrim Area Plan) remain applicable. Account will also be taken of the draft Newtownabbey Area Plan and its associated Interim Statement and the provisions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

Antrim Area Plan 1984 – 2001: The application site is within the primary retail core of Antrim town centre and also forms part of Antrim Town Conservation Area (zoning reference 16.8) as defined by the Plan. There are no specific operational policies relevant to the determination of the application in the Plan.

SPPS – Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland: sets out that Planning Authorities should be guided by the principle that sustainable development should be permitted, having regard to the local development plan

and other material considerations unless the proposed development will cause demonstrable harm to interest of acknowledged importance.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy 2015-2030 (ANPS): sets out the relevant planning policies for assessing planning applications and other planning consents. The relevant strategic and operational policies for the assessment of the current proposal are listed below.

Strategic Policy 1 – Sustainable Development (SP 1): sets out that the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).

Strategic Policy 2 – Employment (SP 2): aims to encourage growth and investment to support enterprise and increase employment benefits. SP2 is supported by Policy:

- Policy DM 6 Development within Centres

Strategic Policy 3 – Transportation and Infrastructure (SP 3): aims to encourage the continued development and growth of high-quality transportation, communications and utilities infrastructure in a timely and co-ordinated fashion to meet the current and future needs of our Borough and support sustainable development in accordance with the Council's Spatial Growth Strategy. SP3 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 10 Access and Parking;
- Policy DM 12 Active Travel (Walking and Cycling); and
- Policy DM 16 Telecommunication Facilities and Digital Services

Strategic Policy 4 - Homes (SP 4): sets out that the Council's aims of achieving quality in new residential development both within urban settlements and the countryside. SP4 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 17 Homes in Settlements

Strategic Policy 6 - Placemaking and Good Design (SP6): sets out that positive placemaking and good design are key components in the delivery of high quality, attractive and sustainable places within our Borough. SP6 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 25 Urban Design; and
- Policy DM 28 Amenity Impact

Strategic Policy 7 - Historic Environment (SPG7): Indicates that careful management and ongoing investment in our historic environment will help to create unique, attractive and welcoming places to live, work and relax in and contribute significantly to our Borough's sense of place. SP 7 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 30 Archaeology;
- Policy DM 32 Listed Buildings; and
- Policy DM 33 Conservation Areas

Strategic Policy 8 - Natural Heritage (SPG8): seeks to protect, conserve and promote the enhancement and restoration of the diversity of our Borough's natural heritage comprised of its habitats, species, landscapes and earth science features. SP 8 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 37 Designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance;
- Policy DM 38 Protected Species;
- Policy DM 39 Habitats, Species & Features of Natural Heritage Importance; and

- Policy DM 42 Trees and Development.

Strategic Policy 10 - Environmental Resilience and Protection (SPG10): seeks to promote environmental resilience by mitigating and adapting to the harmful effects of climate change on our built and natural environment. SPG10 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 47 Surface Water Drainage & Sustainable Drainage Systems; and
- Policy DM 52 Contaminated Land

Supplementary Planning Guidance- Antrim Town Conservation Area Guide

CONSULTATION

Belfast International Airport – No objection

Council Environmental Health Section – No objection subject to conditions

Department for Infrastructure Roads- No objection

Department for Infrastructure Rivers – No objection

Department for Communities Historic Environment Division – No objection

Forward Plan Team (Conservation Team) – No objection

DAERA Regulation Unit, Industrial Pollution and Radiochemical Inspectorate– No objection subject to condition

Northern Ireland Water – No objection subject to conditions

Shared Environmental Services- No objection subject to condition

Northern Ireland Housing Executive- No objection

REPRESENTATION

Thirty (30) neighbouring properties were notified and three (3) letters of objection have been received from three (3) non neighbour-notified properties.

The full representations made regarding the proposal are available to view on the Planning Portal

<https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/application/664811> The issues raised in the representation have been considered as part of the assessment of this application.

A summary of the key points of objection raised is provided below:

- Commercial area is not a practical place for housing;
 - Social housing;
 - Antrim town centre is historical and should be left as it is;
 - Town centre should be pedestrianised, rather than building social homes;
- and
- Increased traffic and congestion

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING ISSUES/MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- Preliminary Matters
- Policy Context and Principle of Development
- Design, Layout and Appearance
- Amenity Space
- Neighbour Amenity
- Built Heritage and Impact on Antrim Conservation Area
- Natural Heritage and Trees
- Access, Movement and Parking
- Flood Risk and Drainage
- Land Contamination
- Other Matters

Preliminary Matters

Environmental Impact Assessment

As the development is within Category 2(10) (B) of the Planning (EIA) Regulations (NI) 2017: 'Urban development projects, including the construction of shopping centres and car parks' the Council is obliged under Regulation 12 (1) of these Regulations to make a determination as to whether the application is or is not EIA development. An EIA was carried out and it is determined that the planning application does not require to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

Habitats Regulation Assessment

This planning application was considered in light of the assessment requirements of Regulation 43 (1) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) by Shared Environmental Service on behalf of the Council. The Council in its role as the Competent Authority under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended), and in accordance with its duty under Regulation 43, has adopted the report, and conclusions therein, prepared by Shared Environmental Service, dated 29th August 2024. The report found that the project would not have any adverse effect on the integrity of any European site with the inclusion of conditions.

Policy Context and Principle of Development

Section 45(1) of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 requires the Council, in dealing with an application for planning permission, to have regard to the Local Development Plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. Section 6(4) of the Act then states that, where, in making any determination under the Act, regard is to be had to the Local Development Plan, the determination must be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) is material to all decisions on individual planning applications. The Antrim & Newtownabbey Plan Strategy (ANPS) sets out the relevant planning policies for the determination of planning applications in the Borough. However, until such times as the Local Policies Plan (LPP) identifies the boundaries of settlement limits, local designations and zonings, the provisions of the current legacy plans, both adopted and in draft form will continue to apply.

The application site is within Antrim Town Centre and also forms part of Antrim Town Conservation Area (zoning reference 16.8) as designated within the Antrim Area

Plan 1984-2001. In line with the transitional arrangements set out in the SPPS, AAP and the ANPS must be read together. Any conflict between the policies in with the Plans must be resolved in favour of the ANPS.

The proposal seeks permission for the part demolition of Castle Mall and erection of 39no. units for social housing and 1no. retail unit.

Policy DM 6.1 of the ANPS 'Development Within Centres' indicates that the Council will encourage and support a diverse range of retail and complementary town centre uses within identified centres. It is considered that the 1no. retail unit within Antrim Town Centre and within the primary commercial core as designated by zoning 16.11 of the AAP is acceptable in principle.

Given the site location within the settlement limits of Antrim, Policy SP 4.1 of the ANPS indicates that a presumption in favour of the development of new homes will be applied, provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy SP 4 and other relevant policies applicable to the development type.

In addition to Strategic Policy SP 4, Policy SP 6.4 places the onus on the developer to demonstrate that they have considered the core principles of placemaking and that the proposed scheme will deliver a high-quality development. Policy DM 17 'Homes in Settlements' of the ANPS indicates that the Council will support proposals for quality and sustainable residential development in settlements, where they do not contribute to town cramming, subject to a number of criteria. There is no planning history for residential use on the site.

The proposed residential units are made up of 1no. detached and 14no. terrace dwellings along with 24no. apartments. As this proposal is for more than ten (10) residential units, a Design and Access Statement is required as set out in Policy SP 6.4 and criterion (g) of DM 17.7 of the ANPS. In line with Criterion (G) of Policy DM 17.1, an acceptable Design and Access Statement, Document 01/2 (date stamped 28th May 2025) was submitted alongside the application.

Criterion (f) of Policy DM 17.1 requires that adequate provision is made for necessary local neighbourhood facilities in relation to new housing developments. However, Policy DM 17.1 does not set a threshold in terms of the size of development or number of units proposed that would trigger the requirement for local neighbourhood facilities. It is considered that in applying this policy, the emphasis is placed on the provision of 'necessary' local neighbourhood facilities. The application site is in the town centre of Antrim which is in close range to a number of facilities and services that come with a town centre location. The provision of local neighbourhood facilities is not required in this instance and Criterion (f) of Policy DM 17.1 is not considered to be applicable in this instance.

One objector has queried the type of the social housing proposed and expressed concern over the number of units proposed and if it would be used for temporary accommodation. Other than the dwellings being for social housing as applied for, the Council has no remit in respect of the occupation of the dwellings following construction. Social housing schemes are usually managed by a registered social housing provider.

An objector has stated that the commercial area is not a practical place for housing however, the SPPS seeks to protect and enhance diversity in the range of

town centre uses, such as leisure, cultural and community facilities, business and housing. In relation to housing, the SPPS, promotes higher density housing in town centres and encourages mixed use developments to boost the vibrancy and vitality of town centres. The principle of residential development within the town centre location is therefore considered to be acceptable.

The proposed development brings a loss of 22 no. retail units within Castle Mall which forms a significant loss of commercial space (approximately 4199sqm floorspace) within the primary retail core. Policy DM 6.2 of the ANPS states that proposals that result in the loss of retail units will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that the retail use of the unit is no longer viable (e.g. evidence to show that despite marketing of the unit/building for at least 6 months there has been no interest shown).

The Council sought further justification for the loss of retail space and Documents 10 and 11 (date stamped 7th April 2023) were submitted in response. The documents present a compelling, evidence-based case for the loss of retail space in the town centre.

Further evidence was provided by the agent within their Planning Statement Addendum, Document 18 (date stamped 30th July 2025), which indicates that in 2005 an extension to the shopping centre was completed however 3 of the new units were never occupied, 18no. years on from construction. It is noted that when the shopping centre changed ownership in 2015, 20no. Units were vacant (approximately 52.6%).

Additionally, a Retail Impact Assessment (Evidence Paper 4) carried out in 2018 in preparation for the LDP Plan Strategy found that, 30 of the 148 units in Antrim were vacant, 21 of which were within the Castle Mall equating to 20.3% which is significantly higher than the national average of 11% in 2018 and can be largely attributed to the number of vacant units within Castle Mall.

It is noted that whilst 21no. units were vacant in 2018 which represented approximately 52% of the shopping centre, as of October 2025, there are only 16no. operating units within Castle Mall (as detailed on Castle Mall website as of 12th November 2025), leaving over half of the units vacant (over 25no. units).

The proposal brings benefits to the area in terms of contributing to meeting social housing need, and it may increase the footfall in the town centre which would have a knock-on effect on the vibrancy and vitality of the town. The existing building does not make a material contribution to the character and appearance of the area and does not address the streetscape in a positive manner; whilst the proposal presents an opportunity for betterment. Whilst the proposal results in the loss of 22no. retail units, it is considered that the numerous benefits of the proposal, outweigh the concerns of loss of retail space. The principle of development for residential use in the town centre replacing the commercial use of the existing site is considered acceptable.

The proposal includes the partial demolition of Castle Mall and an associated application for Demolition Consent Ref: LA03/2022/1076/DCA is currently being considered and will establish whether the demolition is acceptable within the Antrim Town Conservation Area.

Design, Layout and Appearance

Policy SP 4 of ANPS indicates that the Council will seek to ensure that new housing developments are designed in a sustainable fashion and to meet the evolving needs of residents over their lifetimes. Policy SP 4 also directs that the development of high-quality homes should adhere to the principles of placemaking and good design as required by Policy SP 6. The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) refers at paragraph 6.137 to the need to deliver increased housing without town cramming and that within established residential areas it is imperative to ensure that the proposed density of new housing development, together with its form, scale, massing and layout will respect local character and environmental quality as well as safeguarding the amenity of existing residents.

Policy DM 17 of the ANPS allows for the development of quality and sustainable residential schemes in settlements, where they do not contribute to town cramming, and can meet a number of criteria. Furthermore, the aim of Policy DM 17 is to promote the development of high quality, attractive and sustainable homes within settlements, which meet the present and future needs of all sections of the population within the Borough. DM 17.1 allows for the development of quality and sustainable residential schemes in settlements, where they do not contribute to town cramming, and can meet a number of criteria.

Policy DM 17.3 of the ANPS refers to affordable housing which requires developments over 40 units to provide a minimum of 10% affordable housing. In this case, the proposal does not meet the 40 units threshold but the units are proposed to provide social housing. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive have confirmed the need for the proposed housing units within this location through their consultation response dated 29th September 2025. It is accepted that there is a need for social housing in this area.

Policy DM 25 of the ANPS expects all development to deliver high quality design into its layout and appearance whilst demonstrating a number of additional criteria. The design and layout of the proposed residential development is therefore a key factor in determining the acceptability of the proposed development both in terms of its contribution to the amenity of the local neighbourhood and the wider townscape

As noted above the proposal is for 39no. residential units for social housing and 1no. retail unit. The residential units are made up of 1no. detached and 14no. terrace dwellings along with 24no. apartments.

The layout of the proposal consists of apartment blocks and terrace dwellings fronting on to Castle Way, whilst a similar arrangement is seen fronting on to the internal estate road and area of open space, with further residential development located in the southwestern corner of the site, fronting on to High Street.

Drawing Number 03/5, date stamped 18th November 2025 shows the proposed layout. A two-storey apartment block (Apartment Block D), a detached two storey dwelling along with 4no. two storey terrace dwellings are located along the eastern boundary of the site.

Along the northern boundary of the site, fronting on to Central car park, there is 5no. two storey terrace dwellings located between adjoining three storey apartments blocks at either end (Apartment Block A). This arrangement is replicated

approximately 20m south, with 5no. terrace dwellings and 2no. three storey apartments blocks (Apartment Block A1/A2) fronting on to the internal estate road.

A 3-storey apartment block (Apartment Block B) is located to the south of the site along with an additional 3 storey apartment block (Apartment Block C) which consists of the ground floor retail unit and fronts on to High Street. Apartment Block C provides an important frontage on to Antrim High Street and is located in a central position which will be subject to critical views from within the town centre, whilst Apartment Blocks D and A and the terrace dwellings to the north of the site provide an important frontage on to Castle Way.

There are a range of house types proposed throughout the scheme to include a number of variations, and the proposal ensures each dwelling has an attractive outlook in relation to its specific location within the development.

Criterion (d) of DM 17.1 indicates that for proposals of 20 units or more, a minimum of 20% must demonstrate how the 'Lifetime Homes' approach has been taken account of and that new developments are accessible to all and will assist in the creation of a more balanced community. Taking a Lifetimes Home approach ensures that homes have been developed to ensure that they are flexible, adaptable and accessible and that there is added comfort, convenience and safety for tenants and visitors.

Giving consideration to the density of the nearby surrounding residential development and that the application site is located within the town centre of Antrim, it is considered that the number of units proposed respects the scale and size of the settlement as required by criterion (a) of Policy DM 17.1 of the ANPS.

Document 18 (date stamped 30th July 2025) details that all units were designed to meet with the lifetime homes approach. Further clarification was sought from the agent on the 4th September to detail what specific measures have been included to contribute towards the lifetime homes approach.

In an email dated 22nd October 2025, the agent confirms that all residential units have been designed to meet with the lifetime homes approach, which is detailed on the proposed site plan, Drawing Number 03/5, date stamped 18th November 2025. A number of examples are given as to how this approach has been taken including:

- Provision of space for a future lift and stairlifts;
- Wheelchair circulation and manoeuvring spaces as shown on the floor plans;
- A living room/living space provided on the entrance level;
- Entrance level accessible WC, with potential for a shower to be installed in the future; and
- Potential for future fitting of hoist to/from bathroom and bedroom.

The agent has submitted plans of all residential units (Drawing Nos. 52-79, date stamped 23rd October 2025) which show detailed floorplans to demonstrate how the units have been designed to accommodate wheelchair users and how the units can provide a future hoist for users. It is accepted that the proposal complies with criterion (d) of Policy DM 17.1 of the ANPS.

Criterion (e) of DM 17.1 requires that residential developments provide a movement pattern that promotes walking and cycling routes and supports linkages to nearby community facilities and public transport. As discussed in detail within the 'Access, Movement and Parking' section of the Report, the proposal increases permeability and bicycle stands are provided throughout the development which promotes more sustainable movement and responds positively to criterion (e) of Policy DM 17.1.

It is evident that the application site is highly accessible being in the town centre of Antrim. The application site is within walking distance to a number of amenities including grocery shops, banking services, dentists, Antrim Health Centre and chemists. It is also noted that the site has excellent pedestrian linkages within the town centre which provides wide footways that have street lighting providing a safe means of access to the remainder of the town centre from the application site.

Lastly, criterion (g) of DM 17.1 indicates that a Design and Access Statement should accompany any housing development of 10 or more units and refers also to Policy SP 6 of the ANPS. It sets out that positive placemaking and good design are key components in the delivery of high quality, attractive and sustainable places within our Borough.

The Design and Access Statement and Conservation Approach Report, Document 01/2, date stamped 28th May 2025, provides a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the proposed design and it's accessibility.

The report details the overall design concept to include appearance, amenity and landscaping as well as providing context in relation to Antrim Conservation Area and the materials used. This document and the overall scheme demonstrate that the proposal has considered the core principles of placemaking and will deliver a high-quality environment in accordance with Policies SP 6 and DM 25.

DM 16.6, as well as criteria (f) of Policy DM 25 of the ANPS, sets out that development proposals within settlements should include provision for new digital infrastructure. The agent confirmed in an email dated 22nd October 2025 that service ducting will be included and supplied to all residential units. As with all other services and utilities, these will be provided within designated service strips in footpaths and carriageways in locations to be agreed with the statutory providers. The provision of ducting is confirmed on the site layout plan, Drawing Number 03/5, date stamped 18th November 2025.

Criterion (n) of DM 25 requires development proposals in settlements to integrate sustainable energy measures. In an email dated 22nd October 2025, the agent details that solar panels will be included within the development and positioned to optimise solar efficiency. The location of the proposed solar panels are indicated on Drawing Number 51, date stamped 23rd October 2025 which is considered acceptable. The proposal is considered to align with criterion (n) of DM 25 in this regard.

Frontages

The proposed layout involves a number of buildings that would form key frontages, critical to public views both from within the development and from external viewpoints such as Castle Way and High Street. Consideration must also be afforded

to how the development will alter the streetscape of High Street and contextual elevations have been provided (Drawing Numbers 26/4, 27/3, 28/2 date stamped 28th May 2025 and 23rd October 2025).

In terms of the frontage onto Central car park, there is a two storey apartment block (Apartment Block D) and 5no. two storey terrace dwellings located between adjoining three storey apartment blocks at either end (Apartment Block A). All three apartment blocks are located on corner plots and provide a strong frontage to Central car park and the internal access road.

The frontage of the proposed development onto High Street is a shorter frontage but a critical one as the characteristics of the Conservation Area are more prevalent at this location. Apartment Block C fronts on to High Street and consists of a three storey, end terrace building (with a ground floor retail unit) which is designed to be more reflective of the historic fabric of the adjacent buildings. Apartment Block C is of a similar fenestration pattern and height to the adjoining properties along High Street. The finishes consist of natural roof slates, and painted timber window frames which are considered to be appropriate and sympathetic in the setting of the listed buildings. The introduction of a ground floor retail unit along High Street is in keeping with the surrounding context of the area and is appropriate with the main shopping thoroughfare.

Within the development, Apartment Blocks A1 and A2 on Plots 10-11 and 17-18 along with Apartment Block B on Plot 32 are required to provide a dual frontage to address critical public views. Apartment Block B on Plot 32 provides a strong frontage on to the area of open space along with a strong frontage on to the internal estate road consisting of 6no. first and second floor windows along with 2no. ground floor windows and an access door. The design of Apartment Blocks A1 and A2 are relatively repetitive in terms of design and all have three adequate frontages with a large area of glazing to the front elevation along with a number of first and second floor windows to the rear and gable elevations.

The proposed landscaped walkway runs a length of approximately 43 metres from High Street alongside Apartment Block B and C providing access to the residential development. A photomontage of the proposed walkway is included within Document 01/2, date stamped 28th May 2025. The walkway is a 2-metre-wide path with landscaping to either side. Access to Apartment Blocks B and C and to the alleyway running to the rear of the nearest terraced buildings to allow for bin movement, involves use of the walkway. The walkway connects with the area of open space located between Apartment Block B and C which provides a more open feel.

Boundary Treatments

The proposal includes a number of different boundary treatments including timber close board fences, brick walls and metal gates and fencing.

Along the gable elevation of Apartment Blocks B and C consists of a 450mm high brick wall with railings on top to achieve a total height of 1.2m. This boundary treatment separates the apartment blocks from the proposed walkway which connects the site to High Street. The design of the boundary treatments in this section is considered to provide natural surveillance to the walkway and avoids an 'alley-way' feel to the development.

A 3m high brick wall is located along the eastern and southern boundaries which abuts Castle Mall and acts as an acoustic barrier. Additional planting is proposed in front of the wall to the southern boundary in an attempt to soften this element. The planting to the boundary wall is north-facing and concerns were raised with the agent as it was unclear how the planting would grow to provide a sufficient level of screening. The agent responded by email dated 23rd October 2025 that the species of planting proposed 'Escallonia 'Donard Seedling' is suitable for a north facing location due to its evergreen foliage and resistance to colder temperatures and less direct sunlight. Therefore, it is considered that this planting is acceptable in terms of softening the visual impact of the large expanse of wall.

1.8m high close boarded timber fences are proposed to separate rear garden areas and 1.2m high railings are proposed to front of Plots 12 to 16. It is considered that the proposed boundary treatments are acceptable and will not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area, in line with DM 17 and DM 25.

Public Safety

Criterion (k) of Policy DM 25.1 of the ANPS requires that proposals are designed to reduce the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour through the creation of active frontages and ensure buildings front onto streets. Therefore, open space areas and pedestrian routes should be overlooked by the fronts of dwellings and buildings to provide maximum surveillance.

The location of the main area of open space is located to the south of the site, between Apartment Block B and dwellings on Plots 29-31 which front on to the area of open space. This area is considerably overlooked by both the dwellings and apartment block (from living rooms, bedrooms and kitchens) and therefore it is considered acceptable in terms of promoting safety and deterring crime.

Additional areas of open space are located in front of Plots 22-28 which again are significantly overlooked from the dwellings and Apartment Block D (from bedrooms and living rooms). Areas of open space are located between Apartment Blocks A on Plots 8-9, 17-18 and 10-11, 1-2. These areas of open space are again overlooked by the proposed ground, first and second floor windows on the gable elevation of Apartment Block A.

A walkway is proposed to connect the site to High Street which could provide a discrete location where anti-social behaviour may occur. The walkway will experience some overshadowing throughout the day; however, existing streetlights are shown on the site layout plan for night-time.

The gable elevation of Apartment Block C provides significant level of surveillance to the walkway with a number of ground, first and second floor windows which overlook the walkway, serving the ground floor retail unit, bedrooms and living rooms. There will also be passive public surveillance from those using the walkway to access High Street and to access Apartment Block B and C. Overall, the walkway is considered to comply with criterion (k) of Policy DM 25.1 in this regard.

Bin Stores

Criterion (j) of Policy DM 25.1 of the ANPS requires that proposals incorporate adequate and appropriate provision for the storage and disposal of waste.

Seven (7) bin stores have been provided each with a carry distance that is demonstrated as being 25 metres or under which is in accordance with the guidance set out in Creating Places. All bin stores have a separate access door and their location is considered acceptable. The proposal is considered to comply with criterion (j) of Policy D, 25.1 in this regard.

Conclusion

Overall, it is considered that the proposed design and layout of the proposed residential development in terms of its form, materials and detailing is acceptable, and the proposal preserves and enhances the character and appearance of Antrim Conservation Area.

The proposal is designed to be compatible with adjacent land-uses and would not have a detrimental effect on the amenity or character of any adjoining properties or the surrounding area including Antrim Conservation Area. The proposal is considered to comply with the Paragraphs 6.18 and 6.19 of the SPPS and Policies DM 17.1, DM 25, DM 33.1 and DM 32.3 of the ANPS in respect of density, design, layout and character.

Amenity Space

The proposal is for 39no. dwellings and in line with Policy DM 17.7 'Public Open Space Provision in New Residential Developments' of the ANPS, 10% of the total site area is expected to be provided as public open space as an integral part of the overall scheme.

The 0.81Ha site would require 810sqm of public open space to meet this expectation. The agent has submitted an open space layout drawing, Drawing Number 38/2 (date stamped 28th May 2025) which indicates that there is a main area of open space of approximately 664sqm and incidental public open space of approximately 227.5sqm, bringing the total of public open space provided by the developer as 891sqm.

However, it is acknowledged that not all of this is considered to be usable amenity space. On calculating the total public open space, which is considered to be functional, approximately 664sqm is obtained (detailed as the 'main public open space' on Drawing 38/2, date stamped 28th May 2025). It is noted that the proposal provides approximately 8.2% public open space in relation to the site area, a shortfall of 1.8% of the required 10%.

DM 17.8 of the ANPS indicates that a reduction in the above open space standards will be considered where the development is designed to integrate with and make use of adjoining public open space. In this case, the proposal is located within Antrim Town Centre and Antrim Castle Gardens is located 150 metres to the west. In this case, the shortfall of public open space is considered acceptable in accordance with DM 17.8.

In relation to private open space, Policy DM 17.9 of the ANPS indicates that the Council will take account of the guidance in relation to private open space provision for new residential development proposals as set out in the supplementary planning guidance document, Creating Places – Achieving Quality in Residential Developments.

Creating Places requires apartments to have 10-30sqm private amenity space per unit which can include private communal spaces. Given the town centre location and nearby amenities, the lower end of the scale is sought. The 24 apartment units should have a minimum of 240sqm of private amenity space. It is noted that 544sqm of open space is provided for the apartments, which is approximately 23sqm per unit which is considered acceptable.

In relation to the dwellings, Creating Places requires a minimum of 40sqm private amenity space and an average of 70sqm per house or greater across the development. All individual dwellings have private rear gardens which meet the 40sqm threshold, however, across the development, the average is 54sqm. However, on balance it is considered that the shortfall across the dwellings is not determining in this instance, given the town centre location and proximity to areas of public open space such as the Antrim Castle Gardens.

It is considered the proposal provides adequate public and private open space in line with Policies DM 17.7 and 17.9 of the ANPS.

Neighbour Amenity

Paragraphs 4.11 and 4.12 of the SPPS and Policy DM 28 of the ANPS deals with the amenity impact of development proposals. DM 28.1 sets out that the Council will only support development proposals where they will not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of existing or future occupiers of adjoining or nearby properties. DM 28.2 refers to a number of issues which may result from the development including overlooking and/or loss of light, dominance or overshadowing, noise, vibration and other forms of disturbance and odour, fumes and other forms of environmental pollution. These issues will be a material consideration in the assessment of all proposals.

In addition, criterion (c) of DM 25.1 requires new development within settlements to be designed to be compatible with adjacent land-uses and not have a detrimental effect on the amenity or character of any adjoining properties and the surrounding area.

The dwellings located on Plots 3-7 and 12-16 are positioned in a back-to-back arrangement with a separation distance of approximately 21m. Creating Places Guidance suggests around 20 metres or greater between the opposing rear first floor windows of new houses as good practice. The dwellings on these plots are therefore considered acceptable and are not considered to result in a loss of privacy to the future occupants.

Apartment Block A and A1 (Plots 1-2 and Plots 10-11) also host a back-to-back relationship with a separation distance of approximately 17.5 metres. However, the first and second floor windows serve a stairwell on both apartment blocks and therefore there is no significant concerns with regards to overlooking. This relationship is replicated on Apartment Block A2 and A (Plots 8-9 and Plots 17-18) which also has a separation distance of approximately 17.5m which is considered acceptable given that the windows serve a stairwell.

Apartment Block D is located at the northwestern corner of the site and is positioned approximately 21m west of Apartment Block A. Creating Places Guidance states that great care will be needed in designs where new residential schemes, such as apartments, include living rooms or balconies on upper floors as this can cause a

significant loss of amenity to adjoining dwellings. First floor windows serving a kitchen/living room are proposed on the northwestern elevation of Block A. These windows oppose the proposed first floor kitchen/living room and bedroom windows on Block D. Similarly, there is potential for overlooking from a first-floor kitchen/living room window on the first floor of Block D into the ground floor ground floor bedroom windows in block A. In this case the separation distance is inadequate to prevent overlooking however, given there is an additional window serving these rooms and providing an outlook, it is considered appropriate and necessary to condition the remaining first floor kitchen/living room windows on the northwestern elevation of Block A and the southeastern elevation of Block D to be finished with obscure glazing in order to minimise the potential for overlooking (Condition 26).

A Noise Assessment, Document 07/1, date stamped 28th May 2025 and an Odour Assessment, Document 05, date stamped 1st December 2022 were submitted and forwarded to the Council's Environmental Health Section who offered no objections to the proposal subject to conditions.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity.

Built Heritage and Impact on Antrim Conservation Area

Antrim Town has over 50 listed buildings and two Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes, namely Antrim Castle Gardens and the Steeple. There are approximately 25 listed buildings which are located within 100 metres of the application site to include; the Grade A listed Courthouse (HB20/08/008), the Grade B1 listed bank building located at No. 8 Market Square (HB20/08/009), the Grade B2 listed Protestant Hall located at Number 19 Railway Street (HB20/08/059) and the Grade B2 listed terraced dwellings located at numbers 33-37 High Street (HB20/08/012 A, HB20/08/012 B and HB20/08/012 C).

In relation to the proposals impact on the setting of the surrounding listed buildings, paragraphs 6.12 and 6.13 of the SPPS and Policy DM 32.2 of the ANPS require development to be appropriate in design, materials, massing and scale to the listed building and to respect the character and architectural or historic interest of the building and its setting.

In this instance, the listed buildings closest to the site have no ancillary land, the setting of the listing building can be read as the wider streetscape and skyline. The proposed development is read as a visually harmonious group of buildings, particularly on High Street given the proximity of apartment blocks B1 and C to the listed terraced properties. Historic Environment Division - Historic Buildings (HED – HB) were consulted on the proposal and indicated that the site is sufficiently removed from the listed buildings so that their setting will remain largely unaffected by development of this scale.

HED - HB expressed preference for the use of natural slate roofs and timber sliding sash windows which they would consider to be more appropriate and sympathetic in the setting of the listed buildings, however they note that the proposal is not immediately adjacent to them and the use of materials proposed is already prolific in the existing context.

Apartment Block C fronts onto High Street and is situated within a critical location within the Conservation Area and in close proximity to a number of listed buildings including; the Grade A listed Courthouse (HB20/08/008), the Grade B1 listed bank building located at Number 8 Market Square (HB20/08/009), the Grade B2 listed former bank building at No. 16 High Street and the Grade B2 listed terraced dwellings located at numbers 33-37 High Street (HB20/08/012 A, HB20/08/012 B and HB20/08/012 C).

Apartment Block C consists of a 3 storey terrace with similar fenestration pattern and height to the adjoining properties along High Street. The finishes of Apartment Block C consist of natural roof slates, and painted timber window frames which are considered to be more appropriate and sympathetic to the setting of the listed buildings.

It is therefore considered that paragraphs 6.12 and 6.13 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and Policy DM 32.2 of the ANPS are satisfied in that the proposal is considered to respect the character and setting of the surrounding listed buildings.

Impact on Antrim Conservation Area

Section 104(11) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 states:

“Where any area is for the time being designated as a conservation area, special regard must be had, in the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in that area, of any powers under this Act, to the desirability of-

- (a) Preserving the character or appearance of that area in cases where an opportunity for enhancing its character and appearance does not arise;
- (b) Enhancing the character or appearance of that area in cases where an opportunity to do so does arise.”

This approach is reiterated within Paragraph 6.18 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement. In addition, Policy DM 33 of the ANPS deals with development within Conservation Areas. Policy DM 33.1 states that the Council will only support development within or adjacent to a Conservation Area that enhances the character or appearance of the area where an opportunity to do so arises, or otherwise to preserve its character or appearance and that is consistent with any relevant conservation area guidance.

Whilst Paragraph 6.19 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement indicates that in the interests of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, development proposals should respect the characteristics of adjoining buildings in the area by way of its scale, form, materials and detailing along with several other criteria.

Whilst DM 33.3 states that in considering new development, including alterations to or the redevelopment of existing buildings, it will need to be demonstrated that:

- (a) The proposal accords with the Guiding Principle of Policy paragraph DM 33.2 through the appropriate design, use of materials, detailing, scale, form and massing and arrangement of such development; and
- (b) The quality of views within, from and into the Conservation Area will be maintained or enhanced.

Policy DM 33.6 of the ANPS requires that all applications be accompanied by sufficient information to allow an informed appraisal of the potential impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

It is considered that a development proposal in this location has the potential to enhance the existing lifeless vista along Castle Walk which at present has a horizontal expanse of dated frontage characterised by piecemeal ancillary development. The proposal also has the ability to improve the quality of the Conservation Area along High Street as the existing service yard and 3-metre-high security fencing adjacent to the existing pedestrian access provides a rather unsightly vista. The introduction into the streetscape of terraced properties with bookend apartments is considered to introduce a design and layout more in keeping with the characteristic built form of the area than that which is existing.

The development has a level variation across the scheme ranging from 2 storey to 3 storey. However, it is noted that the character of the Conservation Area is primarily 2 and 3 storey development.

Apartment Block C fronts onto High Street and as noted above, is considered a critical frontage on to the Conservation Area which is designed to be of a similar fenestration pattern and height to the adjoining properties along High Street. The finishes of Apartment Block C consist of natural roof slates, smooth render walls with facing brick and there is also a chimney proposed along with painted timber window frames and PPC aluminium rainwater goods which are considered to be appropriate finishes for the Conservation Area.

Advice and guidance was sought from the Council's Conservation Officer who is of the opinion that the proposal is appropriate for the Conservation Area.

Natural Heritage and Trees

Policy SP 1.4 of the ANPS states that the Council will adopt a precautionary approach where there are significant risks of damage to the environment while Policy SP 8.3 requires that appropriate weight in the decision-making process is given to the protection of designated sites, priority habitats, protected species and other features of biodiversity interest. Specific policies for protected species are also provided under Policy DM 38 whilst Policy DM 39 addresses other Habitats, Species and Features of Natural Heritage Importance.

It is noted that there is an area of long-established woodland located over 200 metres northwest of the site within Antrim Castle Gardens, which is noted as a natural feature within DM 39.1 of the ANPS. However, given the separation distance involved it is considered the proposal will not impact the priority habitat.

The application site itself forms part of the existing Castle Mall Shopping Centre and associated car park, there is not considered to be any significant concerns in relation to protected species given the nature of the proposal and the application site as existing.

The application site is located approximately 60m north of the Six Mile Water River which is hydrologically linked to the Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA and Ramsar site approximately 2.1km downstream. Within their consultation response dated 29th August 2024, SES confirm that there are no hydrological links from the application site to the Six Mile Water and therefore there is no conceivable effects due to the proposed demolition and construction phase run off on designated sites.

SES has concluded that the development proposal would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects and has no objections to the proposal subject to the inclusion of recommend conditions.

In relation to landscaping, Policy DM 42.1 of the ANPS requires that proposals promote additional tree planting of native species and maintain existing vegetation where possible. The site lacks any established natural boundaries, and the proposal does not involve the removal of any vegetation given the sites location. However, Drawing Number 31/2 (date stamped 28th May 2025) illustrates the proposed planting, which consists of native tree and hedge planting throughout the site.

Policy DM 42.2 of the ANPS requires that proposals provide sufficient detail on the long-term maintenance of planting. A detailed Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan, Document 04/1 (date stamped 28th May 2025) has been submitted which is considered acceptable and in accordance with Policy DM 42.2.

It is not considered that the proposal will have any significant impact on any designated site or natural heritage feature and complies with Policies DM 37, 38, 39 and 42 in this regard. The proposal is not considered to result in any significant environmental impacts.

Access, Movement and Parking

Policy SP 3.10 of the ANPS sets out that the Council will seek to ensure that all new development provides safe access arrangements that will not significantly inhibit the free flow of traffic, and that sufficient car and cycle parking is provided. Policy SP 3 is supported by Policy DM 10 which indicates that adequate provision should be made for parking and access arrangements do not prejudice road safety. It is also noted that there should be capacity on the road network to accommodate the development.

In relation to access, the proposal utilises existing access from Railway Street, which connects the site to Castle Way and the wider town centre. The existing road and access will be upgraded to accommodate the proposal, whilst a pedestrian only access will be available from High Street. DfI Roads have been consulted on the proposal and offered no objections to the access arrangements, subject to conditions.

Criteria (c) of DM 10.1 requires adequate car parking to be provided. Paragraph 6.303 of the SPPS and DM 10. 2 of the ANPS details that in assessing parking arrangements, the Council will continue to take account of supplementary guidance including Parking Standards (DoE, 2005). Paragraph 6.303 of the SPPS also indicates that in assessing development proposals, planning authorities should require the developer to submit a Transport Assessment which may include a Travel Plan, that sets out a package of complementary measures to secure the overall delivery of more sustainable travel patterns and which reduces the level of private car traffic generated.

In terms of parking, 36no. spaces are proposed to accommodate 39no. units providing 0.92 spaces per unit. Based on DfI Parking Standards, the proposal would require 66no. spaces, this results in a shortfall of 30no. spaces. The proposal therefore provides approximately 55% of the required parking provision.

The submitted Transport Assessment Form (TAF) (Document 08, date stamped 1st December 2022) sets out the case for a reduced level of parking provision due to lower car use in a town centre location, the existing public car parking and less demand for space with the proposed reduction to Castle Mall shopping centre.

The Travel Plan (Document 17/1, date stamped 27th August 2025) indicates that car ownership within this area is low and that there are ample parking opportunities within the town, adjacent to the site. However, it is noted that the car parking located within Castle Mall is not under the ownership of the developer and nor can it be guaranteed that this will be available for residents to utilise.

The amplification text of Policy DM 10 indicates that a reduction in car parking provision may be acceptable where it forms part of a package of measures to promote alternative transport modes, particularly where this has been demonstrated and accepted through the Transport Assessment process and in locations which are highly accessible and well served by public transport.

It is evident that the application site is in a highly accessible location being in the town centre of Antrim. The application site is within walking distance of a number of amenities including grocery shops, banking services, dentists, Antrim Health Centre and chemists. It is also noted that the site has excellent pedestrian linkages within the town centre which has wide footways with street lighting providing a safe means of access to the town centre from the site.

Furthermore, there are a number of Ulsterbus Antrim Town Service buses (Route 321) that operate regularly from Market Square, approximately 0.2 miles from the application site, linking to the main Antrim bus and train hub, Antrim Area Hospital, The Junction, Asda and that the development is located along a highly accessible arterial route/public transport corridor.

The central location, accessibility of the site and the surrounding pedestrian infrastructure including a range facilities and services are located within walking distance from the application site. A reduced level of car parking would be acceptable within this highly accessible location as outlined in Policy DM 10.

However, the main concern relates to the level of under provision of car parking and the consequential impacts that this may have.

In order to address the parking shortfall, the agent has proposed a number of measures to promote a more sustainable method of transport. The measures are included within the Residential Travel Plan, Document 17/1, date stamped 27th August 2025 and include:

- A Translink Travel Card will be offered to one occupier of each apartment (within one month of their occupation) and will be valid for 3no. years and will include travel around Antrim Town.
- A £200 voucher towards the cost of purchasing a bicycle will be offered to each residential unit (within one month of their occupation).

- A Travel Co-Ordinator will provide a resident's welcome pack to promote sustainable transport and cycle routes.

As noted above, the proposed travel card will be applicable for a three year period as this is considered to be an adequate time to encourage a transition to more sustainable modes of transport. It is considered that the shortfall in parking in this instance is not determining due to the sites highly accessible location and the mitigation measures proposed by the applicant.

It is critical to note that the delivery of these incentives will be subject to a Section 76 Legal Agreement under the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 if planning permission is forthcoming.

An objector has raised concern of increased traffic and congestion due to the additional homes. There will be an increase in traffic movements in this area due to the development however, the principle of residential development in this location is acceptable and DfI Roads has not raised any concern regarding the increased movements or suggested any significant inconvenience to the flow of traffic.

The development increases permeability and bicycle stands are provided throughout the development which promotes more sustainable movement and responds positively to criterion (e) of Policy DM 17.1 of the ANPS.

In summary although there is an under provision of car parking, with a shortfall of 30no. spaces, it is considered when taking into consideration the incentives provided within the Travel Plan along with the accessibility of the site to the town centre, local amenities and services, that the under provision of parking is considered acceptable in this instance.

Flood Risk

SP 10 of the ANPS seeks to promote environmental resilience by mitigating and adapting to the harmful effects of climate change on our built and natural environment.

DM 47.2 of the ANPS sets out the threshold for when a Drainage Assessment will be required, including for residential development of 10 or more units which is applicable to this application. Flood Maps (NI) has indicated that the site does not lie within any floodplain. However, a small portion of the site is subject to surface water flooding. DM 47.3 of the ANPS requires the Drainage Assessment to demonstrate that adequate measures will be put in place to effectively mitigate the flood risk and must include suitable arrangements for the long-term management and maintenance of the infrastructure, on which mitigation depends.

A Drainage Assessment (Document 06, date stamped 1st December 2022) has been submitted. DfI Rivers were consulted and indicated that further information was required including a Schedule 6 Consent. An email dated 2nd June 2025 was submitted regarding the request and details that the Schedule 6 Consent cannot be provided at this time as the storm sewer connection to serve the site will be provided by NI Water and the sewer requisition will comprise an extension to their existing storm sewage system rather than connection to a watercourse. DfI Rivers were consulted on the proposal and offered no objection.

Policy DM 47 of the ANPS 'Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) deals with flood risk outside floodplains and aims to reduce flood risk for new developments from surface water (pluvial) sources. DM 47.4 indicates that the Council will seek to promote the use of SuDS, as the preferred means of treating surface water and managing flow rates for development proposals in locations where this is a feasible solution. DM 47.6 requires that all SuDS schemes be accompanied by an appropriate management plan (including arrangements for long-term maintenance).

The agent confirmed in an email dated 23rd October 2025 that the drainage regime includes soft SuDS measures including the grass amenity areas which is a positive contrast to the existing impermeable surfaces associated with Castle Mall and car parking areas. The site also benefits from planted buffers and trees throughout the site, and this contributes positively to the sustainable drainage on site. The application as submitted does not include any specific SUDs measures requiring a dedicated SUDs Management Plan.

The proposal is considered to comply with Policy DM 47 in that it has been demonstrated that surface water can be appropriately dealt with to avoid an increase in flooding to the site or elsewhere.

Land Contamination

Policy DM 52 of the ANPS 'Contaminated Land' states that the Council will only support development proposals on potentially contaminated land, where it can be demonstrated that a thorough site investigation has taken place and necessary remediation measures are agreed.

A Preliminary Risk Assessment (Document 03, date stamped 1st December 2022) was submitted which indicates that historical maps indicate that a gas works and saw mill are located approximately 50m north of the site and with the Six Mile Water located to the south. It is likely that any shallow groundwater flow is from the sawmill/gas works towards the Six Mile Water. It is noted that a ground investigation would be required to obtain site specific data to allow a GQRA to be completed.

The applicant has submitted further information explaining that a GQRA cannot be carried out before demolition of the current structures. The report states that the ground investigation to inform a GQRA could be completed as a planning condition due to the low sensitivity of the proposed development and that any contamination identified can be rectified with remedial actions which will not materially impact any grant of planning permission.

Environmental Health are of the opinion that a GQRA and Remedial Strategy should be submitted for agreement prior to any approval being granted, however if permission is to be granted, conditions are requested to be attached as a minimum requirement.

DAERA Regulation Unit were also consulted with the above information and indicated that it is necessary to conduct a GQRA but are content for this to be conditioned as part of any approval. It is considered acceptable, in this instance, to condition the submission of a GQRA given that this survey data cannot be carried out prior to the demolition of the current structures on site.

The proposal is considered to be acceptable, subject to conditions and comply with Policy DM 52 of the ANPS in this regard.

Other Matters

Sewage Disposal

NI Water were consulted on the application and indicated that there is available capacity at the Waste Water Treatment Works to serve the development. However, they have indicated that the foul sewerage network has reached capacity and that the applicant has agreed a downstream engineering solution to mitigate the foul capacity issue and allow for connection. NI Water have provided conditions which should be attached to any forthcoming approval.

RECOMMENDATION GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION

CONDITIONS

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2. Prior to the occupation of each individual residential unit, all habitable rooms within that unit shall be fitted with glazing including frames, capable of achieving a sound reduction from outside to inside, of at least that shown in the Table 1 below, as detailed within Document Number 07/1, date stamped 28th May 2025. This shall be retained for the lifetime of the development.

Table 1

Zones within Proposed Site Layout (as presented in Figure A.2 in Document No. 07/1, date-stamped 28/05/2025)	Required Façade Sound Reduction of dB R_{fa} (or R_{w} + C_{tr}) or greater	
	Daytime Room	Night-time Room
Zone A	26	26
Zone B	29	29
Zone C	26	28
Zone D	30	32

Reason: In order to ensure a suitable internal noise environment is achieved within the dwellings.

3. Prior to the occupation of each individual residential unit, all habitable rooms within that unit shall be fitted with passive and/or mechanical ventilation, in addition to that provided by open windows, capable of achieving a sound reduction from outside to inside, of at least that shown in the Table 1 above as detailed within Document Number 07/1, date stamped 28th May 2025. This shall be retained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure a suitable noise environment is achieved within the dwelling without jeopardising the provision of adequate ventilation.

4. Prior to the occupation of each individual residential unit in Zone C as shown on Figure A.2 of Document 07/1, date stamped 28th May 2025, all habitable rooms

within that unit shall be fitted with glazing including frames, capable of achieving a sound reduction from outside to inside, of at least 28dB Rw, (in order to provide 28dB or greater at the 63Hz octave frequency band). This shall be retained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: In order to ensure a suitable internal noise environment is achieved within the dwellings.

5. Prior to the occupation of each individual residential unit in Zone D as shown on Figure A.2 of Document 07/1, date stamped 28th May 2025, all habitable rooms within that unit shall be fitted with glazing including frames, capable of achieving a sound reduction from outside to inside, of at least 32dB Rw, (in order to provide 32dB or greater at the 63Hz octave frequency band). This shall be retained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: In order to ensure a suitable internal noise environment is achieved within the dwellings.

6. Prior to the occupation of each individual residential unit in Zone C as shown on Figure A.2 of Document 07/1, date stamped 28th May 2025, all habitable rooms within that unit, shall be fitted with passive and/or mechanical ventilation, in addition to that provided by open windows, capable of achieving a sound reduction from outside to inside, of at least 28dB Rw, (in order to provide 28dB or greater at the 63Hz octave frequency band). This shall be retained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure a suitable noise environment is achieved within the dwelling without jeopardising the provision of adequate ventilation.

7. Prior to the occupation of each individual residential unit in Zone D as shown on Figure A.2 of Document 07/1, date stamped 28th May 2025, all habitable rooms within that unit, shall be fitted with passive and/or mechanical ventilation, in addition to that provided by open windows, capable of achieving a sound reduction from outside to inside, of at least 32dB Rw, (in order to provide 32dB or greater at the 63Hz octave frequency band). This shall be retained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure a suitable noise environment is achieved within the dwelling without jeopardising the provision of adequate ventilation.

8. Prior to the occupation of each individual residential unit in the top floor within Zone D (Apartment Block C) as shown on Figure A.2 of Document 07/1, date stamped 28th May 2025, all habitable rooms within that unit shall have an enhanced roof/ceiling construction of two layers of 15mm thick dense plasterboard (nominal surface weight of 12.5kg/m² or greater per sheet) that are attached to the supporting framework by means of resilient rail / bar, and that there is at least 75mm thickness of acoustically absorbent material (nominal density of 10 to 45kg/m³) within a minimum 100mm void between the plasterboard and the roof structure, as detailed in paragraph 4.1.7.9 of Document Number 07/1. This shall be retained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: In order to sufficiently control potential break-in noise through the roof structure of the dwellings.

9. Prior to occupation of the first residential unit, acoustic barriers of 1.5m height, as marked in blue and acoustic barriers of 2.7m in height as marked in yellow on Figure A.2, of Document Number 07/1, date-stamped 28th May 2025 shall be erected. The barriers shall have a surface weight of not less than 6kg/m², be of solid construction (i.e. no holes or gaps for sound to pass through), and so if it is a fence, it should be of the ship-lapped design. This shall be retained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: In order to protect external amenity of the development hereby approved.

10. The retail unit located on the ground floor below Apartment Block C, as marked on Drawing Number 03/5, date-stamped 18th November 2025 (awaiting), shall not operate anytime during the hours of 23:00 to 07:00, including for deliveries.

Reason: In order to protect amenity at nearby sensitive receptors.

11. No other development hereby approved shall be occupied until the works necessary for the improvement of a public road have been completed in accordance with the details outlined blue on Drawing Number 32/3, date stamped 1st July 2025.

Reason: To ensure there is a safe and convenient road system within the development and to comply with the provisions of the Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980.

12. The Council hereby determines that the width, position and arrangement of the streets, and the land to be regarded as being comprised in the streets, shall be as indicated on Drawing Number 32/3, date stamped 1st July 2025.

Reason: To ensure there is a safe and convenient road system within the development and to comply with the provisions of the Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980.

13. No dwellings shall be occupied until that part of the service road which provides access to it has been constructed to base course; the final wearing course shall be applied on the completion of the development.

Reason: To ensure the orderly development of the site and the road works necessary to provide satisfactory access to each dwelling.

14. Following demolition and prior to construction, no development shall commence until the Council has received in writing and agreed that suitable risk assessments and supporting data have been provided. These should identify all unacceptable risks to health and the water environment. The investigations should include, but not be restricted to:

- Identifying all potential contaminant sources within the planning boundary;

- Site investigations and groundwater monitoring designed and implemented in accordance with British Standard BS BS10175:2011+A2:2017 'Investigation of potentially contaminated sites' to identify the contamination risks associated with the potentially contaminating activities which took place at this site or in the surrounding area; and
- Provision of risk assessment(s) in accordance with the guidance on Land Contamination: Risk Management (LCRM) to identify all unacceptable risks to health and the water environment and provision of remedial criteria to be met through a remedial strategy.

This information shall be submitted to the Council in the form of a Generic Quantitative Risk Assessment (GQRA) for agreement.

Reason: To ensure the land is suitable for use and to control any risk to human health arising from land contamination and for the protection of environmental receptors.

15. Following demolition and prior to construction, no development works shall commence, until a detailed remediation strategy to address all unacceptable risks to environmental receptors identified at Condition 15 has been submitted in writing and agreed with the Council. This should identify all unacceptable risks, the remedial objectives/criteria and the measures which are proposed to mitigate them (including maps / plans showing the remediation design, implementation plan detailing timetable of works, remedial criteria, monitoring program etc.).

Reason: To ensure the land is suitable for use and to control any risk to human health arising from land contamination and for the protection of environmental receptors.

16. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until the mitigation measures as presented within the agreed remediation strategy and implementation plan have been fully implemented and verified to the satisfaction of the Council.

Reason: To ensure the land is suitable for use and to control any risk to human health arising from land contamination and for the protection of environmental receptors.

17. There shall be no amendments or deviations from the remediation and verification recommendations contained within the agreed detailed remediation strategy and implementation plan without the prior written approval of the Council.

Reason: To ensure the land is suitable for use and to control any risk to human health arising from land contamination and for the protection of environmental receptors.

18. Verification documentation shall be submitted in the form of a verification report, to the Council. The report shall describe all the remediation and monitoring works undertaken and shall demonstrate the effectiveness of the works in managing and remediating all risks posed by contamination.

Reason: To ensure the land is suitable for use and to control any risk to human health arising from land contamination and for the protection of environmental receptors.

19. If during the development works, a new source of contamination and risks are found, which had not been previously identified, works should cease and the Council shall be notified immediately. Any new contamination shall be fully investigated in accordance with the Land Contamination: Risk Management (LCRM) Guidance, available online at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/land-contamination-how-to-manage-the-risks>.

Reason: To ensure the land is suitable for use and to control any risk to human health arising from land contamination and for the protection of environmental receptors.

20. Should an unacceptable risk to human health be identified, a remediation strategy shall be submitted to be agreed with the Council before being implemented.

Reason: To ensure the land is suitable for use and to control any risk to human health arising from land contamination and for the protection of environmental receptors.

21. Should unacceptable risk to the water environment be identified, no piling work should commence until a piling risk assessment has been submitted in writing and agreed with the Council. Piling risk assessments should be undertaken in accordance with the methodology contained within the Environment Agency document on "Piling into Contaminated Sites", available at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://cdn.environmentagency.gov.uk/scho0202bisw-e-e.pdf>

In the event of unacceptable risks being identified, a remediation strategy shall be agreed with the Council in writing and subsequently implemented and verified to its satisfaction.

Reason: Protection of environmental receptors to ensure the site is suitable for use.

22. The open space and amenity areas indicated on Drawing Number 38/2, date stamped 28th May 2025 shall be managed and maintained for the lifetime of the development in accordance with the Landscape Management Plan, Document 04/1, date stamped 28th May 2025. Any changes or alterations to the approved landscape management arrangements shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Council.

Reason: To ensure successful establishment and ongoing management and maintenance of the open space and amenity areas for the lifetime of the development in the interests of visual and residential amenity.

23. The proposed planting shall be carried out in accordance with approved Drawing Number 31/2 date stamped 28th May 2025. The planting shall be carried out within the first available season after occupation of the building hereby

approved. Hedging shall be allowed to grow on and retained at a minimum height of 2m thereafter, trees shall be allowed to grow on and retained at a minimum height of 4m thereafter.

Reason: To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of a high standard of landscape.

24. If within the lifetime of the development following the planting of any tree, shrub or hedge, that tree, shrub or hedge is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, or becomes, in the opinion of the Council, seriously damaged or defective, another tree, shrub or hedge of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place within the next available full planting season, unless the Council gives its written consent to any variation.

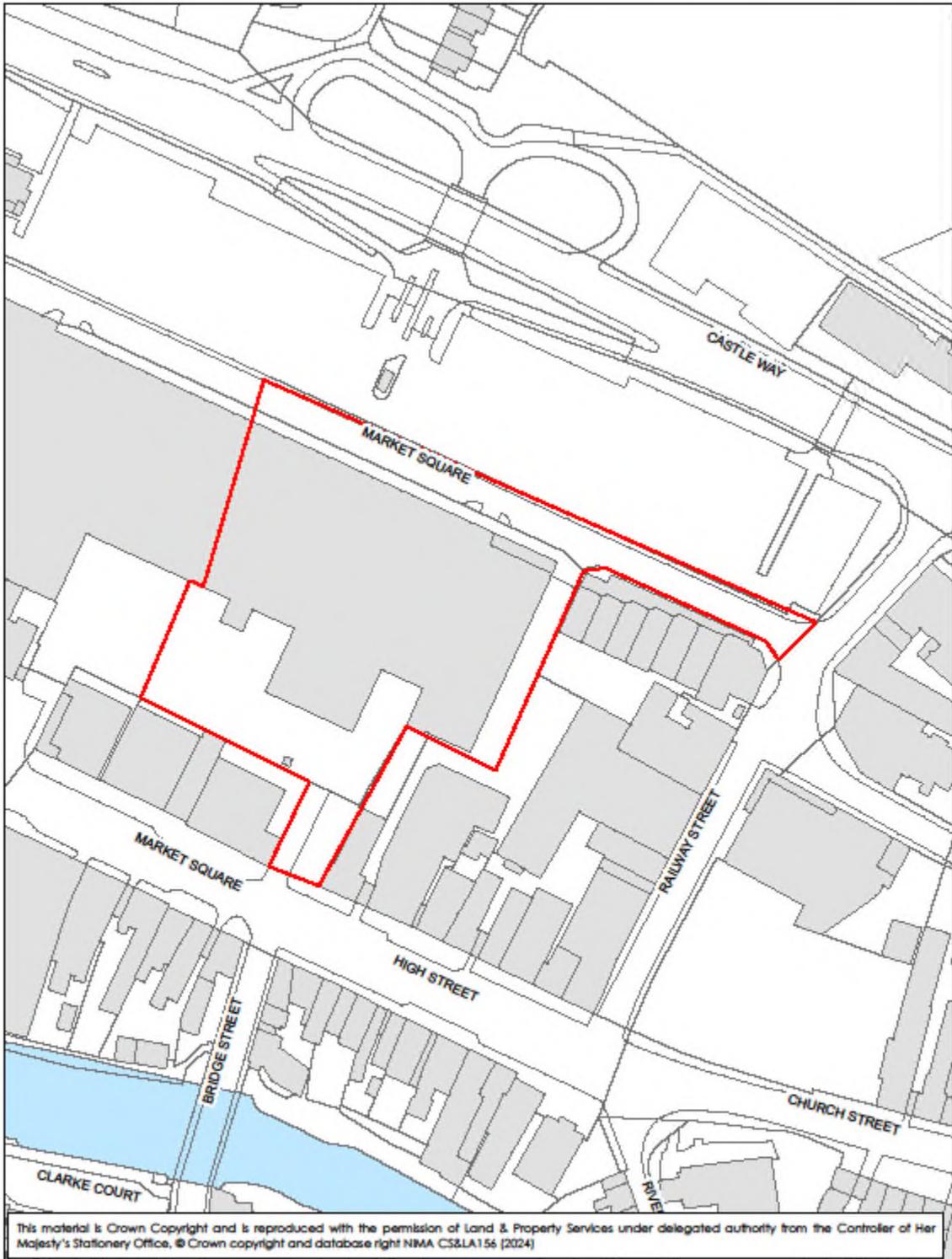
Reason: To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of a high standard of landscape.

25. No development shall commence until it has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that the mains sewer and the receiving Waste Water Treatment Works has the capacity to receive the waste water and foul sewerage from the development. A connection to the public sewer will not be permitted until the Article 161 Agreement has been authorised.

Reason: To ensure adequate wastewater treatment capacity is available and to ensure the project will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site.

26. Prior to the occupation of the apartment on the northwestern elevation of Block A and Apartment 08 within Block D hereby approved, the first floor kitchen/living room windows as indicated in green on Drawing No. 07/3 date stamped 28th May 2025 and Drawing No. 15/4, date stamped 23rd October 2025 shall be fitted with obscure glazing and shall be permanently retained as such.

Reason: In the interest of privacy and amenity.



Site Location Plan

1:1,250

Reference: LA03/2022/1074/F

 Site Location



COMMITTEE ITEM	3.2
APPLICATION NO	LA03/2022/1076/DCA
DEA	ANTRIM
COMMITTEE INTEREST	HEAD OF PLANNING REFERRAL
RECOMMENDATION	GRANT DEMOLITION CONSENT
PROPOSAL	Partial demolition of Castle Mall, comprising units 11- 27 and 51 - 58
SITE/LOCATION	Lands at units 11-27 and 51-58 Castle Mall opposite Central Car Park, extending from Castle Walk/Railway Street (adjacent to No's 1-7) to High Street (adjacent to No's 32 & 38), Antrim
APPLICANT	Keneagles Ltd.
AGENT	TSA Planning
LAST SITE VISIT	1st February 2023
CASE OFFICER	Morgan Poots Tel: 028 903 40401 Email: morgan.poots@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk
Full details of this application, including the application forms, relevant drawings, consultation responses and any representations received are available to view at the Planning Portal https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/application/664820	
SITE DESCRIPTION	
<p>The application site is located in Antrim Town Centre and the Antrim Town Conservation Area (zoning reference 16.8) as defined by the Antrim Area Plan (AAP) 1984-2001.</p> <p>The application site comprises the eastern portion of the existing Castle Mall shopping centre, an associated service yard and a pedestrianised access to Castle Mall from High Street. The site is relatively flat and utilises the existing access of Castle Walk onto Railway Street.</p> <p>The application site is located in a prominent location within the commercial core of the town. It has two main frontages, primarily fronting the Castle Mall central car park with a smaller extent fronting onto High Street. The site is bounded by Castle Mall central car park to the north; the eastern site boundary is partially defined by a 2-metre-high concrete boundary wall and the western gable elevation of No. 1 Castle Walk. The southern and western site boundaries adjoin the remainder of the shopping centre and the rear of the adjacent units along High Street.</p> <p>In terms of the surrounding site context Antrim Castle Gardens is west of the site and to the north there is a police station, primary school and some residential use such as that along the Menin Road. East and south of the site is predominantly commercial in nature, with adjacent units in Castle Walk, the businesses along High Street and a large Tesco retail store.</p>	
RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY	
<p>Planning Reference: LA03/2022/1074/F</p> <p>Location: Lands at units 11-27 and 51-58 Castle Mall opposite Central Car Park, extending from Castle Walk/Railway Street (adjacent to No's 1-7) to High Street (adjacent to No's 32 & 38), Antrim</p>	

Proposal: Proposed part demolition of Castle Mall and erection of 39no. dwellings (1no. detached, 14no. terrace and 24no. apartments) for social housing and 1no. retail unit including parking and amenity spaces. Works to include upgrading of the vehicular access via Railway Street and pedestrian linkages to High Street, and all other associated site and access works. (Amended Description)
Decision: Current Application

Planning Reference: LA03/2021/0076/DCA

Location: Castle Mall, 26 Market Square, Antrim, BT41 4DN

Proposal: Amalgamation of existing retail units within shopping centre to create larger unit, demolition of c.56m of northeastern façade (facing Council car park) and replacement with new façade and associated hard landscaping work

Decision: Permission Granted (23.06.2021)

Planning Reference: LA03/2021/0074/F

Location: Castle Mall, 26 Market Square, Antrim, BT41 4DN

Proposal: Amalgamation of existing retail units within shopping centre to create larger unit, demolition of c.56m of northeastern façade (facing Council car park) and replacement with new façade and associated hard landscaping work

Decision: Permission Granted (23.06.2021)

PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Under the provisions of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, all decisions must be taken in accordance with the provisions of the Local Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Development Plan (ANLDP) will comprise of two parts; Part 1 is the Plan Strategy which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 3rd July 2025. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan which will identify the boundaries of settlement limits, local designations and zonings which has not yet been published. As such the settlement limits, local designations and zonings of the extant adopted Development Plans for the Borough (the Belfast Urban Area Plan, the Carrickfergus Area Plan, and the Antrim Area Plan) remain applicable. Account will also be taken of the draft Newtownabbey Area Plan and its associated Interim Statement and the provisions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

Antrim Area Plan 1984 – 2001: The application site is within the primary retail core of Antrim town centre and also forms part of Antrim Town Conservation Area (zoning reference 16.8) as defined by the Plan. There are no specific operational policies relevant to the determination of the application in the Plan.

SPPS – Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland: sets out that Planning Authorities should be guided by the principle that sustainable development should be permitted, having regard to the local development plan and other material considerations unless the proposed development will cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy 2015-2030 (ANPS): sets out the relevant planning policies for assessing planning applications and other planning consents. The relevant strategic and operational policies for the assessment of the current proposal are listed below.

Strategic Policy 7 - Historic Environment (SPG7): Indicates that careful management and ongoing investment in our historic environment will help to create unique, attractive, and welcoming places to live, work and relax in and contribute significantly to our Borough's sense of place. SP 7 is supported by Policy:

- Policy DM 33 Conservation Areas

Supplementary Planning Guidance- Antrim Town Conservation Area Guide

CONSULTATION

Forward Plan Team Conservation Team – No objection subject to acceptable redevelopment scheme.

Department for Communities Historic Environment Division – No objection subject to conditions

REPRESENTATION

No neighbouring properties were notified as the application relates to Conservation Area Demolition Consent and no letters of representation have been received.

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING ISSUES/MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- Principle of Development

Principle of Development

In accordance with the Planning Act (NI) 2011 and the Planning (Control of Demolition in Conservation Areas) Direction 2015, demolition consent is required as the portion of the building proposed for demolition exceeds 115 cubic metres.

Section 104 (11) of the Planning Act states "where any area is for the time being designated as a conservation area, special regard must be had, in the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in that area, of any powers under this Act, to the desirability of:

- a. Preserving the character or appearance of that area in cases where an opportunity for enhancing its character or appearance does not arise;
- b. Enhancing the character or appearance of that area in cases where an opportunity to do so does arise."

Paragraph 6.18 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and DM 33.4 and DM 33.5 of the ANPS, states that the Council will operate a presumption in favour of the retention of an unlisted building that makes a material contribution to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area. In addition, consent for demolition will only be permitted in exceptional cases and this will be conditional on the prior agreement for the redevelopment of the site. In such cases it must clearly be demonstrated that any redevelopment of the site will enhance the character or appearance of the area where an opportunity to do so arises or otherwise preserve its character or appearance.

The proposed demolition of the eastern part of Castle Mall is to facilitate the submitted redevelopment scheme on site for 39 no. dwellings under planning application Ref: LA03/2022/1074/F. The proposed demolition involves the older portion of Castle Mall shopping centre which consists of a number of small retail units. These units are characterised by top heavy, mansard type roofs with grey/black fibre

files and roughcast render walls. The northern façade facing the car park has numerous supporting columns, access doors, air conditioning units and ventilation grilles as well as fenced off areas, metal railings, bin stores and a laundrette machine. The building provides a linear vista within the Conservation Area which has no visual interest but rather is characterised by a service frontage and ancillary development which can be considered to be 'dead' space. The building has a dated appearance and is not considered to make a material contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Furthermore, DM 33.7 of the ANPS requires that proposals for demolition or partial demolition within a Conservation Area are accompanied by a Statement of Justification. Document 02, date stamped 18th November 2025 was submitted which provides an overview of the proposed demolition works. The Statement of Justification, in summary, details that Castle Mall does not contribute materially to the character of Antrim Conservation Area and its demolition provides an opportunity to enhance the Conservation Area through an appropriate redevelopment scheme which has been recommended for approval under the full planning application Ref: LA03/2022/1074/F.

Historic Environment Division (Historic Monuments) were also consulted on the proposal and indicated that the extent of demolition proposed is acceptable within Antrim Conservation Area, subject to conditions regarding the agreement and implementation of an archaeological programme of works to identify and record any archaeological remains in advance of new construction.

In addition, Advice and guidance was sought from the Council's Conservation Section who are of the opinion that the demolition is appropriate for the Conservation Area.

It is considered that the proposed demolition is acceptable and in line with Paragraphs 6.18 and 6.19 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and DM 33.4 and 33.5 of the ANPS in this regard.

RECOMMENDATION	GRANT DEMOLITION CONSENT
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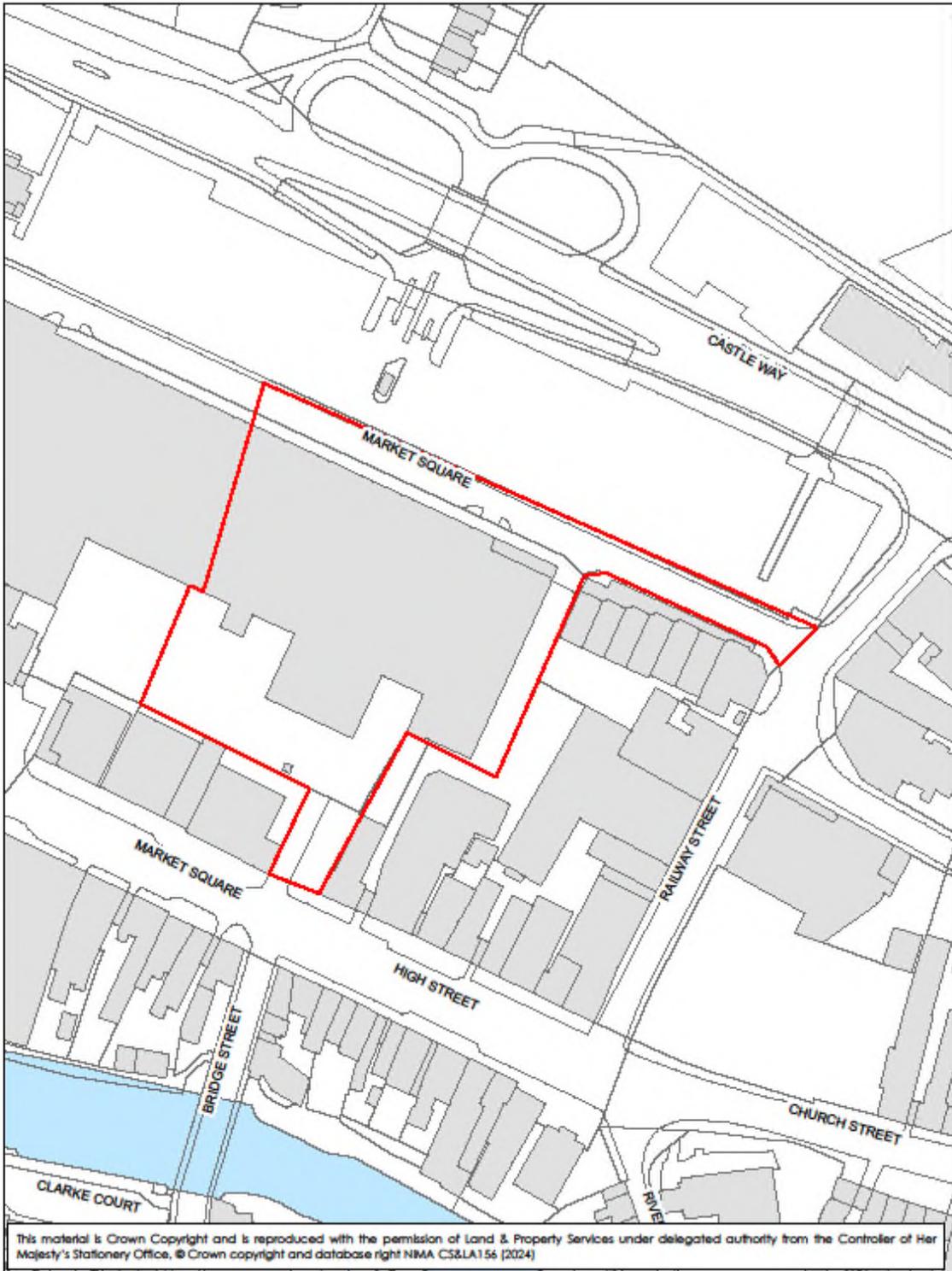
PROPOSED CONDITIONS

1. The works hereby permitted shall be begun not later than the expiration of 5 years beginning with the date on which this consent is granted.

Reason: As required by Section 105 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2. In accordance with Section 91(6) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, the buildings/structures on the site shall not be demolished until planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment of the site and a contract made (and provided to the Council) for the carrying out of works.

Reason: To ensure sites awaiting redevelopment are not left vacant to the detriment of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.



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Site Location Plan

1:1,250

Reference: LA03/2022/1076/DCA

 Site Location



COMMITTEE ITEM	3.3
APPLICATION NO	LA03/2024/0861/F
DEA	ANTRIM
COMMITTEE INTEREST	REFUSAL RECOMMENDED
RECOMMENDATION	REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION
PROPOSAL	Retrospective unit subdivision and proposed change of use from restaurant unit (approved under reference LA03/2018/1006/RM) to amusement arcade/ adult gaming centre and alterations to elevations, addition of external smoking area and plant machinery.
SITE/LOCATION	Unit 4, The Junction Retail and Leisure Park, Ballymena Road, Antrim, BT41 4LL
APPLICANT	Episo 4 Antrim S.a.r.l
AGENT	Diana Thompson (MBA Planning)
LAST SITE VISIT	14 January 2025
CASE OFFICER	Sairead McCarthy Tel: 028 90340406 Email: sairead.mccarthy@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk
<p>Full details of this application, including the application forms, relevant drawings, consultation responses and any representations received are available to view at the Northern Ireland Planning Portal</p> <p>https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/application/694461</p>	
SITE DESCRIPTION	
<p>The application site is located at The Junction Retail and Leisure Park in Antrim. The site is within the development limit for Antrim Town but is located outside the Central Area of Antrim, the Town Core and primary shopping area, as designated in the Antrim Area Plan 1985 – 2001.</p> <p>The unit forming part of this application is single storey with a ridge height of 5.7 metres from finished floor level. External elevations of the existing unit include wood effect composite panelling and a dark grey composite roof covering. The front elevation is predominately aluminium double-glazed windows with a double door on this front elevation also.</p> <p>The application site sits within an established retail and leisure complex and the surrounding units are occupied by a mix of uses, including restaurant, fast food take-away, bulk retail, and a cinema.</p>	
RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY	
<p>Application Number: LA03/2018/1006/RM Location: Junction One Retail and Leisure Park, Ballymena Road, Antrim Proposal: Proposed development of 2no restaurant units, associated plant, car and cycle parking, landscaping and associated site works Decision: Permission Granted Decision Date: 19 February 2019</p>	

Application Number: LA03/2017/0234/O

Location: Lands approximately 50m south of Omniplex Cinema, The Junction Retail and Leisure Park, Ballymena Road, Antrim

Proposal: Outline masterplan to facilitate the comprehensive regeneration of Junction One, including the Factory Outlet Centre, Retail and Leisure Park, and vacant lands. Proposals include demolition and reconfiguration of existing buildings; erection of new buildings to include provision of restaurants/coffee shops, bulky goods retail warehousing, retail kiosks, indoor leisure and factory outlet units; creation of new children's play area, outdoor multi-purpose recreational facility, new gateway entrance road and re-configuration of internal road network; reconfiguration of car parking; provision of environmental improvement scheme featuring hard/soft landscaping and all associated site works (Proposed Master Plan layout to also incorporate the re-configuration of existing car park and 2 No. drive thru restaurants/cafes, 1 No. ancillary external seating area and 1 No ancillary children's play area granted planning permission by LA03/2017/0014/F)

Decision: Permission Granted

Decision Date: 18 December 2017

PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Under the provisions of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, all decisions must be taken in accordance with the provisions of the Local Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Development Plan (ANLDP) will comprise of two parts; Part 1 is the Plan Strategy which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 3rd July 2025. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan which will identify the boundaries of settlement limits, local designations and zonings which has not yet been published. As such the settlement limits, local designations and zonings of the extant adopted Development Plans for the Borough (the Belfast Urban Area Plan, the Carrickfergus Area Plan and the Antrim Area Plan) remain applicable. Account will also be taken of the draft Newtownabbey Area Plan and its associated Interim Statement and the provisions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

Antrim Area Plan 1985 – 2001: The application site is located within the but falls outside any specific designation such as the Central Area of Antrim, the Town Core and primary shopping area, and Conservation Area as designated in this plan.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS): sets out that Planning Authorities should be guided by the principle that sustainable development should be permitted, having regard to the local development plan and other material considerations unless the proposed development will cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy 2015-2030: sets out the relevant planning policies for assessing planning applications and other planning consents. The relevant strategic and operational policies for the assessment of the current proposal are listed below.

Strategic Policy 1 – Sustainable Development (SP 1): sets out that the Council

will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).

Strategic Policy 2 – Employment (SP 2): sets out that the Council will encourage the growth of indigenous business, promote innovation and proactively attract investment into the borough to support enterprise and increase employment for the benefit of all residents. SP 3 is supported by policies:

- Policy DM 7: Development outside Centres; and
- Policy DM 8: Development at The Junction, Antrim

Strategic Policy 3 – Transportation and Infrastructure (SP 3): aims to encourage the continued development and growth of high-quality transportation, communications and utilities infrastructure in a timely and co-ordinated fashion to meet the current and future needs of our Borough and support sustainable development in accordance with the Council's Spatial Growth Strategy. SP3 is supported by Policy:

- Policy DM 10: Access and Parking

Strategic Policy 6 - Placemaking and Good Design (SP6): sets out that positive placemaking and good design are key components in the delivery of high quality, attractive and sustainable places within our Borough. SP6 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 25: Urban Design and
- Policy DM 26: Shopfront design

CONSULTATION

- **Environmental Health** – No objection
- **DfI Roads** – No objection

REPRESENTATION

Two (2) neighbouring properties were notified of the application and one letter of objection has been received from a property outside the neighbour notification area. The full representations made regarding this proposal are available to view online at the Planning Portal:

<https://planningregister.planningssystemni.gov.uk/application/694461>

A summary of the key points of objection raised is provided below:

- The Junction is a family friendly facility; this type of development breeds antisocial behaviour and encourages problems, including criminality.

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING ISSUES/MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- Preliminary Matters
- Policy Context
- Principle of Development
- Design, Appearance and Impact on Character and Appearance of Area
- Neighbour Amenity
- Access, Movement and Parking
- Other Matters

Preliminary Matters - Engagement with the agent/applicant

- The agent was advised by way of email on 22 January 2025 that the Council considered the proposed use to be a town centre use and offered the applicant an opportunity to address this point, with any supporting information to be submitted by 03 February 2025.
- The agent requested an extension of time until 05 February 2025 and submitted further information on 07 February 2025. The Council went back to the agent on 11 March 2025 to reiterate the initial point of the proposed use being a town centre use, and to query the floor space requirement. The applicant was offered another opportunity to address these points by submitting additional information by 01 April 2025.
- The agent again requested a time extension and submitted the information on 15 April 2025. Following adoption of the ANPS, the agent was offered the opportunity to provide an updated Planning Statement via email on 04 July 2025; they were also advised via email on 23 July 2025 of the Council's concerns regarding the sequential assessment. The agent advised that additional information would be submitted by 08 August 2025.
- The agent was granted a further time extension for the submission of information until 13 August 2025; however, this information was not received by the Planning Section until Wednesday 20 August 2025. This information was considered insufficient.

Policy Context

Section 45 (1) of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 requires the Council, in dealing with an application for planning permission, to have regard to the Local Development Plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. Section 6 (4) of the Act then states that, where, in making any determination under the Act, regard is to be had to the Local Development Plan, the determination must be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) is material to all decisions on individual planning applications. The Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy (ANPS) sets out the relevant planning policies for the determination of planning applications in the Borough. However, until such times as the Local Policies Plan (LPP) identifies the boundaries of settlement limits, local designations and zonings, the provisions of the current legacy plans, both adopted and in draft form will continue to apply. The site is defined as being within the settlement limit for Antrim as designated in the Antrim Area Plan 1984-2001 (AAP). In line with the transitional arrangements set out in the SPPS, the AAP and the ANPS must be read together. Any conflict between the policies in the ANPS and those in the Area Plans must be resolved in favour of the ANPS.

Strategic Policy SP 2.12 of the ANPS sets out that the Council will operate a town centre first approach in considering the development of retail and other main town centre uses, and the retail hierarchy for the Borough is set out in Table 4 of SP 2.12. Relevant to this application, it is noted that Antrim has been designated as a Large Town Centre, and that The Junction is not listed in any designated centre in the hierarchy. SP 2.12 goes on to state that the Council will support and promote designated town centres as the preferred locations for the development of retail,

leisure (including evening / night-time economy uses), office, visitor accommodation, and appropriate housing and community facilities. Criterion (d) of SP 2.12 specifies that the Council will apply a sequential test as set out in Policy DM 7 of the ANPS to all development proposals for main town centre uses that are not within an existing centre. Future retail development at The Junction Retail Outlet and Leisure Park will be controlled in accordance with Policy DM 8 of the ANPS.

Principle of Development

The proposed development is for the retrospective subdivision of a previously approved restaurant unit within The Junction Retail and Leisure Park and change of use of this unit to an amusement arcade/adult gaming centre with alterations to the elevations, and the addition of an external smoking area and plant machinery. The proposed development comprises a form of leisure and entertainment and would be considered to be a main town centre use as per the definition of complementary town centre uses within the footnote of Policy DM 6 of the ANPS.

Until such times as the Council's Local Policies Plan identifies the boundaries of settlement limits, local designations and zonings, the provisions of the current legacy plans will continue to apply in the decision-making process. In this case, whilst the application site is located within an existing and established retail and leisure park, it lies outside the town centre boundary for Antrim Town. Paragraph 6.280 of the SPPS states that 'A sequential test should be applied to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with an up-to date LDP. Where it is established that an alternative sequentially preferable site or sites exist within a proposal's whole catchment, an application which proposes development on a less sequentially preferred site should be refused'.

In accordance with the SPPS, Policy DM 7 of the ANPS sets out that the Council will apply a sequential test, which requires that locations for retail use and other main town centre uses should be considered in the following order of preference:

- Centre sites (in accordance with the retail hierarchy).
- Edge of Centre sites; and
- Out of Centre locations that are, or can be made, accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.

As per paragraph 6.289 of the SPPS and DM 7.2 of the ANPS, the onus is on the applicant to identify and fully demonstrate that all centre and edge of centre options have been assessed and discounted as unsuitable, unviable or unavailable. In the context of this application, the applicant is required to show that there are no sequentially preferable sites located within Antrim Town Centre.

The agent contends, in their Planning, Access and Design Statement (DOC 01, date stamped received 26 November 2024) that a sequential test is not required for the proposed development at this out of centre location. It is argued that as the application site is located at The Junction Retail and Leisure Park, which has an approved Concept Masterplan (Ref: LA03/2017/0234/O) to include a number of town centre uses, the proposed use is therefore acceptable at this location.

Whilst reiterating their argument in DOC 02 (date stamped received 07 February 2025), the applicant has nonetheless submitted a Sequential Assessment. The agent identified ten (10) available properties within Antrim Town Centre. Each of these sites was assessed for their ability to meet the preferential requirements of the applicant. These included the need for an existing building, as it is alleged that it is not viable for the applicant/operator to construct a new building for gaming use; an internal area of at least 200sqm to provide a spacious gaming and lounging/relaxation area as well as other ancillary and staff welfare provision; a prominent ground floor location in an area that attracts a reasonable amount of passing footfall; and the ability to trade to midnight seven days a week.

The ten identified properties were located on either High Street, Market Square, Church Street or within Castle Mall. All ten of the identified properties have been deemed as 'not suitable'; six (6) of these vacant units were discounted as they fell below the applicant's preferential floorspace of 200sqm. The two (2) units in Castle Mall were also ruled out due to their size being less than 200sqm, in addition to the lack of external space for smoking, and the fact that Castle Mall trading hours would not allow for a midnight closing time or longer opening hours on a Sunday. The remaining two (2) units are within the Conservation Area of Antrim, and the agent considers that this location would prevent the grant of the required planning permission.

Units E and F of Nos. 55 – 59 High Street formed part of the Sequential Assessment, however, were discounted as the floorspace of both is stated as being too small. Unit 5 of the same property had been marketed on PropertyPal as a lower ground floor unit, with floorspace extending to approximately 383sqm, but did not form part of the Sequential Assessment. When queried with the agent, they advised that this unit was no longer available, however, it continues to be listed for rent on both the PropertyPal website and on the letting agent's website.

In addition, Nos. 50 – 52 High Street has been disregarded by the applicant as it is located within the Conservation Area, and the Sequential Assessment contends that DCAN 1 would not allow for the proposed use at this location. However, since the adoption of the ANPS, DCAN 1 is no longer relevant in the assessment of any application. The agent also states that the proposed use of the upper floors for residential use would create an amenity issue, however, this application is still under consideration, and no decision has been made regarding the proposed residential use (Ref: LA03/2024/0377/F). In addition, amusement arcades are not a noisy activity.

The agent was made aware of the above points relating to No. 50 – 52 High Street and was invited to provide further supporting information regarding this property. In their response, the agent has stated that this premise is constrained by the unavailability of a sewerage connection, and that it is located in a floodplain; consequently, it remains an unsuitable site for the proposed development. The Council would contend however, that as per the Flood Maps NI, the floodplain associated with the Six Mile Water River extends only to the properties north of the river and south of High Street. Therefore, Nos. 50 – 52 High Street, which is situated on the northside of High Street, does not fall within the floodplain, and the argument put forward by the agent in relation to this, is not accepted.

With regards to the unavailability of a sewage connection, NI Water has provided a response to the pending application on the upper level of No. 50 – 52 High Street, advising that there are network constraints, however, if the developer were to engage with NI Water through a Wastewater Impact Assessment, an alternative drainage solution may be found. It may be a similar case for the redevelopment of the ground floor of this premise, and it is not considered that a wastewater connection would be the determining factor for the proposed development to be located at No. 50 – 52 High Street.

The Council queried with the agent the minimum floorspace requirement of 200sqm, and a response to this is provided in DOC 03 (date stamped received 15 April 2025). The agent has stated that the proposed occupier has 'developed a very specific business model that is to operate high quality, well managed gaming centres', with their units being fitted out to exceptional standards and that the 200sqm minimum size requirement has been developed over a period of more than 50 years from the operator's experience of operating gaming centres across NI.

Whilst the applicant argues that a minimum of 200sqm is required to operate its business, it would appear that the same applicant operates the same type of amusement arcade/adult gaming centre facility from Nos. 33 – 35 High Street, Carrickfergus, and that according to the planning application submitted for this property, the floorspace of this unit is 188sqm (Ref: LA02/2023/1342/F). This suggests that the applicant is able to operate with a smaller floorspace than 200sqm, and that this figure of 200sqm is essentially a desire of the applicant and not an absolute requirement for the proposed development.

This point was also raised with the agent, and in their response, it was conceded that the applicant does operate a gaming centre in Carrickfergus, and this unit has a floorspace of only 188sqm. The agent argues that this unit in Carrickfergus was taken on as an 'experiment' to gauge if the applicant can operate its gaming centre with a floorspace below 200sqm. The agent has stated that a reduced floorspace has meant that there is only one toilet and inadequate areas to add cupboard and other storage space. It is also claimed that with the reduced amount of circulation space, it is very difficult to get gaming machines into and out of the premises. The agent has concluded that a reduced floor space does not work for the applicants' business model and has reinforced their position that they are not interested in units that contain less than 200sqm of floorspace.

The Council acknowledges the arguments put forward by the agent in relation to the minimum amount of floorspace; however, it is considered that these additional comments only seek to reinforce the view that a minimum floorspace of 200sqm essentially forms part of a 'wish-list' for the applicant and is not a requisite. The fact that the unit in Carrickfergus continues to operate with less than 200sqm demonstrates that a smaller floorspace can also be viable.

As noted above, in their Sequential Assessment, the applicant discounted all sites as unsuitable as the floorspace fell below 200sqm, or the opening hours were not long enough. In doing so, the applicant has assessed these sites based only on their commercial aspirations, and not whether they are actually suitable for the proposed development, which has been described by the applicant as an

'...amusement arcade/ adult gaming centre and alterations to elevations, addition of external smoking area and plant machinery'. The suitability of a premise should be judged on whether it can accommodate the broad type of development proposed, and not whether it is suitable for the commercial requirements or preferences of the individual developer.

In their supporting statement (Document 03), the applicant refers to planning application Ref: LA03/2024/0456/F which sought permission for the change of use of a former Royal British Legion social club to 3no. retail units. This application was refused by the Council in November 2024 on the basis that the applicant had not demonstrated that there was a suitable site for the development within Ballyclare Town Centre, or another retailing area. The applicant subsequently appealed this decision (Ref: 2024/A0090). In the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) decision, discussion centred around whether the appellant had adopted the correct approach in assessing the 'suitability' of alternative sites, with one area of dispute relating to whether the specific investment aspirations of the developer are relevant when determining the scope of what a suitable site is. As with this current application, the Council argued that the investment aspirations are irrelevant, however the Commissioner sided with the appellant, concluding that suitability means 'suitable for the development proposed by the appellant'. Whilst acknowledging the stance taken by the Commissioner, it is considered that the PAC did not take the proper approach as set out in the case law.

Paragraph 6.289 of the SPPS recognises the importance of 'flexibility' for example, through the use of creative and innovative design schemes, including multi-level schemes, or smaller more efficient trading floors/servicing arrangements. The applicant, however, has failed to apply any degree of flexibility in their approach to assessing suitable sites for their development, rather adopting the stance that if a property is not of their desired size, or if it cannot accommodate their preferred opening hours, then it is 'unsuitable'. Paragraph 6.289 accepts that some alteration of the proposed scheme may be necessary, and as such, the applicant should have considered the scope for accommodating their proposed development in a different built form and / or at a different scale, with potentially different operating hours.

Policy DM 8 of the ANPS refers specifically to development at The Junction. The aim of this policy is to ensure that the core role and function of The Junction as an outlet and retail warehouse park remains distinguishable from Antrim Town Centre, and that Antrim Town Centre is recognised as the first-choice destination in Antrim for town centre uses.

As per DM 8.1 of the ANPS, the Council will support the ongoing redevelopment at The Junction Retail Outlet and Leisure Park in Antrim in accordance with the terms of the Outline Masterplan approved by the Council, Ref: LA03/2017/0234/O. Furthermore, in assessing future proposals at The Junction, and in addition to the requirements of Policy DM 7, the Council will operate a presumption against development that is likely to impact adversely on the continued vitality and viability of Antrim Town Centre.

Under planning application Ref: LA03/2018/1006/RM, permission was granted for one building which contained two restaurant units; unit 1 had a floorspace of 326sqm, with unit 2 having a floorspace of 611sqm. The first unit is currently

occupied by Nando's; however, the second unit has remained vacant since it was built.

The subject unit of this application is shown as the end unit in the building. Part of the application is seeking retrospective planning for 'unit subdivision', and in the supporting statement, the agent highlights that the approved restaurant unit 2 has been subdivided into two smaller units, with this subject unit having a floorspace of 240sqm, and the other unit occupying the remaining floorspace of 371sqm.

Criterion (c) of DM 8.2 of the ANPS specifically refers to proposals for the subdivision of large commercial units into smaller units and the policy advocates that a presumption against such proposals will be applied. Subdividing this larger unit into smaller units results in the creation of two independent units, each with a floorspace more reflective of a town centre shop. It is considered that by creating new smaller shops, the variety of town centre uses at The Junction will increase, and The Junction will subsequently be in a position to compete with the smaller shops typically found in Antrim Town Centre.

As noted above, the aim of the SPPS and Policy DM 7 of the ANPS is to protect town centres to ensure that they are busy, attractive, and economically healthy, and that they will continue to survive and thrive. DM 8.2 adds extra strength to the protection of Antrim Town Centre by operating a presumption against any proposal in The Junction which would have a negative impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre. It is considered that the subdivision of larger units into smaller units would draw trade, footfall, and economic activity away from the Town Centre, leading to a shift in the retail hierarchy, and impacting adversely on the continued vitality and viability of Antrim Town Centre.

Despite forming part of the description of the proposal, and floorplans indicating same, the agent has stated that this proposal does not involve the subdivision of a larger commercial unit into smaller units (page 5 of Document 04). Furthermore, the applicant has provided no justification for this element of the development and has not demonstrated that the subdivision of the unit will not harm Antrim Town Centre.

To conclude, the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the proposed use cannot be accommodated within a town centre unit. In addition, the applicant is seeking a floorspace of 200sqm and has subdivided a larger unit within The Junction to accommodate their preference. The proposal is therefore found to be contrary to the SPPS and Policies DM 7 and DM 8 of the ANPS.

Design, Appearance and Impact on Character and Appearance of the Area

Policy DM 25 of the ANPS deals with urban design and requires development within settlements to demonstrate a clear understanding of the characteristics of the site, its wider context and how the proposal will connect with the surrounding area. All development will be expected to deliver high quality design in its layout and appearance.

In addition, Policy DM 26 of the ANPS deals specifically with 'Shopfront Design', with the amplification text stating that the Council will only support proposals for new shopfronts or alterations to existing shopfronts where these demonstrate a high quality of design.

It is expected that any alterations to existing shop fronts will relate to the architectural character of the host building, utilise complementary materials, colours and textures and respect the scale, plot width and proportions of the streetscape.

This proposal involves the change of use from an approved, but vacant, restaurant unit to an amusement arcade/adult gaming centre. The external appearance of the building will remain largely unchanged, with only a new door on the front elevation, 3 No. floor mounted air conditioning condensers and 2No. louvered grills will be installed on the eastern elevation, with a new open-front smoking shelter to the rear.

It is considered that the proposed changes to the shop front reflect the adjacent units, and that the scale of windows and frequency of openings maximises activity and surveillance whilst creating an active frontage to the surrounding area. The external finishes are designed to reflect those that are existing. The new smoking shelter is located to the rear of the building, and at this location, it will not create clutter or disrupt movement along footpaths.

The design, layout and overall appearance of the proposal are considered acceptable and relate well to the scale, density, massing, character, appearance and use of materials of the surrounding area. The proposed development is found to be in compliance with Policies DM 25 and DM 26 of the ANPS.

Amenity Impact

This application site is located within an established retail and leisure park, which has a mix of uses, including McDonalds restaurant and drive-thru, Nandos, Omniplex cinema, Starbucks, Poundland and B&M Bargains. It occupies a relatively small amount of floorspace in comparison to the total existing floorspace within The Junction.

Whilst there are no nearby schools, churches or hospitals, there are residential properties located across the A26 Ballymena Road in Meadowlands, around 50 metres to the east. One letter of objection has been received from a resident in Ferrard Meadows, which lies approximately 800 metres to the southeast of the application site. The issues raised in this letter relate to the use of the unit as a gaming centre and the public perception of these facilities as leading to an increase in antisocial behaviour and encouraging other problems including criminality.

Policy DM 28 of the ANPS relates to the amenity impact of development proposals. As set out in DM 28.2 the following issues, which may result from the development, will be a material consideration in the assessment of proposals: overlooking and/or loss of privacy; dominance or overshadowing; noise, vibration and other forms of disturbance; and odour, fumes and other forms of environmental pollution. It is considered that given the separation distance to the objector's property, the issues raised by the objector in terms of any disturbance are not likely to be significant and there is no evidence to suggest that criminality would be likely, however, should permission be forthcoming any such issues can be reported to the PSNI.

Given the separation distance between the application site and any residential property, it is considered that the proposed development would not give rise to any significant detrimental impact on residential amenity. In addition, the proposed use would not lead to an impact on the amenity of any surrounding properties in The Junction. The proposal is considered acceptable under Policy DM 28 of the ANPS.

Access, Movement and Parking

Policy SP 3.10 of the ANPS states that the Council will seek to ensure that all new development provides safe access arrangements that will not significantly inhibit the free flow of traffic and that sufficient car and cycle parking is provided. This is supported by Policy DM 10: Access and Parking.

The proposed development is located within The Junction and will make use of the existing access arrangements to the public road. DfI Roads was consulted with the application and has raised no concerns regarding these access arrangements. Parking for the proposed unit will be accommodated within the existing car parks at The Junction. It is considered that there are sufficient spaces to accommodate parking for this development.

CONCLUSION

The following is a summary of the main reasons for the recommendation:

- The principle of the development is not acceptable;
- The design and appearance of the proposal is considered acceptable;
- The proposal will not unduly affect the amenity of neighbouring residents; and
- The proposal will not have a detrimental impact on road safety and there is sufficient space for parking, turning and manoeuvring.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION

PROPOSED REASONS FOR REFUSAL

1. The proposal is contrary to the policy provisions of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) and Policy DM 7 of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy in that it has not been demonstrated that;
 - (a) all centre options have been assessed and discounted as unsuitable, unviable or unavailable; and
 - (b) it has not been demonstrated that the proposal cannot reasonably be altered or reduced in scale to allow it to be accommodated at a sequentially preferable location.
2. The proposal is contrary to Policy DM 8 of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy as it involves the subdivision of a large commercial unit into smaller units, and the proposal is likely to impact adversely on the continued vitality and viability of Antrim Town Centre.



Site Location Plan

1:1,250

Reference: LA03/2024/0861/F

 Site Location



COMMITTEE ITEM	3.4
APPLICATION NO	LA03/2025/0577/F
DEA	AIRPORT
COMMITTEE INTEREST	REFERRED BY HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
RECOMMENDATION	GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION
PROPOSAL	Reconfiguration of an existing service station to facilitate an extension to M&S and rationalisation of the existing 3 no. food and beverage units to provide 2 no. food and beverage units. Development includes external alterations, provision of a trolley bay and additional external plant area, and all other associated site works
SITE/LOCATION	15 Airport Road, Aldergrove, BT29 4DW
APPLICANT	Moorefield Contracts
AGENT	TSA Planning
LAST SITE VISIT	1 st October 2025
CASE OFFICER	Morgan Poots Tel: 028 90340419 Email: morgan.poots@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk
Full details of this application, including the application forms, relevant drawings, consultation responses and any representations received are available to view at the Planning Portal https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/application/702163	
SITE DESCRIPTION	
<p>The application site is situated at 15 Airport Road, Aldergrove and is located outside of any defined development limit, however it is located within an area designated for airport related uses as defined within the Antrim Area Plan 1984-2001 (AAP).</p> <p>The site measures 0.2 hectares in area and is currently occupied by a M&S retail unit along with hot food restaurants. Access to the site is taken from the Airport Road and to the south of the site there is a considerable area of hard standing associated with the car parking area and associated petrol filling station and forecourt. To the north of the site is further car parking associated with Cosmo Airport Car Parking. The boundaries of the application site are undefined.</p> <p>The surrounding area comprises Belfast International Airport approximately 70 metres south of the site and is characterised by airport-related parking facilities and uses.</p>	
RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY	
<p>Planning Reference: LA03/2015/0642/F Location: Lands at 175 Ballyrobin Road, Aldergrove, Co Antrim, BT29 4DW Proposal: Proposed petrol filling station, forecourt and services building including 1 no. retail shop, 3 no. café/restaurant units (one with drive-thru facilities), dining mall, seating area, play area, associated car parking with relocation of existing access onto the Ballyrobin Road Decision: Permission Granted (20/07/2016)</p> <p>Planning Reference: LA03/2016/0970/F Location: Lands at 175 Ballyrobin Road, Aldergrove, Co Antrim, BT29 4DW Proposal: Proposed petrol filling station, forecourt and services building including 1 no. retail shop, 3 no. café/restaurant units (one with drive-thru</p>	

facilities), dining mall, seating area, play area, associated car parking with relocation of existing access onto the Ballyrobin Road (Variation of Condition 10 of Planning Approval LA03/2015/0642/F to increase the maximum floorspace of shop unit from 204m² to 232m²)
Decision: Permission Granted (22/12/2016)

Planning Reference: LA03/2016/0971/NMC

Location: Lands at 175 Ballyrobin Road, Aldergrove, Co Antrim, BT29 4DW

Proposal: Non-Material Change to Planning approval LA03/2015/0642/F for proposed petrol filling station, forecourt and services building including 1 no. retail shop, 3 no. café/restaurant units (one with drive-thru facilities), dining mall, seating area, play area, associated car parking with relocation of existing access onto the Ballyrobin Road. Reconfiguration of site layout including floor plan and building exterior.

Decision: Non-Material Change Granted (13/01/2017)

Planning Reference: LA03/2019/0136/NMC

Location: Lands at 175 Ballyrobin Road, Aldergrove, Co Antrim, BT29 4DW

Proposal: Non-Material Change to Planning approval LA03/2015/0642/F (Proposed petrol filling station, forecourt and services building including 1 no. retail shop, 3 no. café/restaurant units, dining mall, seating area, play area, associated car parking with relocation of existing access onto the Ballyrobin Road). Inclusion of Plant Area and associated 2.4m high fencing and gates to rear of the retail unit.

Decision: Non-Material Change Refused (07/03/2019)

Planning Reference: LA03/2019/0887/F

Location: 175 Airport Road, Crumlin, BT29 4DW

Proposal: Installation of 1 no. refrigerated storage container between 1st November and 31st January annually

Decision: Permission Granted (18/12/2019)

PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Under the provisions of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, all decisions must be taken in accordance with the provisions of the Local Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Development Plan (ANLDP) will comprise of two parts, Part 1 is the Plan Strategy which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 3rd July 2025. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan which will identify the boundaries of settlement limits, local designations and zonings which has not yet been published. As such the settlement limits, local designations and zonings of the extant adopted Development Plans for the Borough (the Belfast Urban Area Plan, the Carrickfergus Area Plan and the Antrim Area Plan) remain applicable. Account will also be taken of the draft Newtownabbey Area Plan and its associated Interim Statement and the provisions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

Antrim Area Plan 1984 - 2001: The site is located outside any development limit and lies in the countryside but it is located within an area designated for airport related uses as defined within the Antrim Area Plan 1984-2001 (AAP).

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS): sets out that Planning Authorities should be guided by the principle that sustainable development should be permitted, having regard to the local development plan and other material considerations unless the proposed development will cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy 2015-2030 (ANPS): sets out the relevant planning policies for assessing planning applications and other planning consents. The relevant strategic and operational policies for the assessment of the current proposal are listed below.

Strategic Policy 1 – Sustainable Development (SP 1): sets out that the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).

Strategic Policy 2 – Employment (SP 2): aims to encourage growth and investment to support enterprise and increase employment benefits. SP2 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 2 Economic Development – Countryside
- Policy DM 7 Development outside Centres

Strategic Policy 3 – Transportation and Infrastructure (SP 3): aims to encourage the continued development and growth of high quality transportation, communications and utilities infrastructure in a timely and co-ordinated fashion to meet the current and future needs of our Borough and support sustainable development in accordance with the Council's Spatial Growth Strategy. SP3 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 10 Access and Parking;
- Policy DM 11 Access to Protected Routes; and
- Policy DM 13 Belfast International Airport - Operations

Strategic Policy 6 - Placemaking and Good Design (SP6): sets out that positive placemaking and good design are key components in the delivery of high quality, attractive and sustainable places within our Borough. SP6 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 27 Rural Design and Character; and
- Policy DM 28 Amenity Impact

Strategic Policy 7 - Historic Environment (SPG7): Indicates that careful management and ongoing investment in our historic environment will help to create unique, attractive and welcoming places to live, work and relax in and contribute significantly to our Borough's sense of place. SP 7 is supported by Policy:

- Policy DM 30 Archaeology

Strategic Policy 10 - Environmental Resilience and Protection (SPG10): seeks to promote environmental resilience by mitigating and adapting to the harmful effects of climate change on our built and natural environment. SPG10 is supported by Policy:

- Policy DM 47 Surface Water Drainage & Sustainable Drainage Systems

CONSULTATION

Environmental Health Section: No objection

Northern Ireland Water Strategic: No objection

DfI Roads: No objection

Historic Environment Division: No objection

Belfast International Airport: No objection subject to conditions

REPRESENTATION

Three (3) neighbouring properties were notified of the application and no letters of representation have been received.

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING ISSUES/MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- Policy Context
- Principle of Development
- Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area
- Neighbour Amenity
- Access, Movement and Parking
- Flood Risk and Drainage
- Archaeology
- Other Matters

Policy Context

Section 45 (1) of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 requires the Council, in dealing with an application for planning permission, to have regard to the Local Development Plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. Section 6 (4) of the Act then states that, where, in making any determination under the Act, regard is to be had to the Local Development Plan, the determination must be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) is material to all decisions on individual planning applications. The Antrim & Newtownabbey Plan Strategy (ANPS) sets out the relevant planning policies for the determination of planning applications in the Borough. However, until such times as the Local Policies Plan (LPP) identifies the boundaries of settlement limits, local designations and zonings, the provisions of the current legacy plans, both adopted and in draft form will continue to apply.

The application site is located outside of any development limit and is within the countryside however, it is located within an area designated for airport related uses as defined within the Antrim Area Plan 1984-2001 (AAP). In line with the transitional arrangements set out in the SPPS, AAP and the ANPS must be read together. Any conflict between the policies in with the Plans must be resolved in favour of the ANPS.

Principle of Development

The ANPS outlines that the Council is committed to promoting a vibrant economy, assisting employers, attracting new firms and supporting business start up.

A petrol filling station, forecourt and associated service building was approved under application Ref: LA03/2015/0642/F on the 18th July 2016. The service building as

approved and constructed hosts 1 no. retail unit, 3 no. food and beverage units along with a seating area and external play area.

The proposal seeks permission for the reconfiguration of the existing and approved service station, with an increase to the retail floorspace of the Marks and Spencer's retail shop from 224sqm to 420sqm, an increase of 196sqm. The proposal also seeks to increase the back of house area including bakery preparation area and cold room from 122sqm to 245sqm, an increase in 123sqm. The proposal also includes a trolley bay and external plant area which are considered to be ancillary to the retail provision at this site and are considered acceptable in principle.

The increases in floorspace are to be facilitated through the removal of an existing toilet block, seating area and one food and beverage counter. Whilst the proposal results in an increase of retail floorspace of 196sqm, it is noted that the overall floorspace of the service station is not being increased and remains as approved at 952sqm.

The proposal also includes the reconfiguration of the existing food and beverage counters, with the removal of one food and beverage unit to leave an enlarged café and Burger King Unit, with a total floorspace of 287sqm associated with both units.

Policy DM 1 of the ANPS deals with zoned sites and settlements. Belfast International Airport is designated as a Strategic Employment Location (SEL) however, the specific boundary will not be brought forward until Local Polices Plan Stage. SP 2.8 of the ANPS details that until such time as the boundary of the SEL at BIA is identified, the Council will operate a presumption in favour of a wide range of industrial, business, airport related, and other complementary employment and service uses on the lands currently zoned at this location for airport related use. However, SP 2.8 also states that proposals for retail and other town centre uses at this location must comply with all relevant retail policies including SP 2.12 and DM 7.

SP 2.12 of ANPS introduces a retail hierarchy in relation to proposals and paragraph 6.273 of the SPPS, requires the Council to operate a town centre first approach for retailing. A retail hierarchy table, Table 4 of SP 2.21 indicates that Antrim as a large town centre which is at the top of the hierarchy in terms of retail development.

Whilst Paragraph 6.281 of the SPPS and Policy DM 7 of ANPS requires a sequential test for development outside of centres, it states that proposals for retailing outside of centres will only be acceptable subject to a number of criteria, including; that all centre and edge of centre options have been assessed and discounted as unsuitable, unviable or unavailable and where the scale of development proposed is appropriate to its location, it meets a qualitative and quantitative need and it has been shown that the proposal cannot reasonably be altered or reduced in scale to allow it to be accommodated at a sequentially preferable location.

As noted above, the application site is located outside of any development limit and is within the countryside, however it is located within an area designated for airport related uses as defined within the Antrim Area Plan 1984-2001. The existing service station was previously approved under Application Ref: LA03/2015/0642/F and was considered to result in a provision of uses that in principle would be acceptable in association with an airport such as Belfast International. The service station and

associated retail and food units were considered to require close siting to the airport and the service station was therefore considered acceptable in principle. However, the proposal involves an increase in retail floorspace within the footprint of the existing building.

The agent has submitted supporting information within Document 01 (date stamped 7th August 2025). The agent details that it has previously been accepted by the Council, under Planning Ref: LA03/2015/0642/F, that the existing shop and services meet the demand generated by visitors to Belfast International Airport and assert that the catchment of the proposal is limited to the immediate area surrounded by the Airport.

The agent contends within Document 01 (date stamped 7th August 2025) that the proposal directly meets the needs of passengers and staff at the adjacent Airport. The proposed increase to the retail floorspace of the M&S unit will provide additional product lines (from 2,465 to 4,900 lines), as well as enhanced food storage and staff facilities. It is also stated that the proposal will allow Marks and Spencer's to increase their product lines and will accommodate the growing number of passengers using the Airport (4.4 million passengers per year in 2016 up to 6.7 million passengers per year in 2024) with numbers expected to rise further in coming years.

It is considered that the proposal to increase the retail floorspace of Marks and Spencer's from 224sqm to 420sqm will result in an increased draw of customers to the site. However, this is considered to be a draw from across Northern Ireland as a whole from customers using the airport, as opposed to a draw from one specific town. The proposed retail unit remains to serve the airport and as such is not considered to have a detrimental impact on any centre within the surrounding area, i.e. Antrim or Crumlin. Therefore, it is considered that the development will not have a significant adverse effect on the vitality and viability of existing centres.

Paragraph 6.283 of the SPPS and Policy DM 7.5 of the ANPS requires that a retail assessment is carried out for applications for retail or town centre type developments above a threshold of 1000 square metres gross external area which are not proposed in a town centre location. In this case, the proposal does not seek to provide more than 1000sqm of retail floorspace and given its location at Belfast International Airport to serve its customers and employees of the airport with the total retail floorspace associated with the site restricted to 420sqm a Retail Impact Assessment is therefore not required in this instance.

DM 7.7 generally restricts individual small shops (including those associated with a petrol filling station) in out of centre locations to no greater than 200sqm (gross) floorspace and where it serves the needs of the local community or is ancillary to an existing use. It is noted that the proposal seeks to increase the retail floorspace to 420sqm and is in excess of the 200sqm allowed within DM 7.7.

The additional retail floorspace is to provide a qualitative need due to the increased customers using Belfast International Airport in the form of an internal reconfiguration to an existing shop. It is considered the proposal is consistent with providing an ancillary and complementary service use for airport passengers and employees within a site identified for Airport related uses. For this reason, it is considered that the increase in retail floorspace to 420 square metres is acceptable, subject to all other material considerations.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

The SPPS para. 6.70 states that all development in the countryside must integrate into its setting and respect the rural character of the area. In addition to this, criterion (c) of Policy DM 27 of the ANPS requires that development proposals respect rural character, are appropriately integrated into their surroundings and deliver local biodiversity benefits. Policy DM 27.4 states that development will be acceptable where it respects rural design in terms of building form, height, size, scale, massing, architectural detailing and finishes.

There are limited external changes proposed as part of this application, with works largely restricted to the internal reconfiguration of floorspace. However, externally there is a new trolley bay proposed, directly south of the main entrance. The trolley bay consists of a freestanding, enclosed shelter with a curved roof, with a maximum height of 2.2m, length of 4m and a width of 1.5m. The trolley bay is to be finished in glazing rails and stainless-steel fenders to the front elevation.

To the rear elevation of the building, there are minor external alterations proposed including the removal of 2no. doors which are to be blocked up and the addition of an external plant area enclosed by 2m high paladin style fencing over a stretch of 8m to the rear. The external plant area and paladin fencing will not have any significant visual impact when viewed from either the Ballyrobin Road or within the application site given its position to the rear of the building.

The overall internal floorspace for M&S is approximately 688sqm, whilst Unit 2 (Café) is 111sqm and Unit 3 (Burger King) is 180sqm.

The minor external alterations proposed are considered acceptable and are in keeping with the design and appearance of the existing service station on site and will not appear out of character when read in conjunction with the wider site. The proposal is not considered to impact upon the rural character of the area, given its location directly north of Belfast International Airport and the existing and approved use on site.

Overall, the external alterations proposed will not appear out of character with this area which is dominated by airport related uses. The proposal is considered to comply with Policy DM 27 in this regard.

Neighbour Amenity

Paragraphs 4.11 and 4.12 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and Policy DM 28 deals with the impact on amenity and states that the Council will only support development proposals where they will not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of existing or future occupiers of adjoining or nearby properties by way of overlooking, loss of privacy, dominance, overshadowing, or other form of disturbance.

The nearest residential properties are located over 700m northwest of the site at No. 151 Airport Road and over 900m northeast of the site at No. 6 Antrim Road and owing to the separation distance does not give rise to any significant concerns in relation to overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing or any general noise and disturbance.

The application site is located within an area dominated by airport related uses, with airport car parking surrounding the site to the north, east and west and the airport

itself located south of the site. Given the location of the proposal and the nature of the development as reconfiguration and external alterations to an existing service station, it is considered that there will not be a significant impact with regard to noise and disturbance on nearby commercial premises and it is considered that the proposal is compatible with the surrounding airport related uses.

The Council's Environmental Health Section were consulted and raised no objection to the proposal. Overall, it is considered that the proposal will not have an unacceptable impact on neighbour amenity and complies with Paragraphs 4.11 and 4.12 of the SPSS and Policy DM 28 of the ANPS in this regard.

Access, Movement and Parking

Policy SP 3.10 of the ANPS sets out that the Council will seek to ensure that all new development provides safe access arrangements that will not significantly inhibit the free flow of traffic, and that sufficient car and cycle parking is provided. SP 3 is supported by Policy DM 10.

Policy DM 10.1 of the ANPS 'Access and Parking' requires that there is the capacity on the road network to accommodate the type and amount of traffic likely to be generated, and access arrangements do not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of people or goods. In addition, Policy DM 10.1 requires adequate provision is made for car and cycle parking and any necessary servicing arrangements.

Paragraph 6.303 of the SPPS and DM 10. 2 of the ANPS details that in assessing parking arrangements, the Council will continue to take account of supplementary guidance including Parking Standards (DoE, 2005).

The proposal seeks to reconfigure the floorspace of the existing and approved service station to increase the retail floorspace associated with M&S. In relation to parking, it is noted that whilst the retail floorspace is being increased by 196sqm, the overall floorspace of the site is not being increased and the seating area and toilet block is being removed entirely. The parking demand for the site is not considered to be increased as a result of the proposal and the existing 85no. parking spaces are proposed to be retained as part of the proposal. The parking provision is considered acceptable in this regard.

The proposal seeks to utilise two existing accesses which provide access and egress on to the Ballyrobin Road (A57) Protected Route.

Policy DM 11.3 indicates that intensification of use of an existing access on to a Protected Route will only be supported where access cannot be reasonably obtained from an adjacent minor road. This approach is reiterated in Paragraph 6.301 of the SPPS.

It is noted that the existing accesses are not being altered as a result of this proposal and supporting information submitted by the agent in the form of a Transport Assessment Form, Document 02, date stamped 7th August 2025, details that the level of trips associated with the proposal is not expected to increase from that approved under Planning Ref: LA03/2015/0642/F. Whilst it is noted that 10no. additional jobs are to be created as a result of this proposal, there is not considered to be a significant increase in traffic to the site through visitors or staff at any one time.

For this reason, it is not considered that the proposal would result in the intensification of an existing access on to a Protected Route and therefore Policy DM 11.3 is not engaged in this instance. DfI Roads were consulted on the proposal and offered no objection to the access arrangements or in relation to road safety.

It is noted that the proposal does not offer any provision for cycle parking, however, the site is located within the rural area and within an area dominated for airport related uses. It is considered that the majority of visitors to the site will travel by car as opposed to on foot or by bicycle given the location of the proposal and lack of infrastructure to support active travel in this location. The lack of active travel provision is not considered determining in this instance.

The proposal is considered to comply with Policy DM 10 of the ANPS and Paragraph 6.301 of the SPPS in this regard.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Policy DM 47.2 of the ANPS and Paragraph 6.114 of the SPPS sets out the threshold where a Drainage Assessment is required. The application site is not located within the 1 in 100-year fluvial or 1 in 100-year coastal floodplain. A Drainage Assessment will be required if the proposal involves a change of use involving new buildings and or the new impermeable hard surfacing exceeding 1000 square metres, in line with Policy DM 47.2.

The proposal does not exceed the threshold set out within Paragraph 6.114 of the SPPS or Policy DM 47.2 to require the submission of a Drainage Assessment as the proposal does not create any additional hardstanding. However, the applicant should carry out their own assessment of flood risk. The proposal is not considered to increase the risk of flooding to the site or elsewhere and as such is compliant with Policy DM 47.2 of the ANPS and Paragraph 6.114 of the SPPS in this regard.

Archaeology

Policy DM 30 'Archaeology' aims to protect our Borough's archaeological remains from development that would have an adverse impact on their integrity and setting.

It is noted that the application site falls within the consultation zone of an archaeological monument (Reference ANT055:142 A.P Site). Historic Environment Division has been consulted on the proposal and indicated that the proposal is compliant with the policy and that no mitigation measures are required.

The proposal is considered to comply with Paragraphs 6.9-6.11 of the SPPS and Policy DM 30 of the ANPS in this regard as the proposal does not include any works of excavation and is not considered to adversely affect the archaeological monument or its setting.

Other Matters

Belfast International Airport

BIA has been consulted and has raised no objection to the proposal although conditions have been suggested.

The BIA response received suggested conditions be included firstly relating to any external lighting, the proposal does not include any aspects of external lighting so this condition is not necessary although given the close proximity to the airport it may be included as an informative.

Another condition is suggested regarding the use of cranes on site; this is also not considered necessary as no external construction works are proposed other than a small plan area and trolley bay but shall be included as an informative.

Sewage Disposal

The proposal includes the removal of an existing toilet block of approximately 10no. toilets, and the erection of a single accessible toilet. The proposal therefore is not considered to increase the demand for sewage infrastructure. Northern Ireland Water were consulted on the proposal and raised no objection.

RECOMMENDATION	GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION
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PROPOSED CONDITIONS

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2. The net retail floorspace of the shop unit labelled 'Unit 1', that being the unit shown coloured purple on Drawing Number 05, date stamped 7th August 2025, hereby approved, shall not exceed 420 sqm when measured internally. For the purposes of this condition, net retail floorspace refers to the sales floorspace of the store which is accessible to members of the public that is labelled 'Sales Floor Area' on Drawing Number 05, date stamped 7th August 2025, hereby approved.

Reason: To enable the Council to control the nature, range and scale of retailing activity to be carried out at this location so as not to prejudice the vitality and viability of existing centres.

3. None of units as labelled 'Unit 1', 'Unit 2 or 'Unit 3' as shown on Drawing Number 05, date stamped 7th August 2025, shall be sub-divided to create separate or independent units or amalgamated without the prior permission in writing of the Council.

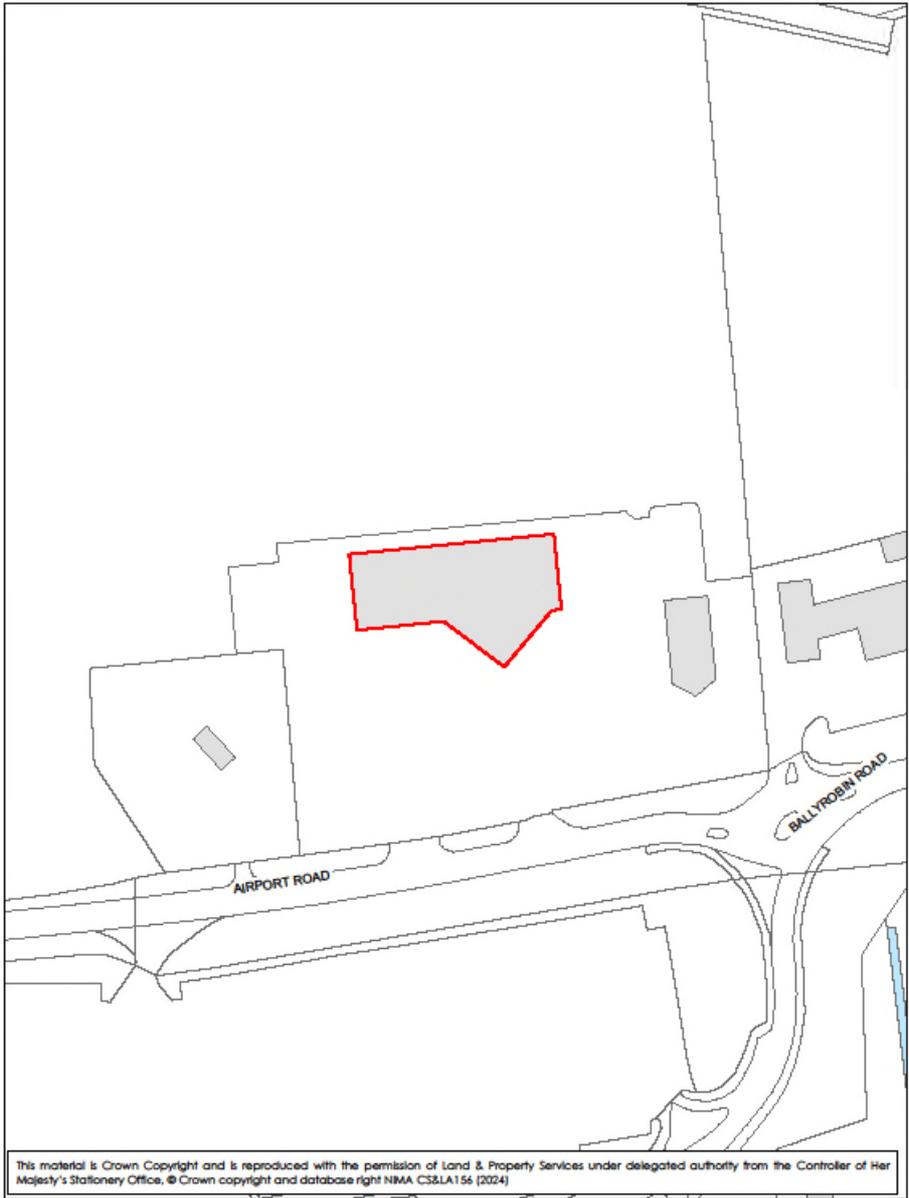
Reason: To enable the Council to exercise control over the nature, range and scale of the retailing and leisure activity to be carried out at the site and to ensure compliance with the objectives and policies for retailing and town centres.

4. The internal floorspace of café 'Unit 2', as shown coloured yellow on Drawing Number 05, date stamped 7th August 2025, hereby approved, shall not exceed 111sqm when measured internally.

Reason: To enable the Council to control the nature, range and scale of activity to be carried out at this location.

5. The internal floorspace of hot food unit 'Unit 3', as shown coloured blue on Drawing Number 05, date stamped 7th August 2025, hereby approved shall not exceed 180sqm when measured internally.

Reason: To enable the Council to control the nature, range and scale of activity to be carried out at this location.



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Site Location Plan 1:1,250 

Reference: LA03/2025/0577/F

 Site Location 

COMMITTEE ITEM	3.5
APPLICATION NO	LA03/2025/0446/F
DEA	DUNSILLY
COMMITTEE INTEREST	REFUSAL RECOMMENDED
RECOMMENDATION	REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION
PROPOSAL	Extension of existing storage and distribution yard for the parking of articulated trailers. Alterations of existing access to Crosskennan Road. Landscaping works associated with the extension of the yard.
SITE/LOCATION	Lands approximately 50m southeast of No. 49 Crosskennan Road, Antrim, BT41 2RB
APPLICANT	Wesley Herron
AGENT	Quinn Design Associates
LAST SITE VISIT	29 th July 2025
CASE OFFICER	Morgan Poots Tel: 028 90340419 Email: morgan.poots@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk
<p>Full details of this application, including the application forms, relevant drawings, consultation responses and any representations received are available to view at the Northern Ireland Planning Portal</p> <p>https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/application/700531</p>	
SITE DESCRIPTION	
<p>The application site is located at lands approximately 50m southeast of No. 49 Crosskennan Road, Antrim. The application site is within the countryside as defined within the Antrim Area Plan 1984-2001.</p> <p>The application site comprises an undeveloped area of agricultural land to the south of an existing yard area associated with No. 49 Crosskennan Road. The application site is accessed directly from the Crosskennan Road, using an existing lane which also serves the dwelling at No. 49 Crosskennan Road. The southern and eastern boundaries are defined by dense mature trees and hedgerows, whilst the northern and western boundaries are undefined and open out to the existing yard area to the north and remainder of the agricultural field to the west.</p> <p>The surrounding area is rural in character with predominately agricultural fields and single dwellings dispersed along the Crosskennan Road.</p>	
RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY	
<p>Planning Reference: LA03/2019/0879/LDE Location: 49 Crosskennan Road, Antrim Proposal: Existing pre-cast concrete business (Class Use B3: General Industrial) Decision: Permission Granted (11/12/2019)</p> <p>Planning Reference: LA03/2020/0107/F Location: 20m southwest of 49 Crosskennan Road, Antrim Proposal: New laneway to existing business premises Decision: Permission Granted (21/04/2020)</p>	

PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Under the provisions of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, all decisions must be taken in accordance with the provisions of the Local Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Development Plan (ANLDP) will comprise of two parts; Part 1 is the Plan Strategy which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 3rd July 2025. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan which will identify the boundaries of settlement limits, local designations and zonings which has not yet been published. As such the settlement limits, local designations and zonings of the extant adopted Development Plans for the Borough (the Belfast Urban Area Plan, the Carrickfergus Area Plan and the Antrim Area Plan) remain applicable. Account will also be taken of the draft Newtownabbey Area Plan and its associated Interim Statement and the provisions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

Antrim Area Plan 1984 - 2001: The site is located outside any development limit and is located in the countryside. The Plan offers no specific policy or guidance pertinent to this proposal.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS): sets out that Planning Authorities should be guided by the principle that sustainable development should be permitted, having regard to the local development plan and other material considerations unless the proposed development will cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy 2015-2030 (ANPS): sets out the relevant planning policies for assessing planning applications and other planning consents. The relevant strategic and operational policies for the assessment of the current proposal are listed below.

Strategic Policy 1 – Sustainable Development (SP 1): sets out that the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).

Strategic Policy 2 – Employment (SP 2): aims to encourage growth and investment to support enterprise and increase employment benefits. SP2 is supported by Policy:

- Policy DM 2 Economic Development – Countryside

Strategic Policy 3 – Transportation and Infrastructure (SP 3): aims to encourage the continued development and growth of high-quality transportation, communications and utilities infrastructure in a timely and co-ordinated fashion to meet the current and future needs of our Borough and support sustainable development in accordance with the Council's Spatial Growth Strategy. SP3 is supported by Policy:

- Policy DM 10 Access and Parking

Strategic Policy 6 - Placemaking and Good Design (SP6): sets out that positive placemaking and good design are key components in the delivery of high quality, attractive and sustainable places within our Borough. SP6 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 27 Rural Design and Character; and

- Policy DM 28 Amenity Impact

Strategic Policy 7 - Historic Environment (SPG7): Indicates that careful management and ongoing investment in our historic environment will help to create unique, attractive and welcoming places to live, work and relax in and contribute significantly to our Borough's sense of place. SP 7 is supported by Policy:

- Policy DM 30 Archaeology

Strategic Policy 8 - Natural Heritage (SPG8): seeks to protect, conserve and promote the enhancement and restoration of the diversity of our Borough's natural heritage comprised of its habitats, species, landscapes and earth science features. SP 8 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 37 Designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance;
- Policy DM 38 Protected Species;
- Policy DM 39 Habitats, Species & Features of Natural Heritage Importance; and
- Policy DM 42 Trees and Development.

Strategic Policy 10 - Environmental Resilience and Protection (SPG10): seeks to promote environmental resilience by mitigating and adapting to the harmful effects of climate change on our built and natural environment. SPG10 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 46 The Control of Development in Flood Plains; and
- Policy DM 47 Surface Water Drainage & Sustainable Drainage Systems

CONSULTATION

DfI Rivers- Further information required

Environmental Health Section- No objection subject to conditions

Historic Environment Division- No objection

DfI Roads- No objection, subject to conditions, if the Council are minded to accept the use of bracketed x figure visibility splays

DAERA Water Management Unit- Advice

Shared Environmental Services- No response

REPRESENTATION

Two (2) neighbouring properties were notified of the proposal, and no letters of objection have been received.

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING ISSUES/MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- Preliminary Matters;
- Policy Context;
- Principle of Development;
- Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area;
- Neighbour Amenity;

- Access, Movement and Parking;
- Flood Risk and Drainage; and
- Natural and Built Heritage.

Preliminary Matters

Environmental Impact Assessment

The proposed development falls within Category 2, 10(B) of the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017. Regulation 12 of the Planning "Environmental Impact Assessment" (EIA) Regulations (NI) 2017, requires the Council to make a determination as to whether the proposed development would or would not be deemed EIA development. In this case a determination was carried out and it was determined that an Environmental Statement was not required.

Engagement with the Agent

- The agent was contacted on the 1st August to submit a supporting statement to detail how the proposal is acceptable within the countryside. A Supporting Statement (Document 03, date stamped 12th August 2025) was submitted.
- The agent was contacted on the 23rd July 2025 and was asked to consider the potential flood risk, provide a Drainage Assessment and a Northern Ireland Biodiversity Checklist by the 13th August 2025. The agent was asked for an update on the requested information on the 28th August 2025. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and a Drainage Assessment were submitted on the 4th and 9th September respectively.
- The agent was contacted on the 2nd September and concerns were raised over the principle of development despite the supporting statement received. The agent was asked to provide any further information by the 9th September. The agent responded with an email dated 3rd September 2025 and a further amended Supporting Statement was also submitted, Document 03/1, date stamped 4th September 2025.
- The agent was contacted again on the 15th October to advise that concerns remain regarding the principle of development and that further information was required in order to satisfy consultees including DfI Rivers and DfI Roads but this information has not been requested due to the concerns with the principle which is discussed in detail below. The agent submitted a further supporting statement, Document 07, date stamped 15th October however, concerns remain regarding the principle of development.

Policy Context

Section 45 (1) of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 requires the Council, in dealing with an application for planning permission, to have regard to the Local Development Plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. Section 6 (4) of the Act then states that, where, in making any determination under the Act, regard is to be had to the Local Development Plan, the determination must be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) is material to all decisions on individual planning applications. The Antrim & Newtownabbey Plan Strategy (ANPS) sets out the relevant planning policies for the determination of planning applications in the Borough. However, until such times as the Local Policies Plan (LPP) identifies the boundaries of settlement limits, local designations and zonings, the provisions of the current legacy plans, both adopted and in draft form will continue to apply.

The application site is located outside of any development limit and is within the countryside as designated within the Antrim Area Plan 1984-2001. In line with the transitional arrangements set out in the SPPS, AAP and the ANPS must be read together. Any conflict between the policies within the Plans must be resolved in favour of the ANPS.

Principle of Development

Strategic Policy SP 1.11 of the ANPS indicates that development proposals in the countryside will be supported in principle provided that they accord with the relevant policies applicable to the development type otherwise it will not be permitted unless there are overriding reasons why it is essential in a countryside location and cannot be located within a settlement.

Paragraph 6.73 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) provides a number of development types that may be acceptable in the countryside, including non-residential development. These include farm diversification, conversion and re-use of existing buildings and agriculture and forestry development. Paragraph 6.74 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement indicates that other types of development, apart from those set out above, will be considered as part of the development plan process in line with other policies set out in the SPPS.

The proposal seeks planning permission for an extension to an existing storage and distribution yard for parking of trailers at lands approximately 50m southeast of No. 49 Crosskennan Road.

A Design and Access Statement and Supporting Statement (Documents 01 and 03/1, date stamped 24th June and 4th September 2025 respectively) indicates that the site has previous planning approvals that establish the site's suitability for industrial use.

It is noted that the adjacent site to the north of the application site and outlined in blue as owned/controlled by the applicant on Drawing No. 01/1, date stamped 8th September 2025 has a certificate of exiting use for a concrete business (Class Use B3: General Industrial), Ref: LA03/2019/0879/LDE. The site has no planning permission for a storage and distribution use; however, the proposal has been described as an 'extension of existing storage and distribution yard'.

Paragraph 6.87 of the SPPS details that appropriate redevelopment and expansion proposals for industrial purposes, farm diversification and re-use of buildings will normally offer the greatest scope for sustainable economic development in the countryside.

Policy DM 2 of the ANPS 'Economic Development- Countryside' sets out at DM 2.1 that the Council will support a range of employment uses in the countryside, subject

to certain criteria. The acceptable employment uses within the countryside are set out within DM 2.2 – DM 2.9. The proposal does not fit within any of the acceptable employment uses set out within DM 2.2 – DM 2.5.

DM 2.6 – DM 2.8 deals with 'Established and Industrial Business Use'. DM 2.6 states that the Council will support proposals for the expansion of an established rural enterprise or its redevelopment for industrial or business use within the confines of the existing site with criteria for new buildings set out within DM 2.7.

The applicant's supporting information set out within Document 03/1 date stamped 4th September 2025 does not refer to which policy within DM 2.6 – DM 2.9 of the ANPS that the proposal complies with. Nevertheless, the agent contends that the proposal is a 'policy compliant extension of the existing authorised operations'. As noted above, the proposal does not have any planning approval or lawful use for a storage and distribution use and therefore cannot be considered an expansion of an established industrial use under Policy DM 2.6 or 2.7 of the ANPS. DM 2.8 of the ANPS allows for the redevelopment of an established industrial or business enterprise to provide a suitable tourist, recreation or community facility, which is not applicable to the application.

The final employment use listed as acceptable in the countryside is under DM 2.9 of the ANPS, 'Major Economic Development'. It is not considered that the proposal falls to be considered under this policy which deals with major economic development and is therefore not considered to be applicable to this application as it stands.

The agent outlines in Document 03/1 that the existing yard is at capacity and the expansion is required to provide safe and efficient operations. It is detailed that no other suitable land is available to meet operational requirements and that relocation is not viable due to the significant investment into the existing infrastructure. However, no evidence has been submitted to support the claims made.

It is considered that the proposal seeks to extend a storage and distribution Class B4 Use on a site which does not benefit from any previous planning approvals or lawful certification for such a use and is therefore considered unacceptable.

Further information was submitted in an email dated the 3rd September 2025 to detail that whilst the Certificate of Lawful Development (LA03/2019/0879/LDE) relates to a B3 general industrial use, the nature of operations on site has always involved significant storage, distribution, and associated vehicle movements. The agent contends that the proposal seeks to regularise and modestly extend an existing established activity rather than introduce a new use. The agent further contends that the site activity has changed over time from primarily manufacturing (B3 general industrial) towards a greater emphasis on storage, distribution, and associated haulage. It is noted that this change to the business that the applicant refers to does not have the benefit of planning permission and a granted certificate under the Certificate of Lawfulness, Ref: LA03/2019/0879/LDE, the applicant was referred to as 'Duncan Precast' which relates to concrete and cement products. However, the applicant and supporting information refers to 'Weztranz' which is a haulage and transportation business. It is therefore considered that the proposal

relates to a separate business and use from that which has been certified as being lawful at the site.

Further information was submitted by the agent on the 15th October 2025 contained within Document 07. The agent refers to a planning appeals decision (Appeal Ref: 2022/A0187) which was for the change of use from engineering workshop to Tachograph Centre at Cargin Road in Toome. The agent states that the PAC considered an appeal proposal which was almost identical to the current application.

In the case of the appeal decision referenced by the agent, the appeal proposal represented a change of use from an engineering workshop to a tachograph centre, the engineering workshop was granted under a CLUED (LA03/2022/0620/LDE) for a Class B3 use, the PAC report indicates that it was confirmed the hearing that the tachograph centre also fell under Class B3 use and that a condition restricting the tachograph centre to be ancillary to the existing engineering works was necessary to restrict it operating as a separate business.

It is considered that the proposal differs from the above appeal as the proposal has been described by the agent as 'extension of existing storage and distribution yard' whereby the application site has no approval for a storage and distribution use which it seeks to extend and is therefore considered to be unacceptable.

Given that the proposal does not meet any of the acceptable economic uses in the countryside, the proposal is considered contrary to Paragraph 6.87 of the SPPS and Policy DM 2 of the ANPS, 'Economic Development'. In addition, the proposal is contrary Strategic Policy SP 1.11 of the ANPS, in that there is no overriding reasons provided as to why this development is essential in this rural location and could not be located within a settlement. It is considered that the principle of development is unacceptable.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

The SPPS paragraph 6.77 states that in all circumstances proposals for development in the countryside must be sited and designed to integrate sympathetically with their surroundings, must not have an adverse impact on the rural character of the area.

Policy DM 27 'Rural Design and Character' of the ANPS, states that the aim of this policy is to promote high quality forms of development which are designed to sympathetically integrate into their surroundings, assist the promotion of biodiversity and to protect the amenity and character of our countryside.

In this case the proposal does not propose any new buildings and solely relates to the construction of a storage and distribution yard for trailer parking. The existing yard at present is set to the rear of the dwelling and is largely screened from the roadside by the existing dwelling. The proposal seeks to extend into the adjacent agricultural field which is set back approximately 136m from the public road.

Policy DM 27.1 states that the Council will support development in the countryside where it is sited to integrate sympathetically into its surroundings and respects rural character. Policy DM 27.2 and DM 27.3 add to the policy requirements for integration and the protection of rural character. It is also noted that Policy DM 27.2

requires that proposals do not rely on the use of substantial new landscaping for integration and does not appear prominent in the landscape.

Policy DM 27.5 states that all proposals for development in the countryside will be expected to address biodiversity impact and be accompanied by a detailed landscaping scheme, which retains or reinstates traditional boundaries and augments existing planting.

In relation to landscaping, Policy DM 42.1 of the ANPS requires that proposals promote additional tree planting of native species and maintain existing vegetation where possible. Drawing Number 02/1, date stamped 8th September 2025 illustrates that the proposal retains the existing planting along the eastern and southern boundaries and additional planting is proposed along the western boundary which consists of an existing bank which is to be planted out in order to provide screening to the extended yard.

DM 42.2 requires that proposals provide details of the long-term maintenance arrangements of the proposed new planting. A summary of the maintenance schedule is provided on Drawing Number 02/1, date stamped 8th September 2025 which is considered acceptable.

When travelling southwards along the Crosskennan Road, the proposal will be screened by the existing roadside boundary which is defined by large mature trees and hedging. When travelling northwards, the proposal will be concealed by the existing boundary hedge which provides a level of screening.

As noted above, the proposal provides a level of planting along the eastern boundary in the form of an existing bank to be planted out but does not rely on the use of new planting alone, rather proposes to augment the existing boundaries of the site with additional landscaping in order to aid integration.

It is acknowledged that the proposed yard area will be visible on approach to the site along the existing laneway. However, this is considered to be acceptable given that the laneway only serves the applicant's dwelling and land.

Overall, the proposal is considered to comply with Policies DM 27.2 and DM 27.3 in that the proposal will integrate into the rural area and will not cause a prominent feature in the landscape due to the landscaping works proposed.

Neighbour Amenity

Paragraphs 4.11 and 4.12 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and Policy DM 28 of the ANPS deals with impact on amenity and states that the Council will only support development proposals where they will not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of existing or future occupiers of adjoining or nearby properties by way of overlooking, loss of privacy, dominance, overshadowing, or other form of disturbance.

The application site is located along the Crosskennan Road. The nearest residential property, not included within the applicant's ownership, is approximately 60m south of the application site at No. 6 Ballynoe Road.

The proposal is for a storage and distribution yard for the parking of trailers along with associated site works. The area of parking for trailers lies just 60m north of No. 6 Ballynoe Road and therefore there is the potential for negative impact on amenity by reason of noise.

The Council's Environmental Health Section requested further information in terms of the opening hours, and the agent responded in an email dated 12th August 2025, that the hours of use are 7am to 6pm. The Council's Environmental Health Section were reconsulted and responded with no objection, subject to conditions.

It is considered that the proposal complies with Paragraph 4.12 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and Policy DM 28 of the ANPS in that it has been demonstrated that the proposal will not result in an unacceptable adverse impact to neighbouring properties.

Access, Movement and Parking

Policy SP 3.10 of the ANPS sets out that the Council will seek to ensure that all new development provides safe access arrangements that will not significantly inhibit the free flow of traffic, and that sufficient car and cycle parking is provided. Policy SP 3 is supported by Policy DM 10. Paragraph 6.297 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement seeks to promote road safety.

Policy DM 10.1 of the ANPS 'Access and Parking' requires that there is the capacity on the road network to accommodate the type and amount of traffic likely to be generated, and access arrangements do not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of people or goods. In addition, Policy DM 10.1 requires adequate provision is made for car and cycle parking and any necessary servicing arrangements.

DCAN 15 indicates that in exceptional circumstances a reduction in the visibility standards may be permitted. However, it is indicated that it is highly unlikely that the Council will permit visibility standards which fall below the figures in the square brackets.

The proposal utilises the existing access from Crosskennan Road with improved visibility splays. The agent has submitted a Transport Assessment Form (Document 02, date stamped 2nd July 2025) as the proposal is likely to generate more than 5 freight movements per day.

It is noted within Document 02, that approximately 63no. total vehicle trips will be made per day, made up of 48no. car trips and 15no. HGV trips, with the peak hour being from 2pm-3pm.

The proposal provides 12no. lorry parking spaces along with 2.4m by 120m visibility splays in both directions from the Crosskennan Road. DfI Roads were consulted on the application and indicated that if the Council are minded to accept the use of bracketed x figure for the site, then DfI Roads can provide conditions.

Based on the information provided by the agent within Document 02, the proposal is considered to result in 63no. vehicle trips per day and therefore would require a minimum x distance of 4.5m as outlined in DCAN 15. While this can be reduced to the bracketed figure of 2.4m but only where traffic speed is less than 37mph. The

access is on to the Crosskennan Road which is a national speed limit road of 60mph for a single carriageway. The proposal is not considered to warrant a reduction in the x distance in this case.

In relation to cycle parking, it is noted that the proposal is located within the rural area and relates to a storage and distribution yard where there is not considered to be a large number of visitors cycling to the site. The absence of any cycle parking is considered acceptable in this regard given the proposed use of the site.

However, as outlined above, the proposal is considered contrary to paragraph 6.297 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and Policies SP.310 and Policy DM 10.1 of the ANPS in that the proposal fails to provide safe access arrangements that do not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of people or goods.

Flood Risk and Drainage

SP 10.2 of the ANPS applies a strong presumption against development proposals within floodplains as set out in Policy DM 46 of the ANPS and Paragraph 6.107 of the SPPS. Policy DM 46 provides further policy on development in a floodplain, which will only be permitted where it is found to be an exception as listed within Policy DM 46.1 and Paragraph 6.197 of the SPPS.

It is noted that a portion of the application site to the east of the site is located within the 1 in 100-year fluvial floodplain of the Ladyhill Burn including an allowance for climate change. Paragraph 6.111 of the SPPS indicates that a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) may be required when a site is close to the margins of the floodplain as depicted on the Strategic Flood Map and a more accurate definition of the extent of potential flooding is required.

DfI Rivers confirmed that as this is the strategic flood map and not the detailed modelled Flood Hazard map, DfI Rivers indicated that the applicant should undertake a Flood Risk Assessment for their consideration that will verify the more accurate extent of the flood plain, this will require a river model.

If any development is found to be within the flood plain, then the proposed development would need to be considered an exception under DM 46.1 with an appropriate FRA submitted.

However, the applicant was not asked to submit a River Model to determine the accurate extent of the floodplain due to the concerns with the principle of development as discussed in detail above. This would result in unnecessary expense for the applicant and would constitute nugatory work.

As the extent of the floodplain is unclear it is not known if the proposal would result in development within the floodplain.

It is considered that the proposal is contrary to Policy DM 46 of the ANPS in that it has not been demonstrated that adequate measures will be put in place to effectively manage and mitigate the increased flood risk arising from the development.

Policy DM 47 of the ANPS 'Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) deals with flood risk outside floodplains and aims to reduce flood risk for new developments from surface water (pluvial) sources.

Policy DM 47.2 of the ANPS and Paragraph 6.114 of the SPPS sets out the threshold where a Drainage Assessment is required. Policy DM 47.3 and Paragraph 6.115 of the ANPS states that the DA must demonstrate that adequate measures will be put in place to effectively mitigate the flood risk to the proposed development and from the development elsewhere.

As outlined above, the proposal relates to an extension to a storage and distribution yard and creates an additional 4000sqm of hardstanding and therefore a Drainage Assessment is required.

Paragraph 6.118 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and Policies DM 47.4-47.6 of the ANPS promotes the use of SuDS as the preferred means of treating surface water and indicates that all SuDS schemes shall be accompanied by an appropriate management plan.

A Drainage Assessment (Document 06, date stamped 9th September 2025) was submitted which does promote the use of SuDS through a permeable yard area and a summary of the maintenance and management of the SuDS is included within Document 06. Whilst the proposed drainage regime promotes the use of SuDS, DfI Rivers has indicated that further information is required in order to fully assess the Drainage Assessment including the applicant's consent to discharge storm water.

However, due to the concerns regarding the principle of development, the applicant was not requested to provide further amendments to the Drainage Assessment.

For this reason, the proposal is contrary to paragraphs 6.111 and 6.115 of the SPPS and Policies SP 10.2, DM 46 and DM 47 of the ANPS in that it has not been demonstrated that adequate measures will be put in place to effectively manage and mitigate the increased flood risk arising from the development.

Natural and Built Heritage

Built Heritage

Policy DM 30.2 of the ANPS 'Archaeological Remains of Regional Importance' indicates that proposals should not adversely affect any scheduled monuments or other important sites.

The application site falls within the consultation zone for historic monument references: ANT050:012. Historic Environment Division were consulted on the proposal and raised no objection with regards to the impact upon historic monuments. The proposal is considered to comply with Policy DM 30.2 in this regard.

Natural Heritage

Policy SP 1.4 of the ANPS states that the Council will adopt a precautionary approach where there are significant risks of damage to the environment while Policy SP 8.3 of the ANPS requires that appropriate weight in the decision-making process is given to the protection of designated sites, priority habitats, protected

species and other features of biodiversity interest. Specific policies for protected species are also provided under Policy DM 38 whilst Policy DM 39 addresses other Habitats, Species and Features of Natural Heritage Importance.

The applicant has submitted a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Document 04, date stamped 4th September 2024) which details that there will be no significant impacts on any ecological features as a result of the development.

Policy DM 37 of the ANPS provides additional policy criteria for assessing developments which could impact upon designated sites. Whilst Paragraph 6.176 of the SPPS details that planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal that is not likely to have a significant effect on any European Sites or Ramsar Sites. It is noted that the application site lies directly west of Ladyhill Burn, a watercourse which is hydraulically connected with Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA and Ramsar, approx. 22km downstream.

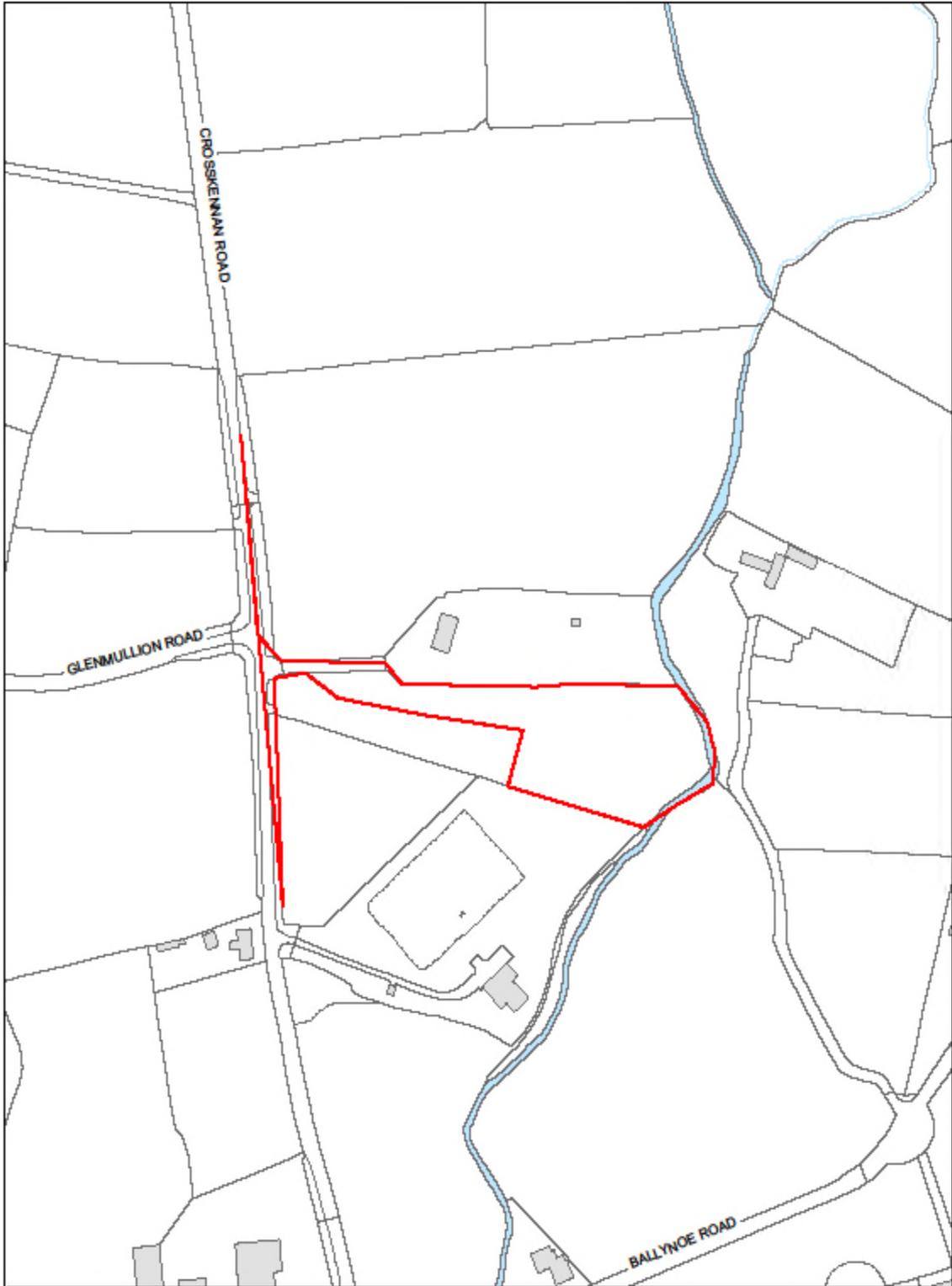
SES were informally consulted on the proposal and indicated that provided the agreed site drainage does not include any direct discharge of surface water to the adjacent watercourse, a HRA is not required, as there is no viable source-receptor pathway. However, the submitted Drainage Assessment indicates that proposed runoff will drain towards the adjacent river. SES were informally consulted and have indicated that a formal consultation will be required in this case and indicated that the agent may wish to address the comments from DAERA WMU in relation to the Drainage Assessment including the installation of an oil interceptor for car parks to prevent oil from on-site activities leaving the site.

The agent was not requested to provide any further information in relation to the drainage assessment due to the concerns with the principle of development as outlined above. At the time of preparing the report SES had not responded.

RECOMMENDATION	REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION
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PROPOSED REASONS FOR REFUSAL

1. The proposal is contrary to the provisions contained within the SPPS and Policies SP 1.11 and DM 2 'Economic Development – Countryside' of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy in that there is no overriding reason why the proposal is essential within this rural location and cannot be located within a settlement.
2. The proposal is contrary to Paragraphs 6.111 and 6.115 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and Policies SP 10.2, DM 46 and DM 47 of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy in that it has not been demonstrated that adequate measures will be put in place to effectively manage and mitigate the increased flood risk arising from the development.
3. The proposal is contrary to the provisions of the Paragraph 6.297 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement, SP 3.10, Policy DM 10.1 of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy and Development Control Advice Note 15 Vehicular Access Standards in that the proposal fails to provide safe access arrangements that do not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of people or goods.



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Application: LA03/2025/0446/F
Scale: 1:2500

1:2,500 



COMMITTEE ITEM	3.6
APPLICATION NO	LA03/2025/0685/O
DEA	GLENGORMLEY URBAN
COMMITTEE INTEREST	LEVEL OF OBJECTION
RECOMMENDATION	GRANT OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION
PROPOSAL	Dwelling
SITE/LOCATION	Approx. 25m East of 122 Hydepark Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 4PZ
APPLICANT	Gary Aiken
AGENT	Arca Design
LAST SITE VISIT	23/10/2025
CASE OFFICER	Harry Russell Tel: 028 903 40408 Email: harry.russell@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk
<p>Full details of this application, including the application forms, relevant drawings, consultation responses and any representations received are available to view at the Planning Portal: https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/application/702832</p>	
SITE DESCRIPTION	
<p>The application site is located on lands approximately 25m east of No. 122 Hydepark Road, Newtownabbey. The site is located within the development limit of Metropolitan Newtownabbey as defined by the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan published 2004 (dBMAP).</p> <p>The site comprises a section of overgrown grassland and vegetation and is located on the opposite side of a laneway from No. 122 Hydepark Road. The site is accessed from an existing laneway off the Hydepark Road which also serves Nos. 118, 120, 122a, 122, and 124 Hydepark Road. The topography of the site is generally flat and the southern and eastern boundaries of the site are defined by a 1.8m close boarded fence. The western boundary of the site is undefined and the northern boundary of the site is defined by mature trees.</p> <p>To the east of the site lies a housing development (Anna's Grove) and to the west of the site, beyond dwellings on the laneway, lie agricultural lands.</p>	
RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY	
<p>Planning Reference: LA03/2023/0201/O Location: 2m north of 122 Hydepark Road, Newtownabbey, Proposal: Site for 2no semi-detached dwellings Decision: Permission Granted (20.10.23)</p> <p>Planning Reference: U/2004/0502/F Location: Site adjacent to 122 Hydepark Road, Newtownabbey Proposal: Erection of two storey dwelling and detached single storey double garage Decision: Permission Granted (12.08.04)</p> <p>Location: 122 Hydepark Road, Ballywonard, Newtownabbey, Northern Ireland Proposal: Erection of single dwelling.</p>	

Decision: Permission Granted (25.03.04)

Planning Reference: U/2003/0551/O

Location: 122 Hydepark Road, Ballywonard, Newtownabbey, Northern Ireland

Proposal: Erection of single dwelling.

Decision: Permission Granted (25.03.04)

PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Under the provisions of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, all decisions must be taken in accordance with the provisions of the Local Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Development Plan (ANLDP) will comprise of two parts, Part 1 is the Plan Strategy which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 3rd July 2025. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan which will identify the boundaries of settlement limits, local designations and zonings which has not yet been published. As such the settlement limits, local designations and zonings of the extant adopted Development Plans for the Borough (the Belfast Urban Area Plan, the Carrickfergus Area Plan and the Antrim Area Plan) remain applicable. Account will also be taken of the draft Newtownabbey Area Plan and its associated Interim Statement and the provisions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP): The application site is located within the Green Belt limit of the Belfast Urban Area. The Plan offers no specific guidance on this proposal.

Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (Published 2004) (dBMAP): The application site is located within the settlement limit of Metropolitan Newtownabbey (designation MNY 03/20).

SPPS – Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland: sets out that Planning Authorities should be guided by the principle that sustainable development should be permitted, having regard to the local development plan and other material considerations unless the proposed development will cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy 2015-2030: sets out the relevant planning policies for assessing planning applications and other planning consents. The relevant strategic and operational policies for the assessment of the current proposal are listed below.

Strategic Policy 1 – Sustainable Development (SP 1): sets out that the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).

Strategic Policy 3 – Transportation and Infrastructure (SP 3): aims to encourage the continued development and growth of high-quality transportation, communications and utilities infrastructure in a timely and co-ordinated fashion to meet the current and future needs of our Borough and support sustainable development in accordance with the Council's Spatial Growth Strategy. SP3 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM10 – Access and Parking;
- Policy DM 13 Belfast international Airport; and
- Policy DM 15 Development Relying on Non-Mains Sewerage.

Strategic Policy 4 - Homes (SP 4): sets out that the Council's aims of achieving quality in new residential development both within urban settlements and the countryside. SP4 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 17 Homes in Settlements.

Strategic Policy 6 - Placemaking and Good Design (SP6): sets out that positive placemaking and good design are key components in the delivery of high quality, attractive and sustainable places within our Borough. SP6 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 25 Urban Design; and
- Policy DM 28 Amenity Impact.

Strategic Policy 7 - Historic Environment (SPG7): Indicates that careful management and ongoing investment in our historic environment will help to create unique, attractive and welcoming places to live, work and relax in and contribute significantly to our Borough's sense of place. SP 7 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 30 Archaeology.

Strategic Policy 10 - Environmental Resilience and Protection (SPG10): seeks to promote environmental resilience by mitigating and adapting to the harmful effects of climate change on our built and natural environment. SPG10 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 47 Surface Water Drainage & Sustainable Drainage Systems.

CONSULTATION

Council Environmental Health Section – No objection

Department for Infrastructure Roads- No objection

Belfast City Airport – No objection

DfC Historic Environment Division – No objection

REPRESENTATION

Eight (8) neighbouring properties were notified and four (4) letters of objection have been received from four (4) neighbour notified properties. The full representations made regarding this proposal are available for Members to view online at the Planning Portal:

(<https://planningregister.planningssystemni.gov.uk/application/702832>).

A summary of the key points of objection raised is provided below:

- Traffic concerns regarding increase in vehicles along the laneway;
- Dwellings would exceed the number of dwellings permitted on a private lane;
- Development located on soakaway of another approved development;
- Concerns regarding proximity of septic tank to property;
- Concerns regarding runoff, pollution, and odours from septic tank;
- Loss of light/overshadowing concerns resulting from height of dwelling; and
- The red line is not in accordance with the deeds.

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING ISSUES/MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- Policy Context and Principle of Development
- Density, Design, Layout and Appearance

- Neighbour Amenity
- Access and Parking
- Natural Heritage
- Archaeology
- Aerodrome Safety
- Sewerage and Drainage

Policy Context and Principle of Development

Under the provisions of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, all decisions must be taken in accordance with the provisions of the Local Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) is material to all decisions on individual planning applications. The Antrim & Newtownabbey Plan Strategy (ANPS) sets out the relevant planning policies for the determination of planning applications in the Borough. However, until such times as the Local Policies Plan (LPP) identifies the boundaries of settlement limits, local designations and zonings, the provisions of the current legacy plans, both adopted and in draft form will continue to apply.

The site is defined as being within the inner green belt of the Belfast Urban Area in the Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP). However, the site is defined within the development limit of Metropolitan Newtownabbey as defined by the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan published 2004 (dBMAP). Any conflict between the policies in the Plans must be resolved in favour of the ANPS.

Policy SP 4.1 of the ANPS indicates the Council will apply a presumption in favour of the development of new homes, provided the proposal meets the requirements of Policy SP 4 and other relevant policies applicable to the development type.

Policy DM 17 of the ANPS indicates that the Council will support proposals for quality and sustainable residential development in settlements, where they do not contribute to town cramming, and where a number of other additional criteria are met. DM 17.6 indicates the Council will support the infilling of vacant sites in Established Residential Areas subject to criteria. In addition, Policy SP 6.4 places the onus on the developer to demonstrate that they have considered the core principles of placemaking and that the proposed scheme will deliver a high-quality development.

Given the site's location is situated within the development limits of Metropolitan Newtownabbey and within a predominately residential area, the principle of development is considered acceptable subject to complying with the requirements of the relevant planning policies set out below.

Density, Design, Layout and Appearance

Policy SP 6 states the Council will operate a presumption in favour of well-designed proposals that meet the requirements of Policy SP 6 and all other relevant policies and provisions of the ANPS. DM 17.6 states that in established residential areas, the Council will only support proposals for the redevelopment of existing buildings, or the infilling of currently vacant sites (including extended garden areas) to accommodate new housing, where:

- (a) The density proposed is not significantly higher than that found in the established residential area; and
- (b) The pattern of development is in keeping with the overall character, environmental quality and residential amenity of the established residential area.

Policy DM 25 'Urban Design' requires the development to deliver high-quality design in its layout and appearance and comply with a number of criteria, including that the proposal should make a positive contribution and relate well to the scale, density, massing, character, appearance, and use of materials of the surrounding area and be sympathetic to the built form.

In terms of density, the proposal would have a plot size which is generally within keeping with the area and not significantly higher than that found within the established residential area.

As this is an outline planning application, limited details have been provided. However, the Proposed Site Layout Plan, Drawing No. 01 date stamped 19th September 2025, provides an indicative layout of the proposed dwelling. The plan indicates the dwelling would be sited with its gable to the laneway. Other buildings and dwellings have a similar orientation to the laneway and therefore the proposed siting is considered acceptable. In terms of height of the proposed dwelling, the immediate area contains both single storey and two storey dwellings.

Criterion (b) of DM 25 indicates biodiversity/landscape features should be integrated into the development. As such, the mature trees to the rear boundary of the site will be conditioned for their retention if planning permission is to be granted.

The Creating Places document recommends that a dwelling with three or more bedrooms has an average of 70sqm of private amenity provision behind the building line. The provision of rear private amenity space is indicated to be significantly above 70sqm for both the proposed dwelling and the existing dwelling in the indicative site plan on Drawing No. 01 and the proposal is therefore considered to comply with DM 17.9 of the ANPS.

Neighbour Amenity

Criterion (c) of Policy DM 25 of the ANPS states that proposals should be designed so as to not have a detrimental effect on the amenity of adjoining properties. In addition, Policy DM 28 deals with impact on amenity and states that the Council will only support development proposals where they will not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of existing or future occupiers of adjoining or nearby properties by way of overlooking, loss of privacy, dominance, overshadowing, or other form of disturbance.

Concerns were raised by objectors regarding loss of light and overshadowing from the proposal due to the dwelling's potential height and proximity to neighbouring properties.

No. 20 Anna's Grove abuts the application site to the east and has a gable-to-gable relationship with the proposed dwelling. An existing close boarded fence approximately 1.8m in height defines the existing boundary between No. 20 and the application site which would screen views from the ground floor windows. Views from the upper floor windows towards this neighbouring property would either be oblique

or face towards its blank western gable. In addition, given the gable-to-gable relationship, the indicative 7.5m separation distance, and the lack of windows on the western gable of the neighbouring property, it is considered No. 20 Anna's Grove would not be adversely impacted by way of loss of light, overshadowing or dominance.

No. 18 Anna's Grove abuts the application site to the south and has a gable to front elevation relationship with the proposed dwelling. The indicative Site Layout Plan suggests the dwelling would have a 10.5m separation distance from this neighbouring dwelling. Given this separation distance, it is considered this property would not be adversely impacted by way of loss of light, overshadowing or dominance. In terms of overlooking towards No. 18 Annas's Grove, whilst the existing close boarded fence would mitigate any overlooking from ground floor windows of the proposed dwelling, first floor windows on this property would have direct views into the private amenity area of this property. As such, a condition would be imposed restricting the ridge height to 6.5m and restricting the use of dormer windows on the front elevation if planning permission was to be granted. These measures would mitigate overlooking/loss of privacy concerns upon No.18 Anna's Grove.

No. 124 Hydepark Road is situated to the north of the site and would have a separation distance from the proposal of approximately 40m. Given the separation distance and the existing mature trees located on the northern boundary, which can be conditioned to be retained, it is considered the amenity of this dwelling would not be adversely impacted by the proposal.

No. 122 Hydepark Road is situated approximately 20 metres west of the proposed dwelling. Two dwellings were also granted planning permission (Ref: LA03/2023/0201/O) adjacent to No. 122, which are situated approximately 21m from the proposal. Both No. 122 and the siting of the two approved dwellings are situated on lands within the applicant's ownership. Notwithstanding this, given the separation distance between the proposal and the existing/proposed properties, it is considered that the amenity of either the subject proposal or the existing/proposed properties, would not be adversely impacted.

A condition requiring the erection of a 2m high rendered wall along the rear section of the western boundary of the proposal is considered necessary to protect the amenity of the proposed dwelling from vehicle movements along the laneway, whilst respecting the character of the area.

The Council's Environmental Health Section was consulted on the application and raised no concerns regarding the development proposal.

One of the objectors raised concerns regarding the red line of the application site not being shown in accordance with their personal deeds. The area of land referred to has not been specified by the objector and regardless, matters of land ownership are generally a civil matter between the relevant parties. The applicant has indicated that they have served notice upon a third party to lands required to facilitate the required visibility splays.

Accordingly, the proposal is not considered to have an adverse impact on the amenity of current or future dwellings by way of overlooking, loss of privacy, dominance, overshadowing, or other form of disturbance.

Access and Parking

Policies SP 3.10 and DM 10 of the ANPS indicate that any access for a dwelling must not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of traffic. Concerns were raised by objectors regarding the increase in vehicles along the laneway and that the increase in the number of dwellings would exceed the number of dwellings permitted on a private laneway.

The proposal is accessed from the Hydepark Road via a shared private laneway. As part of the proposal, the visibility from this laneway when exiting onto the Hydepark Road is to be improved which would mitigate road safety concerns regarding access onto the public road. There are no fixed limits on the number of dwellings allowed on a private laneway and DfI Roads was consulted on the application and raised no objection to the proposal from a road safety perspective, subject to the submission of an accurate scale plan in accordance with the RS1 Form at the Reserved Matters stage.

Archaeology

Policies SP 7 and DM 30 of the ANPS indicate the Council will protect, conserve and promote the enhancement of archaeological remains and will operate a presumption in favour of the physical preservation in-situ of all archaeological remains and their settings.

The proposal is situated within the consultation zone of an archaeological site. DfC Historic Environment Division (HED) was consulted regarding the development proposal and on the basis of the information provided was content that the proposal complies with the SPPS and the archaeological policy requirements of the ANPS.

Aerodrome Safety

DM 13.5 indicates the Council will consult on proposals for tall structures within the Airport Safeguarding Zone. Belfast City Airport was consulted regarding the development proposal and raised no objections subject to conditions relating to aerodrome safety to be attached to any forthcoming planning approval. As such, the development proposal is considered to comply with DM 13.5 of the ANPS.

Sewerage and Drainage

Policy DM15 states that the Council will only support development proposals for non-mains sewerage where it is demonstrated that this will not create or add to a pollution problem. In addition, Policy DM 47 states that consideration of drainage issues is a requirement for all development proposals.

Concerns were raised by objectors regarding the proximity of the septic tank to neighbouring properties in relation to pollution, odour, and runoff. Concerns were also raised regarding the soakaway for a neighbouring property encroaching within the application site.

The proposal includes details for a septic tank and a soakaway which requires a Discharge Consent to be granted by DAERA Water Management Unit, albeit no consent has been granted to date. The site is not known to be located in an area known to be at risk from pollution. Details of the location of the septic tank and soakaways are indicated on the indicative Proposed Site Block Plan, (Drawing No. 01 date stamped 19th September 2025). A condition will be imposed if planning

permission is to be granted requiring an agreed means for the disposal of sewage and surface water to be in place, prior to any development taking place on the site.

The Council's Environmental Health Section was consulted regarding the development proposal and has raised no concerns regarding odour from the proposed development.

The proposal is not situated in an area where there is evidence of a history of surface water flooding, and the indicative Proposed Site Block Plan, (Drawing No. 01 date stamped 19th September 2025), does not involve buildings and/or hard surfacing of 1,000sqm or greater in area, and as such a Drainage Assessment (DA) was not required to be submitted. The soakaways for the dwellings approved under planning application Ref: LA03/2023/0201/O is located within the rear amenity area of the application site; however, they are not situated in the area where the dwelling is to be sited.

CONCLUSION

The following is a summary of the main reasons for the recommendation:

- The principle of development is considered acceptable;
- A dwelling could be erected at this location without detrimentally impacting upon the character and appearance of the area;
- Neighbour amenity will not be unduly affected by the proposal, subject to conditions;
- There are no road safety concerns; and
- There are no archaeological concerns.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION

PROPOSED CONDITIONS

1. Application for approval of the reserved matters must be made to the Council within 3 years of the date on which this permission is granted and the development, hereby permitted, shall be begun by whichever is the later of the following dates:-

- i) The expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission;
- ii) The expiration of 2 years from the date of approval of the list of the reserved matters to be approved.

Reason: As required by Section 62 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2. Approval of the details of the siting, design and external appearance of the buildings, the means of access thereto and the landscaping of the site (hereinafter called "the reserved matters"), shall be obtained from the Council, in writing, before any development is commenced.

Reason: This is outline permission only and these matters have been reserved for the subsequent approval of the Council.

3. Full particulars, detailed plans and sections of the reserved matters required in Conditions 01 and 02 must be submitted in writing to the Council and shall be carried out as approved.

Reason: To enable the Council to consider in detail the proposed development of the site.

4. A scale plan and accurate site survey at 1:500 (minimum) shall be submitted as part of the reserved matters application showing the access location to be constructed and other requirements in accordance with the attached RS1 form.

Reason: To ensure there is a satisfactory means of access in the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.

5. The proposed dwelling must be sited in the area shaded green on the approved Drawing No. 01 date stamped 19th September 2025.

Reason: To ensure that the development is satisfactorily integrated with the adjacent residential dwellings.

6. Prior to the dwelling being occupied, a 2-metre-high rendered wall must be erected as indicated in yellow on the approved Drawing No. 01 date stamped 19th September 2025 along the rear western boundary of the proposed dwelling.

Reason: in the interest of neighbouring amenity of the proposed dwelling.

7. The depth of underbuilding between finished floor level and existing ground level must not exceed 0.3 metres at any point.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.

8. The proposed dwelling shall have a ridge height of less than 6.5 metres above finished floor level.

Reason: In the interest of neighbour amenity.

9. There shall not be any dormer windows on the front elevation of the proposed dwelling facing No. 18 Annas Grove.

Reason: In the interest of neighbour amenity.

10. No development shall take place until detailed proposals for the disposal of storm water and foul sewage have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The dwelling shall not be occupied until the approved arrangements are in place.

Reason: To ensure an adequate means of sewage disposal is provided and to ensure protection of the aquatic environment.

11. No development shall take place until a landscaping scheme has been submitted to and approved by the Council showing the location, numbers, species and sizes of trees and shrubs to be planted. The scheme of planting as finally approved shall be carried out during the first planting season after the occupation of the development.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and to ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of a high standard of landscape.

12. If within a period of 5 years from the date of the planting of any tree, shrub or hedge, that tree, shrub or hedge is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, or becomes, in the opinion of the Council, seriously damaged or defective, another tree, shrub or hedge of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place within the next available full planting season, unless the Council gives its written consent to any variation.

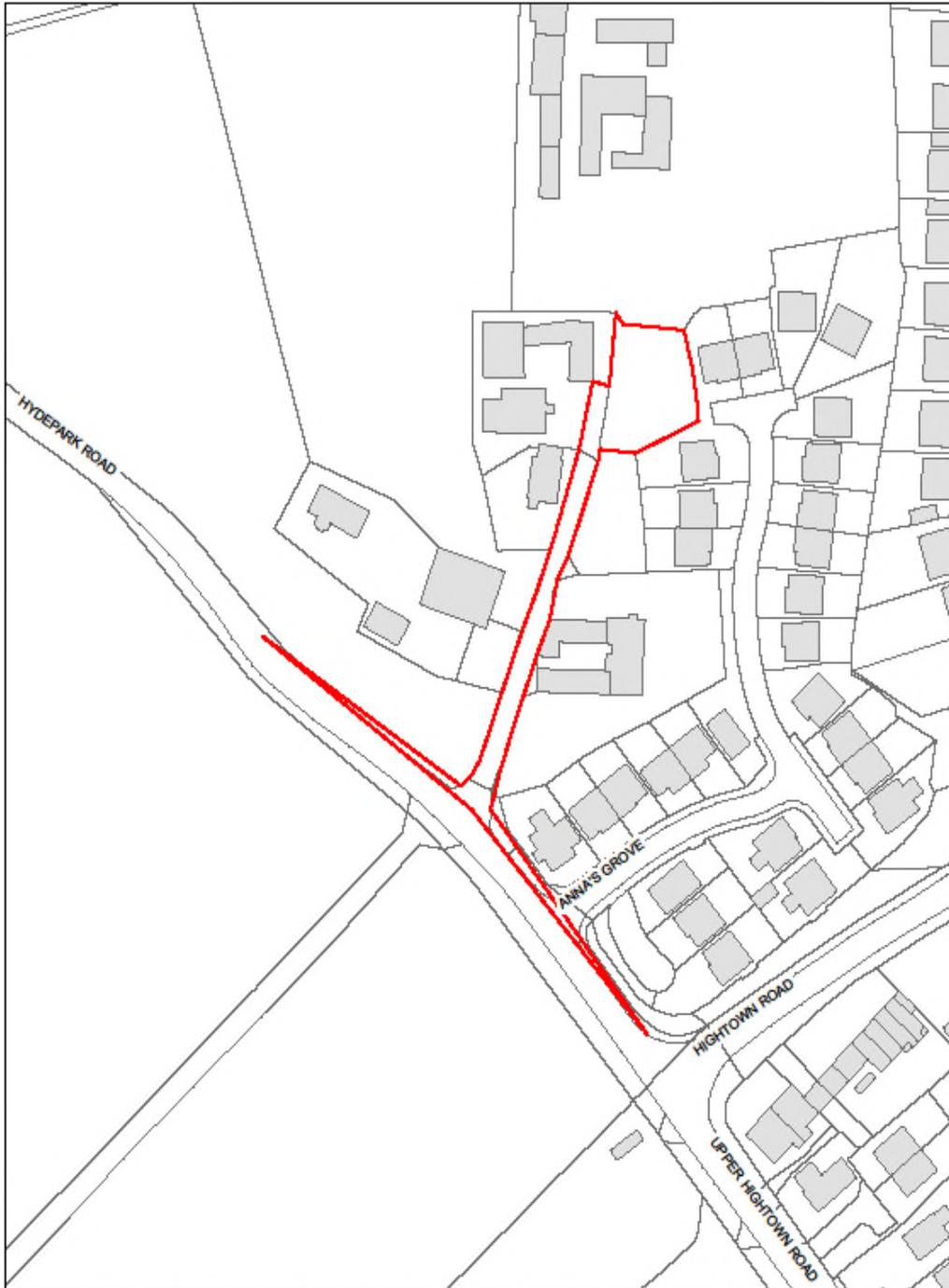
Reason: To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of a high standard of landscape.

13. The existing trees along the northern boundary of the site, as indicated in dark green on approved Drawing No. 01 date stamped 19th September 2025, must be retained at a minimum height of 5 metres.

Reason: To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of a high standard of landscape.

14. If any retained tree or hedgerow is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies during the construction and upon completion of the development and for the lifetime of the development, it shall be replaced within the next planting season by another tree or trees in the same location of a species and size as specified by the Council.

Reason: To ensure the continuity of amenity afforded by existing trees and hedgerows.



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Site Location Plan

1:1,250

Reference: LA03/2025/0685/O

 Site Location



COMMITTEE ITEM	3.7
APPLICATION NO	LA03/2025/0565/O
DEA	DUNSILLY
COMMITTEE INTEREST	ADDENDUM TO COMMITTEE REPORT
RECOMMENDATION	REFUSE OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION
PROPOSAL	Site for dwelling and garage
SITE/LOCATION	Approx 15m northeast of 21 Loughbeg Road, Toomebridge, Antrim, BT41 3TN
APPLICANT	Ryan and Claire Marron
AGENT	PJ Carey Architecture
LAST SITE VISIT	2nd September 2025
CASE OFFICER	Alexandra Tipping Tel: 028 903 40216 Email: alexandra.tipping@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk
<p>Full details of this application, including the application forms, relevant drawings, consultation responses and any representations received are available to view at the Planning Portal https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/application/701511</p>	
ASSESSMENT/MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS	
<p>At the November Planning Committee meeting Members agreed to defer the application for one month to allow the agent the opportunity to register to speak at the December Planning Committee and enable him to exercise his speaking rights.</p> <p>It was conveyed to Members at the November meeting that the agent belatedly submitted a Supporting Statement on the evening of the November Planning Committee meeting (Document 03 date stamped 17th November 2025).</p> <p>Within the Statement the agent contends that due to the suggested siting of the proposed dwelling, as indicated on the Site Layout Plan (Drawing No. 02 date stamped 5th August 2025), it would not extend the ribbon of development further than the existing cluster and would therefore meet the policy requirements of criteria (c) and (d) of Policy DM 18 D of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy (ANPS).</p> <p>The Statement goes on to advise that a suitably sited and designed dwelling and garage, the details of which would be submitted at the Reserved Matters stage, could overcome any issues in relation to the overlooking of No. 21 Loughbeg Road and would not result in the extension of ribbon development or have a detrimental impact on rural character due to the limited views and the backdrop of the cluster.</p> <p>As discussed within the original Planning Committee Report and the previous Addendum Report, regardless of the siting of a new dwelling within the application site, a dwelling and its associated features to include a new access arrangement would be considered to expand development beyond the existing built form and further into the open countryside. If a new dwelling on the site was located immediately behind the existing dwelling at No. 21 Loughbeg Road, it would not only not be in keeping with the pattern of development in the area but would also be</p>	

considered to have an inappropriate outlook and an unacceptable impact on the neighbour amenity of No. 21.

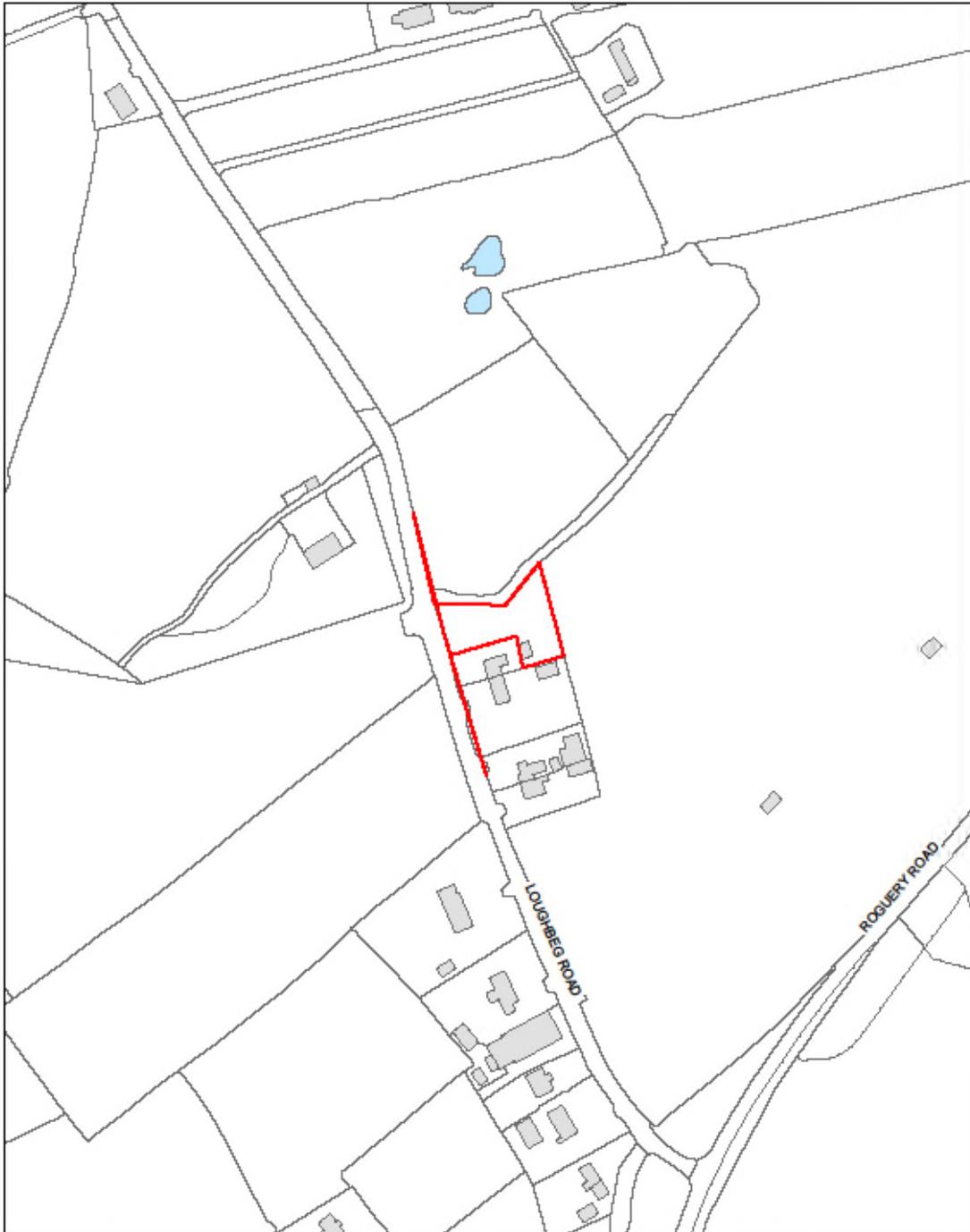
Overall, it remains that the proposal would visually intrude into the open countryside, result in the addition to ribbon development and a suburban style build up of development, disrespect the traditional pattern of development in the area and would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the occupiers of an existing nearby dwelling at No. 21 Loughbeg Road in terms of overlooking and loss of privacy.

With the above considered, the recommendation remains to refuse outline planning permission.

RECOMMENDATION	REFUSE OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION
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PROPOSED REASONS FOR REFUSAL

1. The proposal is contrary to the provisions contained within the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and Policies SP1.11 and DM 18 of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy in that there are no overriding reasons why this development is essential in this rural location and could not be located within a settlement.
2. The proposal is contrary to the provisions contained within the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and fails to meet the provisions of Policy DM 18D of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy, in that the development fails to meet the provisions for a dwelling in an existing cluster and would visually intrude into the open countryside.
3. The proposal is contrary to the provisions contained in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and fails to meet the provisions of DM 27.3 of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy in that the proposal if permitted will result in the addition to ribbon development along the Loughbeg Road and a suburban style build-up of development that extends into the open countryside when viewed with existing buildings and does not respect the traditional pattern of settlement exhibited in the area.
4. The proposal is contrary to the provisions contained within the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and fails to meet the provisions of Policy DM 28 of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy in that the proposal would result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the occupiers of an existing nearby dwelling (No. 21) in terms of overlooking and loss of privacy.



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Site Location Plan

1:2,500

Reference: LA03/2025/0565/O

 Site Location



COMMITTEE ITEM	3.8
APPLICATION NO	LA03/2025/0435/F
DEA	AIRPORT
COMMITTEE INTEREST	REFUSAL RECOMMENDED
RECOMMENDATION	REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION
PROPOSAL	Dwelling on a farm (Substitution of approved house on applicant's farm at 121 Ballyrobin Road, Antrim, approved under LA03/2021/0409/F)
SITE/LOCATION	110m SE of 4a Laurel Lane, Belfast, BT14 8SQ
APPLICANT	Robert McKendry
AGENT	Park Design Associates
LAST SITE VISIT	2nd September 2025
CASE OFFICER	Alexandra Tipping Tel: 028 903 40216 Email: alexandra.tipping@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk
<p>Full details of this application, including the application forms, relevant drawings, consultation responses and any representations received are available to view at the Planning Portal: https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/application/700410</p>	
SITE DESCRIPTION	
<p>The application site is located approximately 110 metres southeast of the existing dwelling at No. 4A Laurel Lane, Belfast. The site is located in the countryside, outside of any settlement designated in the Antrim Area Plan 1984- 2001.</p> <p>The application site is set back from Laurel Lane by approximately 170 metres and consists of part of a wider agricultural field that lies adjacent to an existing outbuilding and gravelled yard area. The site's northeastern boundary is defined partially by a hedge and bounds an undesignated watercourse. The southeastern boundary is defined with an existing hedgerow with interspersed trees, whilst the southwestern boundary remains undefined and bounds an existing grassed agricultural track. The northwestern boundary is defined in part with post and wire fencing.</p> <p>The area in which the site is located is typically rural in character and consists mostly of clustered farm groups and dispersed dwellings which are generally set back from the public road.</p>	
RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY	
<p>Planning Reference: LA03/2024/0280/O Location: 70m NE of No. 4a Laurel Lane, Belfast Proposal: Dwelling and Garage Decision: Appeal Dismissed (17th January 2025)</p> <p>Planning Reference: LA03/2023/0391/O Location: 25m E of No. 6 Laurel Lane, Belfast Proposal: Site for Infill Dwelling and Garage Decision: Permission Refused (21st July 2023)</p>	

Planning Reference: LA03/2021/0409/F
Location: 30m SW of 121 Ballyrobin Road, Antrim
Proposal: Farm Dwelling
Decision: Permission Granted (17th August 2021)

PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Under the provisions of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, all decisions must be taken in accordance with the provisions of the Local Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Development Plan (ANLDP) will comprise of two parts, Part 1 is the Plan Strategy which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 3rd July 2025. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan which will identify the boundaries of settlement limits, local designations and zonings which has not yet been published. As such the settlement limits, local designations and zonings of the extant adopted Development Plans for the Borough (the Belfast Urban Area Plan, the Carrickfergus Area Plan and the Antrim Area Plan) remain applicable. Account will also be taken of the draft Newtownabbey Area Plan and its associated Interim Statement and the provisions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

Antrim Area Plan 1984 – 2001: The application site is located within the open countryside as identified within the Antrim Area Plan, 1984-2001. The Plan offers no specific guidance on this proposal.

SPPS – Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland: sets out that Planning Authorities should be guided by the principle that sustainable development should be permitted, having regard to the local development plan and other material considerations unless the proposed development will cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy 2015-2030 (ANPS): sets out the relevant planning policies for assessing planning applications and advertisement consents.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy 2015-2030: sets out the relevant planning policies for assessing planning applications and other planning consents. The relevant strategic and operational policies for the assessment of the current proposal are listed below.

Strategic Policy 1 – Sustainable Development (SP 1): sets out that the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).

Strategic Policy 3 – Transportation and Infrastructure (SP 3): aims to encourage the continued development and growth of high-quality transportation, communications and utilities infrastructure in a timely and co-ordinated fashion to meet the current and future needs of our Borough and support sustainable development in accordance with the Council's Spatial Growth Strategy. SP3 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM10 – Access and Parking; and
- Policy DM 15 – Development Relying on Non-Mains Sewage.

Strategic Policy 4 - Homes (SP 4): sets out that the Council's aims of achieving quality in new residential development both within urban settlements and the countryside. SP4 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 18 – Homes in the Countryside; and
- Policy DM 18A – Farm Dwellings.

Strategic Policy 6 - Placemaking and Good Design (SP6): sets out that positive placemaking and good design are key components in the delivery of high quality, attractive and sustainable places within our Borough. SP6 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 27 Rural Design and Character; and
- Policy DM 28 Amenity Impact.

Strategic Policy 8 - Natural Heritage (SPG8): seeks to protect, conserve and promote the enhancement and restoration of the diversity of our Borough's natural heritage comprised of its habitats, species, landscapes and earth science features.

- Policy DM 37 Designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance;
- Policy DM 38 Protected Species;
- Policy DM 39 Habitats, Species & Features of Natural Heritage Importance; and
- Policy DM 42 Trees and Development.

Strategic Policy 10 - Environmental Resilience and Protection (SPG10): seeks to promote environmental resilience by mitigating and adapting to the harmful effects of climate change on our built and natural environment. SPG10 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 46 The Control of Development in Floodplains; and
- Policy DM 47 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems.

Building on Tradition: A Sustainable Design Guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside: sets out design principles for new dwellings in the countryside.

CONSULTATION

Council Environmental Health Section – No objection

Department for Infrastructure Roads – No objection subject to conditions

Belfast International Airport – No objection

Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs - No objection

Department for Infrastructure Rivers – No objection, subject to condition

REPRESENTATION

Two (2) neighbouring properties were notified of the application and no representations have been received.

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING ISSUES/MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- Preliminary Matters
- Policy Context and Principle of Development
- Rural Design and Character

- Neighbour Amenity
- Access and Parking
- Natural Heritage
- Flood Risk
- Sewerage and Drainage

Preliminary Matters

- Concerns relating to the principle of development were raised with the agent via a telephone conversation and followed up with an email on 16th September 2025. The email highlighted concerns in relation to the applicant's extant planning permission for a farm dwelling granted under planning application Ref. LA03/2025/0435/F and there only being one farm building adjacent to the application site.
- A meeting with the Deputy Director of Planning and Building Control was then arranged with the applicant's agent, Stephen Nicholl and Robin Swann MP on 10th October 2025.
- Following this meeting the agent submitted additional supporting information by way of a Rebuttal Statement, (Document 02 date stamped 14th October 2025), which provided comments in response to the original email sent on 16th September 2025. These comments referred to revocation of the extant approval and the possibility of erecting a new farm shed adjacent to the site in accordance with the provision accepted under the Planning General Permitted Development Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Policy Context and Principle of Development

Section 45 (1) of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 requires the Council, in dealing with an application for planning permission, to have regard to the Local Development Plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. Section 6 (4) of the Act then states that, where, in making any determination under the Act, regard is to be had to the Local Development Plan, the determination must be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) is material to all decisions on individual planning applications. The Antrim & Newtownabbey Plan Strategy (ANPS) sets out the relevant planning policies for the determination of planning applications in the Borough. However, until such times as the Local Policies Plan (LPP) identifies the boundaries of settlement limits, local designations and zonings, the provisions of the current legacy plans, both adopted and in draft form will continue to apply. The site is defined as being within the countryside in the Antrim Area Plan 1984-2001 (AAP). In line with the transitional arrangements set out in the SPPS, the AAP and the ANPS must be read together. Any conflict between the policies in with the Plans must be resolved in favour of the ANPS.

Strategic Policy SP 1.11 of the ANPS indicates that development proposals in the countryside will be supported in principle provided that they accord with the relevant policies applicable to the development type otherwise it will not be permitted unless there are overriding reasons why it is essential in a countryside location and cannot be located within a settlement. DM 18.1 of the ANPS indicates that the Council will support the development of new homes in the countryside provided that it meets

with the range of development types permitted by policy. One such development type is for a farm dwelling as provided for by Policy DM 18A of the ANPS which sets criteria for the assessment of farm dwellings. Paragraph 6.73 of the SPPS also provides the strategic policy for residential development in the countryside to include dwellings on farms.

DM 18.3 of the ANPS states the Council will support an application for a dwelling on a farm, where the applicant is actively engaged in farming and where the three listed criteria can be met:

Criterion (a) requires that the farm business has been established and active for a continuous period of 6 years and that it has not been artificially divided solely to obtain planning permission. The Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) advised in a consultation response that the Farm Business ID was allocated in January 1992. The business has claimed payments through the Basic Payment Scheme or Agri Environment Scheme in each of the last six years. The response also states that the proposed site is located on land for which payments are currently being claimed by the farm business. In addition, a history search of the site and Farm Business ID has not indicated the farm business has been artificially divided. The proposal is therefore considered to meet policy criterion (a) of Policy DM 18A.

Criterion (b) requires that no dwellings or residential development opportunities have been sold off or transferred from the farm holding within a period of 10 years from the date of the application and no previous permissions have been granted for a farm dwelling during the same period. In this case the applicant obtained planning approval for a dwelling on a farm granted under planning application Ref – LA03/2021/0409/F on 17th August 2021, which remains extant until 16th August 2026. As per the description of development the applicant wishes to substitute this approval with the current proposal. The previously approved farm dwelling is located on lands 30 metres southwest of No. 121 Ballyrobin Road, Antrim approximately 13km from the application site.

The submitted Supporting Statement (Document 01 date stamped 17th June 2025) states that due to a change in circumstance (namely the inability to expand their farm at Ballyrobin Road) that the applicant will not be building the farm dwelling at that location.

The applicant has requested that the initial approval for a farm dwelling be revoked by the Council in order to permit approval of a farm dwelling at the subject application site. The Council can revoke or modify planning permission under Section 68 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 if it appears to the Council, having regard to the local development plan and to any other material considerations, that it is expedient to do so.

In this instance, there was no known error, material inaccuracy, unforeseen environmental impacts or significant changes in the direction of the Local Development Plan that would lead the Council to revoke the previous permission. The revocation would be sought solely on the basis of a change of desire from the applicant (albeit for reasons in relation to farm expansion). Owing to the financial implications associated with revocation, the Council would generally only pursue revocation if it was expedient to do so and that the public interest was being served.

Owing to the two sites being 13km apart, it would also not be possible to use a condition to substitute the previously approved permission with the current proposal. The applicant has confirmed in the PIC form accompanying the application that no other dwellings or development opportunities have been sold-off from the farm holding within 10 years of the date of this application. A history search of the of the Farm Business ID and applicant's name have found no evidence of any development opportunities having been sold off from the farm holding within the last 10 years (other than that discussed above).

Notwithstanding this, giving consideration to the above, it is concluded that the proposal does not comply with criteria (b) of Policy DM 18A as a previous permission for a farm dwelling has been granted within the last ten years.

The third criterion (c) requires the proposed dwelling to be positioned to sensitively cluster with an established group of buildings on the farm holding and where practicable access to the dwelling should be obtained from an existing lane.

In this instance the application site is located adjacent to a single linear outbuilding which appears to be used for storage. This is the applicant's only building at this location. Although the applicant has advised within the Rebuttal Statement, (Document 02 date stamp 16th October 2025), that they would erect a second building at the application site under agricultural permitted development to address the matter and that this could be conditioned upon approval. This is not considered appropriate given that the applicant has farm buildings (plural) elsewhere on the holding. This includes the applicant's dwelling and buildings at No. 121 Ballyrobin Road, Antrim.

It is noted that the applicant has advised that this location (Ballyrobin Road) is no longer suitable for a farm dwelling as the farm cannot be expanded here but the applicant has also got no verifiable plans to expand the farm at Laurel Lane.

The proposed access is via an extension of an existing approved laneway granted under planning application Ref: LA03/2023/0740/RM (for an adjacent replacement dwelling).

Given that a previous permission has been granted for a dwelling on a farm within the last 10 years and that the proposed dwelling is not positioned to sensitively cluster with an established group of buildings on the farm holding, the proposal fails to comply with criterion (b) and (c) of Policy DM 18A of the ANPS and the principle of development is therefore not acceptable.

Design, Integration and Rural Character

Paragraph 6.70 of the SPPS states that all development in the countryside must integrate into its setting, respect rural character and be appropriately designed. The ANPS includes a number of policies that any proposed development within the countryside must demonstrate in relation to appearance and design.

DM 18.2 of the ANPS states that in all cases, the Council will expect proposals for new residential development to be sited and designed to integrate sympathetically with their surroundings and not to have an adverse impact on the landscape character or rural amenity of the countryside. Furthermore, Policy DM 27 of the ANPS indicates the Council will support development in the countryside where it is sited to integrate

sympathetically into its surroundings and respects rural character. New buildings will be expected to demonstrate high quality rural design, appropriate to the proposed site and its context.

The proposal is for a large two storey detached dwelling as detailed on Elevational Drawing No. 05 bearing the date stamp 17th June 2026. The dwelling has a ridge height of 9.2 metres and consists of a main block with a two storey rear return. The dwelling has a traditional pitched roof, chimneys expressed on the ridge line and sliding sash style windows. The finishes include white render for the walls, black upvc rainwater goods and slate roof tiles. The dwelling is sited to face towards Laurel Lane.

The site lacks any immediate backdrop or enclosure as the northeastern boundary (to the rear of the site) remains undefined although there is a distant backdrop of the rising lands beyond the site to the northeast. It is considered that a dwelling with a 9.2 metre ridge height would appear excessive on the application site and would not integrate harmoniously into its receiving rural environment without the use of substantial new landscaping. It is noted that the site is set back some 170 metres from Laurel Lane, however, beyond the roadside hedging there is no other intervening vegetation to assist with screening. Furthermore, the character of the immediate area is defined by single and one and a half storey dwellings. It is considered that the site does not have the capacity to absorb a dwelling of the size and scale proposed and thus the proposal is considered contrary to DM 27.2 of the ANPS.

Given the concerns with the principle of development Officers did not seek amended design proposals but notwithstanding the concern with the principle of development a dwelling with a reduced scale would be more appropriate on the site and within the surrounding context.

DM 27.3 of the ANPS states that development will be acceptable where it respects the traditional pattern of development in the area and will not cause a detrimental change to, or further erode, the rural character of the area.

Although the principle of a new dwelling and the proposed design is not considered acceptable, owing to the application site's set back distance of 170 metres from the public it is considered that the proposal would not detrimentally alter the existing character of the area.

Neighbour Amenity

Paragraph 4.27 of the SPPS states that planning authorities will reject poor designs, particularly proposals that are inappropriate to their context, including schemes that are clearly out of scale, or incompatible with their surroundings, or not in accordance with the LDP or local design guidance.

DM 28.1 of the ANPS states the Council will only support development proposals where they will not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of existing or future occupiers of adjoining or nearby properties. Both the individual and cumulative impacts of proposals on amenity will be considered in assessing their acceptability.

A dwelling is currently under construction at No. 6 Laurel Lane, which is the closest dwelling to the application site. Given the separation distance of approximately 64 metres, together with the staggered siting arrangement of these two dwellings

(proposed and No. 6) it is considered that the proposed dwelling could be constructed on site without any adverse amenity impact on No. 6 or any other nearby dwelling house.

The Council's Environmental Health Section was consulted and raised no objection to the development subject to informatives regarding nuisances from the applicant's adjacent farm.

Access and Parking

Paragraph 6.296 of the SPPS indicates that the aim of the SPPS with regard to transportation is to secure improved integration with land-use planning, and to facilitate safe and efficient access, movement and parking. Additionally, criterion (g) within paragraph 6.297 of the SPPS states that the regional strategic objectives for transportation and land-use planning are to promote road safety, in particular for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users.

Policy SP 3.10 of the ANPS indicates that the Council will seek to ensure that all new development provides safe access arrangements that will not significantly inhibit the free flow of traffic, and that sufficient car and cycle parking is provided.

DfI Roads was consulted in relation to the proposal and responded with no objection, subject to the attachment of conditions.

Natural Heritage

SP 1.4 of the ANPS states that the Council will adopt a precautionary approach where there are significant risks of damage to the environment whilst SP 8.3 requires that appropriate weight in the decision-making process is given to the protection of designated sites, priority habitats, protected species and other features of biodiversity interest. Specific policies for designated sites are provided within Policy DM 37, policies relating to protected species are provided under Policy DM 38, whilst Policy DM 39 addresses other habitats, species and features of natural heritage importance.

An informal consultation was issued to Shared Environmental Services (SES) owing to the watercourse that runs adjacent to the application site's northeastern boundary. However, SES has advised that having considered the development proposal it can be eliminated from the need for Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) because it could not have any conceivable effect on a European site. This is concluded because there are no hydrological connections to designated sites from the application site and there are no concerns with operational effects.

There is no significant vegetation removal proposed as part of the development, however, it is considered that more detail of the proposed landscaping should be submitted or provided through the use of suitably worded conditions if planning permission were to be forthcoming.

Flood Risk

Policy DM 46 of the ANPS advises that the Council will not permit development within the floodplains of rivers or seas unless a number of exemptions apply.

There is an undesignated watercourse which runs along the site's northeastern boundary. The NI Flood Maps do not indicate a floodplain associated with this watercourse.

DfI Rivers has advised that although the site does not fall within a defined floodplain, it is the applicant's responsibility to appoint a competent professional to assess the flood risk and to mitigate the risk to the development and any impacts beyond the site. It has also advised that the applicant should contact the local Rivers Directorate area staff in order to establish their needs. DfI Rivers also requires that a working strip is shown on a site layout drawing that would be included in any forthcoming planning approval to enable enforcement of the provision of the working strip and requests that the working strip is protected from impediments (including tree planting, hedges, permanent fencing and sheds), land raising or any future development by way of a planning condition. Access to and from the maintenance strip should be available at all times.

Owing to the concern with the principle of development no further information or additional drawings in relation to flooding were sought from the applicant.

Sewerage & Drainage

Policy DM 15 of the ANPS states that the Council will only support development proposals for non-mains sewerage where it is demonstrated that this will not create or add to a pollution problem. In addition, Policy DM 47 states that consideration of drainage issues is a requirement for all development proposals.

The location of the septic tank is detailed on Site Layout Plan, Drawing No. 02 bearing the date stamp 17th June 2025. The site is not known to be located in an area known to be at risk from pollution. A septic tank will also require a Discharge Consent to be granted by DAERA Water Management Unit.

The proposed dwelling is not located in an area where there is evidence of a history of surface water flooding, and given the proposal, it is not expected to involve buildings and/or hard surfacing of 1,000sqm or greater in area, and as such a Drainage Assessment (DA) was not required to be submitted.

NI Water was not consulted in relation to this application for a single dwelling in the countryside. An informative will however be attached to any forthcoming approval advising that the applicant's attention is drawn to NI Waters' Standing Advice in relation to single domestic properties in the rural area seeking connection to watermains.

CONCLUSION

The following is a summary of the main reasons for the recommendation:

- The principle of a dwelling on a farm is not acceptable;
- The proposed dwelling would not integrate into the surrounding rural environment due to its scale and lack of sufficient enclosure or backdrop.
- The proposal would not result in a detrimental change of rural character;
- It is considered that the proposed dwelling would not compromise the amenity of neighbouring occupiers;
- The proposal would not have any significant detrimental impact on natural heritage features; and
- It is the applicant's responsibility to assess the flood risk at the application site and carry out appropriate mitigation if necessary.

RECOMMENDATION**REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION****PROPOSED REASONS FOR REFUSAL**

1. The proposal is contrary to the provisions contained in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement paragraph 6.73 and fails to meet the provisions of Policy DM 18A of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy in that the proposal does not comply with criterion (b) as a previous permission has been granted for a dwelling on a farm within the last 10 years.
2. The proposal is contrary to the provisions contained in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement paragraph 6.73 and fails to meet the provisions of Policy DM 18A of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy in that the proposal does not comply with criterion (c) as the proposed dwelling is not positioned to sensitively to cluster with an established group of buildings on the farm holding.
3. The proposal is contrary to the provisions contained in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement paragraph 6.70 and fails to meet the provisions of DM 27.2 of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy in that the proposal if permitted would fail to visually integrate into the surrounding landscape given size and scale of the dwelling proposed and the lack of enclosure or immediate visual backdrop provided at the application site.



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Site Location Plan

1:2,500 

Reference: LA03/2025/0435/F

 Site Location



COMMITTEE ITEM	3.9
APPLICATION NO	LA03/2025/0584/O
DEA	AIRPORT
COMMITTEE INTEREST	REFUSAL RECOMMENDED
RECOMMENDATION	REFUSE OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION
PROPOSAL	Site for dwelling and garage on a farm
SITE/LOCATION	70m West of 81 Rickamore Road Upper, Templepatrick, Ballyclare, BT39 0JF
APPLICANT	Robert Oliver
AGENT	S W Marcus Architectural Services
LAST SITE VISIT	2nd September 2025
CASE OFFICER	Alexandra Tipping Tel: 028 903 40216 Email: alexandra.tipping@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk
<p>Full details of this application, including the application forms, relevant drawings, consultation responses and any representations received are available to view at the Planning Portal https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/application/701859</p>	
SITE DESCRIPTION	
<p>The application site is located approximately 70 metres to the west of the existing dwelling at No. 81 Rickamore Road Upper, Templepatrick. The site is located in the countryside, outside of any settlement limit designated in the Antrim Area Plan 1984-2001.</p> <p>The site is made up of part of a wider agricultural field and extends to the roadside. The site's northern and western boundaries remain undefined, the eastern boundary is defined with a rendered wall that bounds the existing farmyard and the southern (roadside) boundary is defined by a post and wire fence. The topography of the site sits marginally higher than the roadside and then falls away in a northerly direction.</p> <p>The area in which the site is located is typically rural in character, with a farm grouping and single dwellings in the immediate vicinity of the site.</p>	
RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY	
<p>Planning Reference: LA03/2024/0468/O Proposal: Dwelling and Garage Location: Approx 20m NW 79 Rickamore Road Upper, Templepatrick Decision: Permission Refused (31st October 2024)</p>	
PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE	
<p>Under the provisions of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, all decisions must be taken in accordance with the provisions of the Local Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.</p> <p>The Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Development Plan (ANLDP) will comprise of two parts, Part 1 is the Plan Strategy which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 3rd July 2025. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan which will identify the boundaries of settlement limits, local designations and zonings which has not yet been published. As such the settlement limits, local designations and zonings of the</p>	

extant adopted Development Plans for the Borough (the Belfast Urban Area Plan, the Carrickfergus Area Plan and the Antrim Area Plan) remain applicable. Account will also be taken of the draft Newtownabbey Area Plan and its associated Interim Statement and the provisions of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

Antrim Area Plan 1984 – 2001: The application site is located within the open countryside as identified within the Antrim Area Plan, 1984-2001. The Plan offers no specific guidance on this proposal.

SPPS – Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland: sets out that Planning Authorities should be guided by the principle that sustainable development should be permitted, having regard to the local development plan and other material considerations unless the proposed development will cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy 2015-2030: sets out the relevant planning policies for assessing planning applications and other planning consents. The relevant strategic and operational policies for the assessment of the current proposal are listed below.

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Strategic Policy 3 – Transportation and Infrastructure (SP 3): aims to encourage the continued development and growth of high-quality transportation, communications and utilities infrastructure in a timely and co-ordinated fashion to meet the current and future needs of our Borough and support sustainable development in accordance with the Council's Spatial Growth Strategy. SP3 is supported by Policies:

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- Policy DM 18A – Farm Dwellings

Strategic Policy 6 - Placemaking and Good Design (SP6): sets out that positive placemaking and good design are key components in the delivery of high quality, attractive and sustainable places within our Borough. SP6 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 27 Rural Design and Character; and
- Policy DM 28 Amenity Impact.

Strategic Policy 8 - Natural Heritage (SPG8): seeks to protect, conserve and promote the enhancement and restoration of the diversity of our Borough's natural heritage comprised of its habitats, species, landscapes and earth science features.

- Policy DM 37 Designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance;
- Policy DM 38 Protected Species;
- Policy DM 39 Habitats, Species & Features of Natural Heritage Importance; and

- Policy DM 42 Trees and Development.

Strategic Policy 10 - Environmental Resilience and Protection (SPG10): seeks to promote environmental resilience by mitigating and adapting to the harmful effects of climate change on our built and natural environment. SPG10 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 47 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems.

Building on Tradition: A Sustainable Design Guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside: sets out design principles for new dwellings in the countryside.

CONSULTATION

Council Environmental Health Section – No objection

Department for Infrastructure Roads- No objection, subject to condition

Belfast International Airport – No objection

Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs - No objection

REPRESENTATION

Two (2) neighbouring properties were notified of the application and no representations have been received.

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING ISSUES/MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- Preliminary Matters
- Policy Context and Principle of Development
- Rural Design and Character
- Neighbour Amenity
- Access and Parking
- Natural Heritage
- Sewerage and Drainage

Preliminary Matters

Concerns were raised with the applicant on 10th November by telephone call in relation to the siting of the proposed dwelling and its impact in terms of integration and character. The agent advised verbally that the site was chosen to allow future expansion of the existing farm. At the time of writing there were no verifiable plans for expansion submitted to the Council.

Policy Context and Principle of Development

Section 45 (1) of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 requires the Council, in dealing with an application for planning permission, to have regard to the Local Development Plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. Section 6 (4) of the Act then states that, where, in making any determination under the Act, regard is to be had to the Local Development Plan, the determination must be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) is material to all decisions on individual planning applications. The Antrim & Newtownabbey Plan Strategy (ANPS) sets out the relevant planning policies for the determination of

planning applications in the Borough. However, until such times as the Local Policies Plan (LPP) identifies the boundaries of settlement limits, local designations and zonings, the provisions of the current legacy plans, both adopted and in draft form will continue to apply. The site is defined as being within the countryside in the Antrim Area Plan 1984-2001 (AAP). In line with the transitional arrangements set out in the SPPS, the AAP and the ANPS must be read together. Any conflict between the policies in with the Plans must be resolved in favour of the ANPS.

Strategic Policy SP 1.11 of the ANPS indicates that development proposals in the countryside will be supported in principle provided that they accord with the relevant policies applicable to the development type otherwise it will not be permitted unless there are overriding reasons why it is essential in a countryside location and cannot be located within a settlement. DM 18.1 of the ANPS indicates that the Council will support the development of new homes in the countryside provided that it meets with the range of development types permitted by policy. One such development type is for a farm dwelling as provided for by Policy DM 18A which sets criteria for the assessment of farm dwellings.

DM 18.3 states the Council will support an application for a dwelling on a farm, where the applicant is actively engaged in farming and where the three listed criteria can be met:

Criterion (a) requires that the farm business has been established and active for a continuous period of 6 years and that it has not been artificially divided solely to obtain planning permission. The Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) advised in a consultation response that the Farm Business ID was allocated in November 1991 and the business has claimed payments through the Basic Payment Scheme or Agri Environment Scheme in each of the last six years. The response also states that the proposed site is located on land for which payments are currently being claimed by the farm business. In addition, there is no evidence that the farm business has been artificially divided. The proposal is therefore considered to meet policy criterion (a) of Policy DM 18A of the ANPS.

Criterion (b) requires that no dwellings or residential development opportunities have been sold off or transferred from the farm holding within a period of 10 years from the date of the application and no previous permissions have been granted for a farm dwelling during the same period. The applicant has confirmed in the PIC form accompanying the application that no dwellings or development opportunities have been sold-off from the farm holding. A planning history search of the farm holding, a search of the farm Business ID, and of the applicant's name have found no evidence of any development opportunities having been sold off from the farm holding within the last 10 years.

The third criterion (c) requires the proposed dwelling to be positioned to sensitively cluster with an established group of buildings on the farm holding and where practicable access to the dwelling should be obtained from an existing lane. In this instance the application site bounds the existing entrance to the farmyard to the east. The northeastern corner of the site lies approximately 11.6 metres from the closest farm building within the existing adjacent established farm group. Although full access details have not been provided at this outline stage it appears from the Site Location Plan, Drawing No. 01 date stamped 12th August 2025, that the proposal includes a new access to the west of the existing access to the associated farm yard.

An appropriately sited dwelling within the application site could be considered to sensitively cluster with the established group of farm buildings to the northeast, although there are other suitable sites within the farm holding. DM 18.2 of the ANPS states that in all cases, the Council will expect proposals for new residential development to be sited and designed to integrate sympathetically with their surroundings and not to have an adverse impact on the landscape character or rural amenity of the countryside.

In this case, although the proposal broadly meets the criteria outlined in Policy DM 18A of the ANPS and a farm dwelling on the applicant's farm holding is acceptable in principle, there are concerns with the location of the proposed site in relation to ribbon development, integration and overall impact on the rural character and amenity of the area. This matter will be discussed in further detail below.

Design, Integration and Rural Character

Paragraph 6.70 of the SPPS states that all development in the countryside must integrate into its setting, respect rural character and be appropriately designed. The ANPS includes a number of policies that any proposed development within the countryside must demonstrate in relation to appearance and design.

DM 18.2 of the ANPS states that in all cases, the Council will expect proposals for new residential development to be sited and designed to integrate sympathetically with their surroundings and not to have an adverse impact on the landscape character or rural amenity of the countryside. Furthermore, Policy DM 27 states the Council will support development in the countryside where it is sited to integrate sympathetically into its surroundings and respects rural character. New buildings will be expected to demonstrate high quality rural design, appropriate to the proposed site and its context.

As the application seeks outline planning permission, no details have been provided regarding the proposed design or layout of the dwelling and garage.

As noted above a suitably sited dwelling in the northeastern section of the application site would be considered to cluster with the established group of buildings on the farm. However, the roadside site lacks any form of enclosure with no existing vegetated boundaries. The site avails of a backdrop provided by the existing farm buildings when travelling eastwards along Rickamore Road Upper, however, when passing the frontage of the site it appears open and exposed with no significant backdrop or existing vegetated boundaries to aid the integration of a new dwelling. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to DM 27.2 as a dwelling on the site would not be considered to integrate sympathetically into its surroundings.

DM 27.3 states that development will be acceptable where it respects the traditional pattern of development in the area and will not cause a detrimental change to, or further erode, the rural character of the area.

In this instance the application site is considered to result in the extension of an existing ribbon of development. This existing ribbon consists of the dwellings at No. 79 and No. 81 Rickamore Road Upper, together with the existing farm buildings which are located to the east of the application site. It is acknowledged that these buildings don't all directly front onto the Rickamore Road Upper, nonetheless, they

are perceived visually as a linear form of development when viewed from the public road. The addition of a new dwelling to the west of this existing ribbon is considered contrary to DM 27. 3, as the extension of a ribbon of development is detrimental to rural character.

As noted above and outlined in blue on the Site Location Plan, Drawing No. 01 date stamped 12th August 2025, the applicant appears to own other opportunities on the farm that may be more suited for the siting of a new dwelling in accordance with the policy provisions.

Overall, the proposal is considered contrary to Policy DM 27 as a new dwelling on the application site would not integrate sympathetically into its surrounding rural environment and would result in the addition to an existing ribbon of development which is detrimental to rural character.

Neighbour Amenity

Paragraph 4.27 of the SPPS states that planning authorities will reject poor designs, particularly proposals that are inappropriate to their context, including schemes that are clearly out of scale, or incompatible with their surroundings, or not in accordance with the LDP or local design guidance.

Policy DM 28.1 states the Council will only support development proposals where they will not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of existing or future occupiers of adjoining or nearby properties. Both the individual and cumulative impacts of proposals on amenity will be considered in assessing their acceptability.

As this application seeks outline permission, no details have been provided regarding the siting, layout or proposed design. It is however considered that an appropriately designed dwelling could be provided on site without any adverse amenity impact.

The Council's Environmental Health Section was consulted on the application and had no objection to the development subject to informatives regarding nuisances from the applicant's adjacent farm.

Access and Parking

Paragraph 6.296 of the SPPS indicates that the aim of the SPPS with regard to transportation is to secure improved integration with land-use planning, and to facilitate safe and efficient access, movement and parking. Additionally, criterion (g) within paragraph 6.297 of the SPPS states that the regional strategic objectives for transportation and land-use planning are to promote road safety, in particular for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users.

Policy SP 3.10 indicates that the Council will seek to ensure that all new development provides safe access arrangements that will not significantly inhibit the free flow of traffic, and that sufficient car and cycle parking is provided.

DfI Roads was consulted in relation to the proposal and responded with no objection, subject to the attachment of a condition detailing the submission of an access plan in accordance with the attached RS1 form at the Reserved Matters stage.

Natural Heritage

SP 1.4 states that the Council will adopt a precautionary approach where there are significant risks of damage to the environment whilst Policy SP 8.3 requires that appropriate weight in the decision-making process is given to the protection of designated sites, priority habitats, protected species and other features of biodiversity interest. Specific policies for designated sites are provided within Policy DM 37, policies relating to protected species are provided under Policy DM 38, whilst Policy DM 39 addresses other habitats, species and features of natural heritage importance.

The application site is not located in a sensitive location and does not appear to have any physical or hydrological link to protected sites. The proposal also does not involve the removal of existing vegetation which limits any potential impact on natural heritage features.

Should the application be approved, appropriate landscaping proposals could be submitted at the Reserved Matters stage to aid the integration of a dwelling on the application site.

Sewerage & Drainage

Policy DM 15 states that the Council will only support development proposals for non-mains sewerage where it is demonstrated that this will not create or add to a pollution problem. In addition, Policy DM 47 states that consideration of drainage issues is a requirement for all development proposals.

As the proposal is for outline permission, it does not include any details of the location of the proposed soakaways and package treatment plant. The site is not known to be located in an area known to be at risk from pollution. A package treatment plant also requires a Discharge Consent to be granted by DAERA Water Management Unit. Details of the location of the package treatment plant and the soakaways would be provided at the Reserved Matters stage if planning permission was to be forthcoming.

The proposed dwelling and garage are not proposed in an area where there is evidence of a history of surface water flooding, and given the nature of the proposal, it is not expected to involve buildings and/or hard surfacing of 1,000sqm or greater in area, and as such a Drainage Assessment (DA) was not required to be submitted.

NI Water was not consulted in relation to this application for a single dwelling in the countryside. An informative will however be attached to any forthcoming approval advising that the applicant's attention is drawn to NI Waters' Standing Advice in relation to single domestic properties in the rural area seeking connection to watermains.

CONCLUSION

The following is a summary of the main reasons for the recommendation:

- The principle of a dwelling and garage on a farm is acceptable
- A dwelling and garage on the application site would not integrate sympathetically into the surrounding receiving environment;
- The proposal would result in the extension to an existing ribbon of development along the Rickamore Road Upper;
- It is considered that a dwelling on the application site would not compromise the amenity of neighbouring occupiers; and

- The proposal would not have any significant detrimental impact on natural heritage features.

RECOMMENDATION**REFUSE OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION****PROPOSED REASONS FOR REFUSAL**

1. The proposal is contrary to the provisions contained in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement paragraph 6.70 and fails to meet the provisions of DM 27.2 of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy in that the proposal if permitted would fail to visually integrate into the surrounding landscape given the lack of enclosure or visual backdrop provided at the application site.
2. The proposal is contrary to the provisions contained in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement paragraph 6.70 and fails to meet the provisions of DM 27.3 of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Plan Strategy in that the proposal if permitted will result in the addition to ribbon development along the Rickamore Road Upper and be detrimental to the rural character of the area.



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Site Location Plan

1:2,500

Reference: LA03/2025/0584/O

 Site Location



COMMITTEE ITEM	3.10
APPLICATION NO	LA03/2025/0557/F
DEA	THREE MILE WATER
COMMITTEE INTEREST	COUNCIL APPLICATION
RECOMMENDATION	GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION
PROPOSAL	Erection of a single-storey changing pavilion with associated fencing, landscaping and site works
SITE/LOCATION	Lands at Three Mile Water Playing fields, Doagh Road, Newtownabbey, BT37 9PA
APPLICANT	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
AGENT	Ellis Turley
LAST SITE VISIT	24 th October 2025
CASE OFFICER	Dan Savage Tel: 028 90340438 Email: daniel.savage@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk
Full details of this application, including the application forms, relevant drawings, consultation responses and any representations received are available to view at the Planning Portal https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/application/701007	
SITE DESCRIPTION	
<p>The application site is located within the development limit of the Belfast Urban Area as indicated within the Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP). The site is zoned as 'Lands reserved for landscape, amenity or recreation use' (N5) within the BUAP. Within draft BMAP (published 2004) the application site located within the settlement limits of Metropolitan Newtownabbey and is zoned as an area of existing open space and is also within Three Mile Water Local Landscape Policy Area (MNY53).</p> <p>The application site is accessed off Doagh Road which is a protected route and comprises of part of the lower section along the southern boundary of the Three Mile Water Playing Fields situated along the Doagh Road. The boundaries of the site to the north and east are currently undefined, while the boundary to the west is consistent of mature trees and hedging. At the time of the site visit (24th October 2025) the southern boundary along the Doagh Road was closed off and defined by a temporary fence to facilitate ongoing construction works.</p> <p>The surrounding area comprises a range of uses including the existing Three Mile Water Playing Fields and Three Mile Water River Park. Existing residential development is abutting and opposite the site and also behind the river to the northeast of the site. An existing factory building is located on the Doagh Road to the southwest of the site.</p>	
RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY	
<p>Planning Reference: U/1987/0546 Location: Three Mile Water Playing Fields, Doagh Road, Glengormley Proposal: Erection of pre-fabricated sports changing facilities Decision: Permission Granted (24/11/1987)</p> <p>Planning Reference: U/2014/0390/F Location: Three Mile Water Playing Fields, Doagh Road, Newtownabbey</p>	

Proposal: Proposed Changing Pavillion, stand, 3G pitches of various sizes, fencing, floodlights, dugouts, viewing shelters, toilet blocks and new vehicle entrance
Decision: Permission Granted (19/08/2015)

Planning Reference: LA03/2022/0356/F

Location: Three Mile Water Playing Fields, Doagh Road, Newtownabbey

Proposal: Proposed erection of a new post-primary school, ancillary accommodation and sports facilities with associated hard and soft play areas, parking, landscaping, replacement of floodlighting for 3G pitch, site works and access arrangements from Doagh Road including works to the public road

Decision: Permission Granted (27/06/2023)

Planning Reference: LA03/2024/0705/S54

Location: Three Mile Water Playing Fields, Doagh Road, Newtownabbey

Proposal: Proposed erection of a new post-primary school, ancillary accommodation and sports facilities with associated hard and soft play areas, parking, landscaping, replacement of floodlighting for 3G pitch, site works and access arrangements from Doagh Road including works to the public road (Variation of Conditions 4 [archaeological report], 10 [vehicular access] and 21 [construction and environmental management plan] of planning approval LA03/2022/0356/F.)

Decision: Permission Granted (27/02/2025)

PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Under the provisions of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, all decisions must be taken in accordance with the provisions of the Local Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Development Plan (ANLDP) will comprise of two parts, Part 1 is the Plan Strategy which contains strategic and operational policies and was adopted on 3rd July 2025. Part 2 is the Local Policies Plan which will identify the boundaries of settlement limits, local designations and zonings which has not yet been published. As such the settlement limits, local designations and zonings of the extant adopted Development Plans for the Borough (the Belfast Urban Area Plan, the Carrickfergus Area Plan and the Antrim Area Plan) remain applicable. Account will also be taken of the draft Newtownabbey Area Plan and its associated Interim.

Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP): The application site is located within the development limit of Belfast Urban Area. The site is Zoned as 'Lands reserved for landscape, amenity or recreation use' (N5).

Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (Published 2004)(dBMAP): The application site is located within the settlement limit of Metropolitan Newtownabbey. The site is an area of existing open space.

SPPS – Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland: sets out that Planning Authorities should be guided by the principle that sustainable development should be permitted, having regard to the local development plan and other material considerations unless the proposed development will cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance.

Strategic Policy 1 – Sustainable Development (SP 1): sets out that the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).

Strategic Policy 3 – Transportation and Infrastructure (SP 3): aims to encourage the continued development and growth of high quality transportation, communications and utilities infrastructure in a timely and co-ordinated fashion to meet the current and future needs of our Borough and support sustainable development in accordance with the Council's Spatial Growth Strategy. SP3 is supported by Policy:

- Policy DM 10 Access and Parking

Strategic Policy 5 – Community Infrastructure (SP 5): sets out that the Council's aims of seeking to promote access to community services and the protection of areas of open space areas. SP5 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 23 Protection of Open Space; and
- Policy DM 24 Community Facilities

Strategic Policy 6 - Placemaking and Good Design (SP6): sets out that positive placemaking and good design are key components in the delivery of high quality, attractive and sustainable places within our Borough. SP6 is supported by Policies:

- Policy DM 25 Urban Design; and
- Policy DM 28 Amenity Impact

Strategic Policy 8 - Natural Heritage (SPG8): seeks to protect, conserve and promote the enhancement and restoration of the diversity of our Borough's natural heritage comprised of its habitats, species, landscapes and earth science features. SP 8 is supported by the following Policy:

- Policy DM 42 Trees and Development

Strategic Policy 10 - Environmental Resilience and Protection (SPG10): seeks to promote environmental resilience by mitigating and adapting to the harmful effects of climate change on our built and natural environment. SPG10 is supported by Policy:

- Policy DM 47 Surface Water Drainage & Sustainable Drainage Systems

CONSULTATION

Council Environmental Health Section: No objection, subject to condition

DFI Roads: No objection

Northern Ireland Water Strategic: No objection

REPRESENTATION

Three (3) neighbouring properties were notified and no letters of objection were received.

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING ISSUES/MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- Policy Context;
- Principle of Development;
- Design, Appearance and Impact on the Character of the Area;

- Neighbour Amenity;
- Flood Risk and Drainage; and
- Other Matters

Policy Context

Section 45 (1) of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 requires the Council, in dealing with an application for planning permission, to have regard to the Local Development Plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. Section 6 (4) of the Act then states that, where, in making any determination under the Act, regard is to be had to the Local Development Plan, the determination must be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) is material to all decisions on individual planning applications. The Antrim & Newtownabbey Plan Strategy (ANPS) sets out the relevant planning policies for the determination of planning applications in the Borough. However, until such times as the Local Policies Plan (LPP) identifies the boundaries of settlement limits, local designations and zonings, the provisions of the current legacy plans, both adopted and in draft form will continue to apply. The site is defined as being within the development limit of the Belfast Urban Area in the Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP). In line with the transitional arrangements set out in the SPPS, BUAP and the ANPS must be read together. Any conflict between the policies in with the Plans must be resolved in favour of the ANPS.

Principle of Development

Policy SP 5.3 of the ANPS indicates that the Council will continue to support the enhanced recreational opportunities afforded by the further development of Multi-Use Games Areas and the dual use of educational sporting facilities to benefit local communities. Policy DM 24.1 of the ANPS indicates that the Council will support proposals within settlements that provide enhanced community facilities or services and Policy DM 24.6 outlines that for the purposes of this policy community facilities includes sports and recreation facilities (including intensive sports facilities).

The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a changing pavilion. The application site forms part of the wider Three Mile Water Playing Fields. Planning permission was granted on the 27th June 2023, Ref: LA03/2022/0356/F for the erection of a new post-primary school, ancillary accommodation and sports facilities along with associated site works on the wider application site. Works are currently ongoing in relation to this approval which remains extant.

The proposal seeks to provide a new changing pavilion in association with the wider playing fields and sports facilities approved under Planning Ref: LA03/2022/0356/F. It was confirmed by the applicant that the proposed changed rooms are to meet the IFA standards and will serve the upgraded facilities. The proposal therefore seeks to provide an enhanced community facility within the development limits and in association with a wider community use and therefore the proposal is considered to comply with SP 5.3 and Policy DM 24.1 of the ANPS.

Loss of Open Space

Paragraph 6.205 of the SPPS and Policy DM 23.1 of the ANPS sets out a presumption against development resulting in the loss of open space.

The application site comprises an existing grass area which was to be retained as such under the wider approval, Ref: LA03/2022/0356/F, Drawing No. 02/3, date stamped 23rd June 2023. The application site does not form part of the larger playing fields and would appear to have been retained as an area of landscaping, although this does meet with the definition of open space.

Paragraph 6.205 of the SPPS and Policy DM 23.2 of the ANPS indicates that an exception will be permitted with regards to the loss of open space where it is clearly shown that the development will bring significant community benefits that clearly outweigh the loss of open space.

There are existing changing rooms on site currently, which are to be removed to facilitate the new school building, Ref: LA03/2022/0356/F. It is noted that the total area of open space, to be lost to accommodate the proposal, will be approximately 345sqm of grassed area, adjacent to the car park. The proposed location of the changing pavilion is considered to be the most practical, appropriate and least obstructive within this site and covers a relatively small area within the larger sporting facility, leaving approximately 3.0ha of formal and informal amenity space.

It is considered that the need for a changing facility to serve the approved development outweighs the loss of this area of informal open space and given the small scale of the proposal and nature of the proposal as an ancillary changing facility to the wider development, the proposal is considered acceptable in principle subject to all other material considerations.

Design, Appearance and Impact on the Character of the Area

Policy SP6 of the ANPS seeks to promote good placemaking, high quality design practices and the importance of the development responding positively to the local context, in this case the wider school campus.

Policy DM 25 'Urban Design' of the ANPS requires development within settlements to demonstrate a clear understanding of the characteristics of the site, its wider context and how the proposal will connect with the surrounding area. It is noted that all development should deliver high quality design in its layout and appearance.

Policy DM 25 of the ANPS requires that proposals make a positive contribution and relate well to the scale, density, massing, character, appearance and use of materials; are sympathetic to the local built form; and appropriately integrate any heritage assets and/or landscape and biodiversity features of the site.

The application seeks permission for the erection of a single storey changing room building comprising of two (2) changing rooms, with an additional referee changing room, along with an associated storeroom, plantroom and toilets. The building is sited on an existing grassed area, 3 metres from the eastern site boundary and 20m from the southern boundary abutting Doagh Road. It is considered to be of an appropriate size and scale and is sensitively sited to the edge of the wider application site to limit public views from the road and is adjacent to mature vegetation.

There is a single door located on the northeastern elevation with a small canopy above which forms the main entrance, while an additional single door located on

the northwestern gable elevation for use as an emergency exit. There are two windows on both the southwestern and northeastern elevations. The unit is finished in a self-coloured render with brick plinth and cement fibre feature panels, insulated profiled steel panel roof. The windows are polyester powder coated aluminium and external doors are vertical T & G sheeted hardwood. The design and materials are considered acceptable.

Landscaping

SP 8: Natural Heritage of the ANPS seeks to protect, conserve and promote the enhancement and restoration of the diversity of our Borough's natural heritage comprised of its habitats, species, landscapes and earth science features. Policy SP 8 is supported by Policy DM 42 of the ANPS. Policy DM 42.1 requires that proposals promote a mixture of planting and provide details for the maintenance of the planting. In addition, Policy DM 25 of the ANPS requires proposals to promote biodiversity and incorporate an appropriate landscaping scheme.

A Landscape Plan, Drawing Number 07/1, date stamped 27th October 2025 has been submitted which shows the proposed planting in relation to the pavilion building including additional trees located along the southern (roadside) boundary. However, limited details are provided as to the species and size of the planting proposed and no details have been provided as to the maintenance of the planting. For this reason, a condition has been attached to any forthcoming approval to ensure that sufficient landscaping details are provided prior to the commencement of development.

Given the above it is considered that approval would be compliant with the provisions of Policies DM 25 and DM 42 in that the development would, given its set back from the public road and housed within a sporting facility, have a negligible impact on the character of the area.

Neighbour Amenity

Paragraphs 4.11 and 4.12 of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and Policy DM 28 of the ANPS deals with impact on amenity and states that the Council will only support development proposals where they will not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of existing or future occupiers of adjoining or nearby properties by way of overlooking, loss of privacy, dominance, overshadowing, or other form of disturbance.

As noted above, the proposal relates to a single storey changing pavilion, whilst windows are proposed, these are located on the ground floor. The closest residential properties lie some 13m south of the site at No. 367 Doagh Road. The boundary treatment of a 2.4m high palidin fence to the southern boundary, separating the site in addition to mature trees and hedging along this boundary with No. 367, acts as a visual barrier between the proposal and the nearby dwelling. The mature vegetation along this boundary is considered sufficient to ameliorate any concerns with regards to overlooking from the ground floor windows.

As such there are no significant concerns with regards to overlooking or loss of privacy to nearby residents. The Councils Environmental Health Section was consulted on the proposal and proposes a condition to keep the doors in a closed position except for ingress and egress. It is considered that this is necessary and will

reduce any potential impacts from noise. It is not anticipated that the proposal will give rise to any additional noise or nuisance than that already associated with an educational and sporting facility.

The changing rooms will only be occupied during a short period of time prior to and after matches. The unit would not likely contribute to any further significant noise and disturbance than already experienced from the location of the existing playing pitches.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal will not have an unacceptable impact on neighbour amenity and complies with Paragraphs 4.11 and 4.12 of the SPSS and Policy DM 28 of the ANPS in this regard.

Access and Parking

Policy SP 3.10 of the ANPS sets out that the Council will seek to ensure that all new developments provide safe access arrangements that will not significantly inhibit the free flow of traffic, and that sufficient car and cycle parking is provided. Policy SP 3 is supported by Policy DM 10.

Policy DM 10.1 of the ANPS 'Access and Parking' requires that there is the capacity on the road network to accommodate the type and amount of traffic likely to be generated, and access arrangements do not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of people or goods. In addition, Policy DM 10.1 requires adequate provision is made for car and cycle parking and any necessary servicing arrangements.

Paragraph 6.303 of the SPPS and DM 10. 2 of the ANPS details that in assessing parking arrangements, the Council will continue to take account of supplementary guidance including Parking Standards (DoE, 2005).

The proposal is to be served by a new access taken from the Doagh Road which is a Protected Route and Policy DM 11 of the ANPS seeks to restrict new accesses on to Protected Routes, with a number of exceptions. However, the access has been approved under Planning Ref: LA03/2022/0356/F and as noted above works are currently ongoing in facilitating the above development.

Policy DM 11.3 of the ANPS indicates that intensification of use of an existing access on to a Protected Route will only be supported where access cannot be reasonably obtained from an adjacent minor road. This approach is reiterated in Paragraph 6.301 of the SPPS. The erection of a changing pavilion is considered to be ancillary to the wider use on the site as football pitches and a new post-primary school. The changing pavilion is not considered to result in the intensification of an approved access on to a Protected Route and therefore Policy DM 11.3 of the ANPS is not engaged in this instance. DfI Roads were consulted on the proposal and offered no objections to the access arrangements or in relation to road safety.

In relation to parking, there are 47no. parking spaces to be provided under Planning Ref: LA03/2022/0356/F along with three additional disabled parking spaces and a new bus stop to serve the playing fields. The current proposal does not seek to amend either the access or the parking arrangements. DfI Roads were consulted on the proposal and offered no objections.

The proposal is considered to comply with Policy DM 10 of the ANPS and Paragraph 6.301 of the SPPS in this regard.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Policy DM 47.2 of the ANPS and Paragraph 6.114 of the SPPS sets out the threshold where a Drainage Assessment is required.

The application site is not located within the 1 in 100-year fluvial floodplain or within an area of surface water flooding. The proposal does not exceed the threshold set out within Paragraph 6.114 of the SPPS or Policy DM 47.2 of the ANPS to require the submission of a Drainage Assessment as the proposal creates only an additional 345sqm of hardstanding. However, the applicant should carry out their own assessment of flood risk. The proposal is not considered to increase the risk of flooding to the site or elsewhere and as such is compliant with Policy DM 47.2 of the ANPS and Paragraph 6.114 of the SPPS in this regard.

Other Matters

Sewage Disposal

The proposal includes the addition of 4no. toilets and as such Northern Ireland Water were consulted on the proposal and offered no objection.

RECOMMENDATION	GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION
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PROPOSED CONDITIONS

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

2. All doors, to the areas marked 'Plant Room' and 'Switch Room' as marked on Drawing Number 03, date stamped 1st August 2025, shall remain in the closed position at all times, except for ingress and egress.

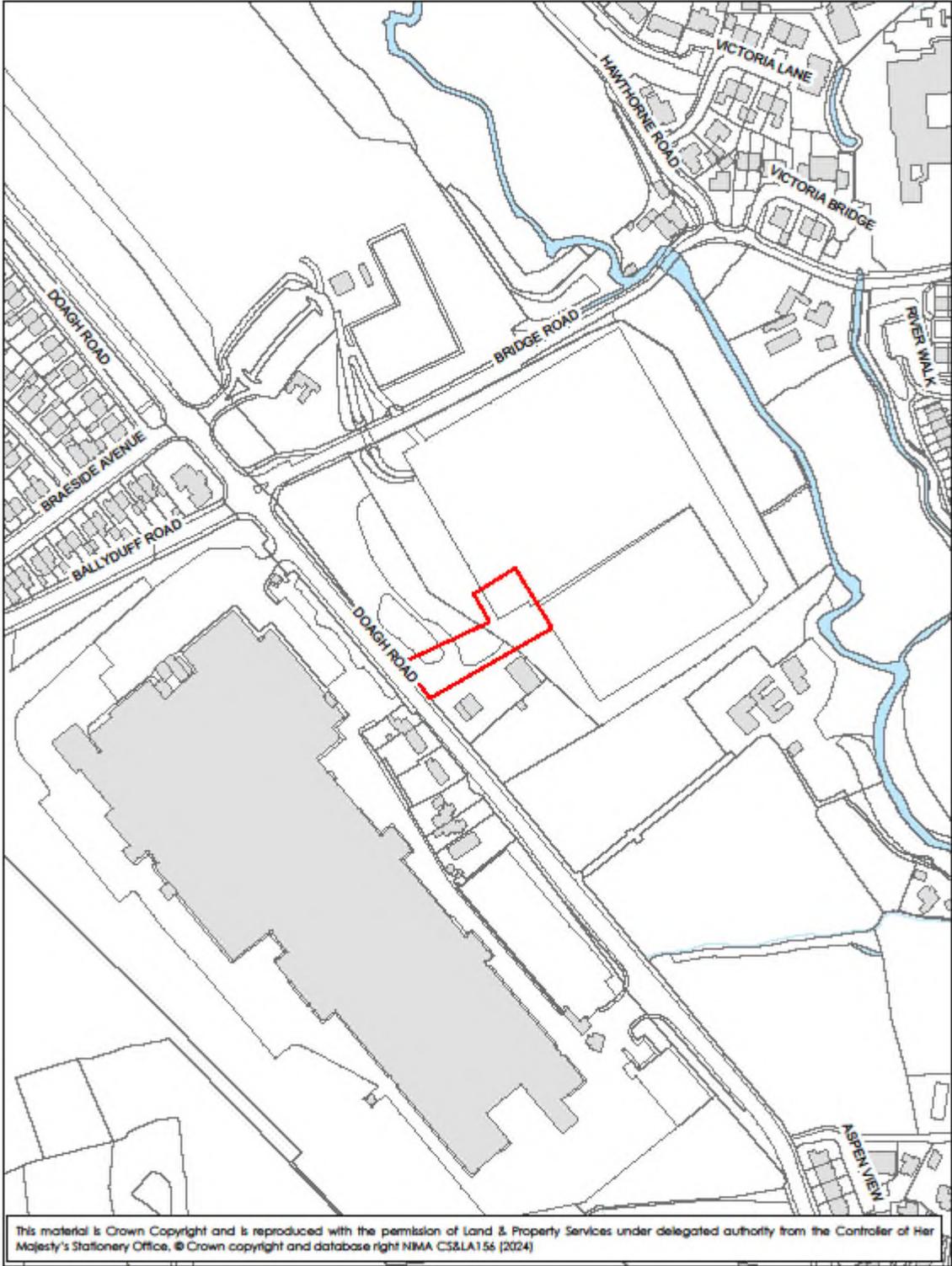
Reason: In order to protect nearby noise sensitive receptors.

3. No development shall take place until a landscaping scheme has been submitted to and approved by the Council showing the location, numbers, species and sizes of trees and shrubs to be planted. The scheme of planting as finally approved shall be carried out during the first planting season after the commencement of the development.

Reason: To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of a high standard of landscape.

4. If within the lifetime of the development any tree, shrub, or hedge in the opinion of the Council, becomes seriously damaged or defective, another tree, shrub or hedge of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, within the first available full planting season, unless the Council gives its written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of a high standard of landscape.



Site Location Plan

1:2,500

Reference: LA03/2025/0557/F

 Site Location



PART TWO

OTHER PLANNING MATTERS

ITEM 3.11

P/PLAN/1 DELEGATED PLANNING DECISIONS AND APPEALS NOVEMBER 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the planning applications decided under delegated powers and decisions issued by the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) during November 2025.

2. Delegated Decisions of Council

A list of planning decisions issued by Officers during the period 1 – 20 November 2025 under delegated powers together with information relating to planning appeals are enclosed for Members' information.

3. Planning Appeal Commission Decisions

One (1) appeal was dismissed during November 2025 by the PAC.

Planning application:	LA03/2024/0586/F
PAC reference:	2025/A0009
Proposed Development:	Retrospective application for retention of existing agricultural shed
Location:	100m SE of No. 30 Belfast Road, Ballynure, Ballyclare
Date of Appeal Submission:	09/04/2025
Date of Appeal Decision:	31/10/2025
Decision:	Appeal Dismissed – Council Decision Upheld

A copy of the decision is enclosed.

4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Stephanie Boyd, Planning & Economic Development Business Support Supervisor

Agreed by: Sharon Mossman, Deputy Director of Planning and Building Control

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning

ITEM 3.12

P/PLAN/1 PROPOSAL OF APPLICATION NOTICES FOR MAJOR DEVELOPMENT NOVEMBER 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Proposal of Application Notices received during the period 1 - 20 November 2025 .

2. Background

Under Section 27 of the 2011 Planning Act prospective applicants for all development proposals which fall into the Major development category are required to;

- give at least 12 weeks' notice to the Council that an application for planning permission is to be submitted.
- consult the community in advance of submitting a Major development planning application.

Where, following the 12-week period set down in statute, an application is submitted this must be accompanied by a Pre-Application Community consultation report outlining the consultation that has been undertaken regarding the application and detailing how this has influenced the proposal submitted.

3. Proposal of Application Notice

PAN Reference:	LA03/2025/0851/PAN
Proposal:	Erection of 213 No. dwellings (to include social/affordable housing), provision of community facilities, playground, public open space areas and associated infrastructure and ancillary works.
Location:	Lands at the site of the former Craighill Quarry, accessed off Craighill Park, Ballyclare
Applicant:	Craighill Developments Ltd
Date Received:	13 November 2025
12-week expiry:	5 February 2026

PAN Reference:	LA03/2025/0852/PAN
Proposal:	The proposal relates to the SONI Mid-Antrim Upgrade Project, with this application comprising the following elements (Phase 1 of the overall project): - A new proposed switching substation at Whitesides Road (approximately 800m north east of the junction between Whitesides Road and Portglenone Road), Terrygowan, County Antrim (located within Mid & East Antrim

<p>Location:</p> <p>Applicant:</p> <p>Date Received:</p> <p>12-week expiry:</p>	<p>Borough Council area) with configuration of the adjacent, existing 110kV overhead line - An upgrade (replacement of existing cables) of the existing overhead line between the existing Kells substation, Maxwell's Road, Ballymena, County Antrim, and the new proposed switching substation at Whitesides Road, Terrygowan (approximately 11km of overhead line within Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council area)</p> <p>Lands between the existing Kells Main Substation, Maxwell's Road, Ballymena, County Antrim and the proposed Switching Substation at Whitesides Road, Terrygowan, County Antrim (approximately 11km of the existing overhead line within Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council area)</p> <p>SONI Ltd</p> <p>14 November 2025</p> <p>6 February 2026</p>
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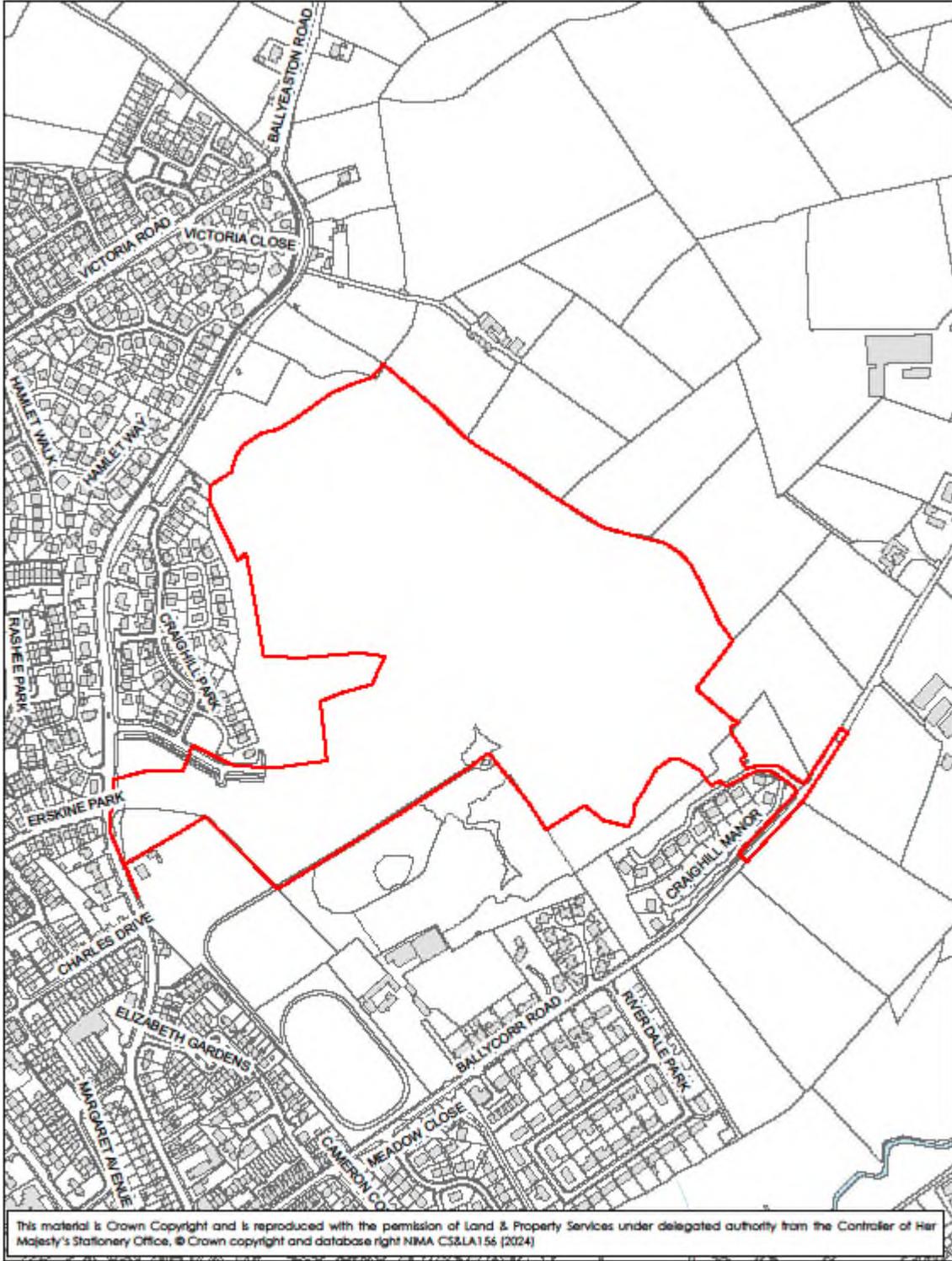
4. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Prepared by: Kathryn Bradley, Planning and Economic Development Business Support Supervisor

Agreed by: Sharon Mossman, Deputy Director of Planning and Building Control

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning



Site Location Plan

1:5,000

Reference: LA03/2025/0851/PAN

 Site Location



ITEM 3.13

P/PLAN/1 DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE PIP - UPDATE OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN PRACTICE NOTES

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to advise Members of recent correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) regarding their review of the Development Plan Practice Notes (DPPNs) through the Planning Improvement Programme and Joint Council Planning Improvement Programme.

2. Introduction/Background

Members are reminded of the Departments Planning Improvement Programme (PIP) which is progressing and DfI are now on phase 2 of their PIP. Phase 2 of the PIP focuses on the review of policy and legislation. The correspondence received on the 12 November from DfI (**enclosed**) is in line with DfI's aspirations of phase 2 of the PIP.

In this correspondence the Department have provided their review of DPPN 2, Statement of Community Involvement, DPPN3, Timetable, and DPPN 5, Preferred Options Paper (**enclosed**). Officers consider the revision of these documents as minor amendments that will not have a considerable impact on assisting in the streamlining of the plan process.

The Department have indicated they have begun their review of DPPN 7, The Plan Strategy, DPPN 8, The Local Policies Plan and DPPN 10, Submitting Development Plan Documents for Independent Examination.

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide Councils and their Elected Members with up-to-date advice and guidance on these 3 elements of the plan process. Councils are required to take this updated guidance into consideration in the preparation and implementation of their local planning functions.

The Departmental and Joint Council Planning Improvement Programme is an ongoing process, and the reporting mechanism is through SOLACE. It is recommended by officers that the Chief Executive raises at SOLACE, the matter that a quarterly update should be provided to Planning Committee Members, as the key decision makers, on the implications of the PIP to the delivery of their plan aspirations and the streamlining of their development management process. In addition, an update on the overall delivery of the PIP, in particular phase 2, is requested.

3. Previous Decision of Council

None.

4. Financial Position/Implication

None.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the report be noted and that the Chief Executive through the SOLACE group request the following:

- **Quarterly update should be provided to Planning Committee Members, on the implications of the PIP to the delivery of their plan aspirations and the streamlining of their development management process.**
- **An update on the overall delivery of the PIP, in particular phase 2.**

Prepared by: Sharon Mossman, Deputy Director of Planning and Building Control

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning

ITEM 3.14

P/FP/LDP/19 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – FEASIBILITY OF FORMULATION OF A POLICY TO CONSIDER FUTURE PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR HMOs.

1. Purpose

In the May Planning Committee requested that Officers consider the feasibility of formulating of Policy to consider future planning applications for Houses of Multiple Occupation

2. Introduction/Background

A House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) is defined in Section 1 of the HMO Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 as a building or part of a building that meets the following criteria:

- It is living accommodation.
- It is occupied by three or more persons as their only or main residence.
- Those residing form more than two households, and
- Rents are payable or other consideration is to be provided by at least one of the people living in the accommodation.

Advantages of HMOs

HMOs provide a unique opportunity to meet housing demand, whilst also making efficient use of existing housing stock and offering affordable accommodation for the likes of students, young professionals and low-income individuals.

Disadvantages of HMOs

HMOs increase population density within a local area which can result in an increased demand on services, infrastructure, and on-street parking provision. They can result in increased levels of noise and disturbance and reduce community cohesion through a high number of transient residents.

Planning Requirements

All new HMOs (both new and conversion to) require both planning permission and building control approval. Under The Planning (Use Classes) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015, HMOs do not fall under a standard planning use class and are defined as a sui generis use. This means that planning permission for residential use is not sufficient and with HMOs not benefitting from permitted development rights, planning permission must be sought. All HMOs must also be licensed by their local Council unless a temporary exemption is in effect. The 'NIHMO' unit based within Belfast City Council administers the regulation of HMOs on behalf of the eleven (11) Northern Ireland Councils, the details of which are available at:

<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/checkhmollicence>

HMOs in Antrim and Newtownabbey

There is currently a total of eighteen (18) HMOs identified within the Borough, fifteen (15) of which hold an existing licence and three (3) which benefit from planning

approval, with a further two (2) HMO planning applications currently under consideration. It should be noted that twelve (12) of the fifteen (15) licenced HMOs are located on Abbeyville Street, Whiteabbey (Newtownabbey) within two (2) buildings at 'nos. 1-12 Abbeyville Court'. Table 1 provides a list of the addresses which are publicly available at:

<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/community/houses-in-multiple-occupation/check-the-hmo-licence-register>

A comparison of the number of licensed HMOs across other Local Government jurisdictions in Northern Ireland is detailed in Table 2 – enclosed for Members information. There are already four (4) Councils in Northern Ireland with more than twenty (20) HMOs, including Belfast City Council – 3019, Derry City and Strabane District Council -224, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council – 215, and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council – 57.

Members are advised the Council's adopted Plan Strategy does not contain a dedicated HMO policy.

HMO Planning Policy in Other Jurisdictions

Various examples of NI based approaches to HMO policy are detailed in Table 2 – enclosed for Members information.

Generally, LPA's which have adopted a dedicated HMO policy follow one of two approaches; a 'street-by-street' method whereby HMOs must not account for more than a set percentage of development along a single street, or a 'radius approach', whereby HMOs must not account for more than a set percentage of development within a specified radius of the application property. Those councils that have brought forward such planning policy are predominantly in areas of high concentration of HMOs such as in Belfast and Derry and Strabane..

Regarding policy provision outside of local authority planning control, Members will be aware that on 21 October 2025 the Minister for Communities, Mr Gordon Lyons, made a statement in relation to HMO licensing and enforcement. The Houses in Multiple Occupational Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 provides Councils with a key statutory tool to prevent future over concentration of HMOs through the overprovision test. Minister Lyons advised that, (1) Councils should have their own specific policies about HMO provision and set restrictions on numbers or percentages of HMOs in certain areas, (2) the Department will be writing to all Council Chief Executives outlining their obligations under the current legislation, (3) that Councils have powers to investigate, enforce, and punish those landlords acting outside the law, and (4) that the Department expects a Council to implement their own HMO policies, to include setting a limit on the percentage of HMOs in a certain area. These are matters for the Council to consider through legislation that is outside the planning process in terms of policy powers relating to HMOs and control through the Multiple Occupation Act.

Members are advised that for the Council to bring forward a bespoke HMO planning policy, it would either have to bring forward a Plan Strategy Amendment or seek a policy position in the Draft Local Policies Plan process. An evidential context to support the policy position would also be required and would be subject to Independent Examination. The previous legislative powers that the legacy Belfast City Council used for a subject Plan no longer exist and there is no policy in the current Plan to support supplementary planning guidance in a robust manner.

The current LDP process is subject to an Independent Examination (IE), and the PAC has indicated to officers that no IE can be accommodated until 2029. The Department for Infrastructure is seeking to appoint independent commissioners. The plan policy option, as well as being lengthy, would be at risk going forward unless it is supported by a robust evidence base. It is the view of officers that the current level of HMOs in the Borough may not be substantial enough to defend a plan policy option, and such an emphasis would have a significantly negative impact on delivery of the LDP Timetable.

3. Summary

The Council currently has no dedicated HMO planning policy or guidance which restricts the number of HMOs in an area. This is due to the low number of HMO applications (both through planning and licencing) that the Council receives.

Given the small number of HMOs within the Borough, Officers consider that HMO policy is not required through the plan process to limit their over concentration as there is currently no pattern of over concentration in any area.. This approach is consistent with that taken by other local Councils which have comparable numbers of HMOs. Any HMO development application scheme which may come forward can be considered under the current development management process (Plan Strategy policies SP1 'Sustainable Development, and/or 'SP4 'Homes').

Therefore, Officers recommend that whilst the matter should continue to be monitored by the Council's Planning Section, no specific planning policy is brought forward at this time.

4. Previous Decision of Council

May Planning Committee - Officers consider the feasibility of formulating a Policy to consider future planning applications for Houses of Multiple Occupation.

5. Financial Position/Implication

Any Plan Amendment or Local Policies Plan would be subject to Independent Examination and associated costs, alongside those associated with any delay in plan adoption.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that given the low number of Houses of Multiple Occupancy that exist within the Borough, their dispersed nature and the lengthy procedure to bring forward a policy through the Plan system, a bespoke HMO planning policy is not brought forward at this time and that the situation is monitored through both Planning and Environmental Health.

Prepared by: Simon Thompson, Local Development Plan and Enforcement Manager

Agreed by: Sharon Mossman, Deputy Director of Planning and Building Control

Approved by: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development, Planning

3.15 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

Any Other Relevant Business (AORB) may be taken at this point.