



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE  
HELD IN MOSSLEY MILL ON MONDAY 8 DECEMBER 2025 AT 6.00 PM**

**In the Chair** : Councillor R Kinnear

**Committee Members Present (In Person)** : Aldermen – L Boyle and T Campbell  
Councillors – J Archibald-Brown, A Bennington, S Cosgrove,  
H Cushinan, S Flanagan, R Foster and B Mallon

**Committee Members Present (Remotely)** : Alderman - M Magill  
Councillor - AM Logue

**Non-Committee Members Present (In Person)** : Councillor - R Lynch

<b>Public Speakers</b>	: Tom Stokes	In Support (Agent, Items 3.1, 3.2 and 3.4)
	Daniel McConkey	In Support (Applicant, Item 3.1 and 3.2)
	Stewart Beattie KC	In Support (For Applicant, Item 3.3)
	Diana Thompson	In Support (Agent, Item 3.3)
	Philip Marsden	In Support (Applicant, Item 3.4)
	Councillor R Lynch	In Support (Councillor, Item 3.7)
	Robert McKendry	In Support (Applicant, Item 3.8)
	Gary Dodds	In Support (Agent, Item 3.10)

**Officers Present** : Director of Economic Development and Planning - M McAlister  
Borough Lawyer and Head of Legal Services – P Casey  
Head of Planning Development Management – B Diamond  
Senior Planning Officer – J McKendry  
Senior Planning Officer – A Wilson  
ICT Change Officer – A Cole  
Member Services Manager – AM Duffy

**CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

The Chairperson welcomed Committee Members to the December Planning Committee Meeting and reminded all present of the protocol for speaking, timeframes accorded and of the audio recording procedures.

The Chairperson further advised that Addendum reports relating to Items 3.3 and 3.9 and the Site Visit report, had been circulated to Members in advance of the

meeting, with hard copies being made available in the Chamber.

The Borough Lawyer and Head of Legal Services reminded Members about a number of issues in relation to their role as Members of the Planning Committee and their obligations under the Code of Conduct.

## **1 APOLOGIES**

Sharon Mossman, Deputy Director of Planning and Building Control

## **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Items 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 – Councillor Mallon

*Having declared an interest in Items 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 Councillor Mallon left the Chamber.*

## **PART ONE PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

### **ITEM 3.1 APPLICATION NO: LA03/2022/1074/F**

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<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	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.
<b>SITE/LOCATION:</b>	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
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Keneagles Ltd.

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Ashleigh Wilson, Senior Planning Officer, introduced the Planning Report and associated Addendum Report to the Committee and made a recommendation to grant planning permission, subject to a Section 76 agreement.

The undernoted public speakers addressed the Committee and responded to enquiries from Members as requested –

Tom Stokes  
Daniel McConkey

In Support/Agent  
In Support/Applicant (for questions)

Proposed by Alderman Campbell  
Seconded by Councillor Foster that planning permission be granted subject to Section 76 agreement.

On the proposal being put to the meeting 11 Members voted in favour, 0 against and 0 abstentions, and it was unanimously agreed

**that planning permission be granted for the application subject to the Conditions set out in the Planning Report and the details of the Section 76 agreement.**

*ACTION BY: Sharon Mossman, Deputy Director of Planning & Building Control*

**ITEM 3.2 APPLICATION NO: LA03/2022/1076/DCA**

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<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Partial demolition of Castle Mall, comprising units 11- 27 and 51 – 58
<b>SITE/LOCATION:</b>	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
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Keneagles Ltd.

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Ashleigh Wilson, Senior Planning Officer, introduced the Planning Report to the Committee and made a recommendation to grant demolition consent.

The undernoted public speakers addressed the Committee and responded to enquiries from Members as requested –

Tom Stokes	In Support/Agent
Daniel McConkey	In Support/Applicant (for questions)

Proposed by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Alderman Campbell that demolition consent be granted.

On the proposal being put to the meeting 11 Members voted in favour, 0 against and 0 abstentions, it was unanimously agreed

**that the partial demolition request be granted for the application subject to the Conditions set out in the Planning Report.**

*ACTION BY: Sharon Mossman, Deputy Director of Planning & Building Control*

**ITEM 3.3 APPLICATION NO: LA03/2024/0861/F**

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<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	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.
<b>SITE/LOCATION:</b>	Unit 4, The Junction Retail and Leisure Park, Ballymena Road, Antrim, BT41 4LL
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Episo 4 Antrim S.a.r.l

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Ashleigh Wilson, Senior Planning Officer, introduced the Planning Report and

associated addendum report to the Committee and made a recommendation to refuse planning permission.

The undernoted public speakers addressed the Committee and responded to enquiries from Members as requested –

Stewart Beattie KC  
Diana Thompson

In Support/for Applicant  
In Support/Agent

Proposed by Alderman Campbell  
Seconded by Alderman Boyle that planning permission be refused.

on the proposal being put to the meeting 6 Members voted in favour, 5 against and 0 abstentions, it was agreed

**that planning permission be refused for the following reasons:**

- 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.**

*ACTION BY: Sharon Mossman, Deputy Director of Planning*

*Councillor Mallon returned to the Chamber at Item 3.4.*

#### **ITEM 3.4 APPLICATION NO: LA03/2025/0577/F**

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<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	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
<b>SITE/LOCATION:</b>	15 Airport Road, Aldergrove, BT29 4DW
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Moorefield Contracts

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Ashleigh Wilson, Senior Planning Officer, introduced the Planning Report to the

Committee and made a recommendation to grant planning permission.

The undernoted public speakers addressed the Committee and responded to enquiries from Members as requested –

Tom Stokes  
Philip Marsden

In Support/Agent  
In Support/Applicant (for questions)

Proposed by Councillor Flanagan

Seconded by Councillor Foster that planning permission be granted.

On the proposal being put to the meeting 12 Members voted in favour, 0 against and 0 abstentions, it was unanimously agreed

**that planning permission be granted for the application subject to the conditions set out in the Planning Report**

*ACTION BY: Sharon Mossman, Deputy Director of Planning and Building Control*

### **ITEM 3.5 APPLICATION NO: LA03/2025/0446/F**

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<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	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.
<b>SITE/LOCATION:</b>	Lands approximately 50m southeast of No. 49 Crosskennan Road, Antrim, BT41 2RB
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Wesley Herron

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Ashleigh Wilson, Senior Planning Officer, introduced the Planning Report to the Committee and made a recommendation to refuse planning permission.

There were no public speakers to address this item.

Proposed by Alderman Campbell

Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that planning permission be refused.

on the proposal being put to the meeting 12 Members voted in favour, 0 against and 0 abstentions, it was unanimously agreed

**that planning permission be refused for the following reasons:**

- 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.

*ACTION BY: Sharon Mossman, Deputy Director of Planning*

### **ITEM 3.6 APPLICATION NO: LA03/2025/0685/O**

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<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Dwelling
<b>SITE/LOCATION:</b>	Approx. 25m East of 122 Hydepark Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 4PZ
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Gary Aiken

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Johanne McKendry, Senior Planning Officer, introduced the Planning Report to the Committee and made a recommendation to grant outline planning permission.

There were no public speakers to address this item.

Proposed by Councillor Bennington  
 Seconded by Alderman Boyle and agreed that outline planning permission be granted.

on the proposal being put to the meeting 12 Members voted in favour, 0 against and 0 abstentions, it was unanimously agreed

**that outline planning permission be granted for the application subject to the conditions set out in the Planning Report**

*ACTION BY: Sharon Mossman, Deputy Director of Planning*

### **ITEM 3.7 APPLICATION NO: LA03/2025/0565/O**

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<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Site for dwelling and garage
<b>SITE/LOCATION:</b>	Approx 15m northeast of 21 Loughbeg Road, Toomebridge, Antrim, BT41 3TN
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Ryan and Claire Marron

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Johanne McKendry, Senior Planning Officer, introduced the Planning Report to the Committee and made a recommendation to refuse outline planning permission.

The undernoted Elected Member and public speaker addressed the Committee and responded to enquiries from Members as requested –

Councillor R Lynch  
Joe Carey

In Support/Councillor  
In Support/Agent

Proposed by Alderman Campbell  
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that outline planning permission be refused.

on the proposal being put to the meeting 7 Members voted in favour, 5 against and 0 abstentions, it was agreed

**that outline planning permission be refused for the following reasons:**

- 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.**

*ACTION BY: Sharon Mossman, Deputy Director of Planning*

#### **ITEM 3.8 APPLICATION NO: LA03/2025/0435/F**

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<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Dwelling on a farm (Substitution of approved house on applicant's farm at 121 Ballyrobin Road, Antrim, approved under LA03/2021/0409/F)
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**SITE/LOCATION:** 110m SE of 4a Laurel Lane, Belfast, BT14 8SQ

**APPLICANT:** Robert McKendry

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Johanne McKendry, Senior Planning Officer, introduced the Planning Report to the Committee and made a recommendation to refuse planning permission.

The undernoted public speaker addressed the Committee and responded to enquiries from Members as requested –

Robert McKendry

In Support/Applicant

Proposed by Alderman Campbell

Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that planning permission be refused.

on the proposal being put to the meeting 9 Members voted in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention, and it was agreed

**that planning permission be refused for the following reasons:**

- 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.**

*ACTION BY: Sharon Mossman, Deputy Director of Planning*

### **ITEM 3.9 APPLICATION NO: LA03/2025/0584/O**

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**PROPOSAL:** Site for dwelling and garage on a farm

**SITE/LOCATION:** 70m West of 81 Rickamore Road Upper, Templepatrick, Ballyclare, BT39 0JF

**APPLICANT:** Robert Olive

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Johanne McKendry, Senior Planning Officer, introduced the Planning Report and associated addendum report to the Committee and made a recommendation to refuse outline planning permission.

There were no public speakers to address this item.

Proposed by Alderman Boyle

Seconded by Councillor Bennington and agreed that outline planning permission be refused.

on the proposal being put to the meeting 12 Members voted in favour, 0 against and 0 abstentions, and it was unanimously agreed

**that outline planning permission be refused for the following reasons:**

- 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.**

*ACTION BY: Sharon Mossman, Deputy Director of Planning*

#### **ITEM 3.10 APPLICATION NO: LA03/2025/0557/F**

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<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Erection of a single-storey changing pavilion with associated fencing, landscaping and site works
<b>SITE/LOCATION:</b>	Lands at Three Mile Water Playing fields, Doagh Road, Newtownabbey, BT37 9PA
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council

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Johanne McKendry, Senior Planning Officer, introduced the Planning Report to the Committee and made a recommendation to grant planning permission.

The undernoted public speaker addressed the Committee and responded to enquiries from Members as requested –

Gary Dodds

In Support/Agent

Proposed by Councillor Flanagan

Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that planning permission be granted.

on the proposal being put to the meeting 12 Members voted in favour, 0 against

and 0 abstention, and it was unanimously agreed

**that planning permission be granted for the application subject to the Conditions set out in the Planning Report.**

*ACTION BY: Sharon Mossman, Deputy Director of Planning*

*Councillor Mallon left the Chamber at Item 3.11.*

## **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 was 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 were circulated for Members' information.

##### **3. Planning Appeal Commission Decisions**

One (1) appeal was dismissed during November 2025 by the PAC.

<b>Planning application:</b>	<b>LA03/2024/0586/F</b>
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
<b>Decision:</b>	<b>Appeal Dismissed – Council Decision Upheld</b>

A copy of the decision was circulated.

Proposed by Alderman Campbell  
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

**the report be noted.**

**NO ACTION**

## ITEM 3.12

### P/PLAN/1 PROPOSAL OF APPLICATION NOTICES FOR MAJOR DEVELOPMENT NOVEMBER 2025

#### 1. Purpose

**The purpose of this report was 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 were required to;

- give at least 12 weeks' notice to the Council that an application for planning permission was 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 was submitted this must have been accompanied by a Pre-Application Community consultation report outlining the consultation that had been undertaken regarding the application and detailing how this had influenced the proposal submitted.

#### 3. Proposal of Application Notice

<b>PAN Reference:</b>	LA03/2025/0851/PAN
<b>Proposal:</b>	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.
<b>Location:</b>	Lands at the site of the former Craighill Quarry, accessed off Craighill Park, Ballyclare
<b>Applicant:</b>	Craighill Developments Ltd
<b>Date Received:</b>	13 November 2025
<b>12-week expiry:</b>	5 February 2026

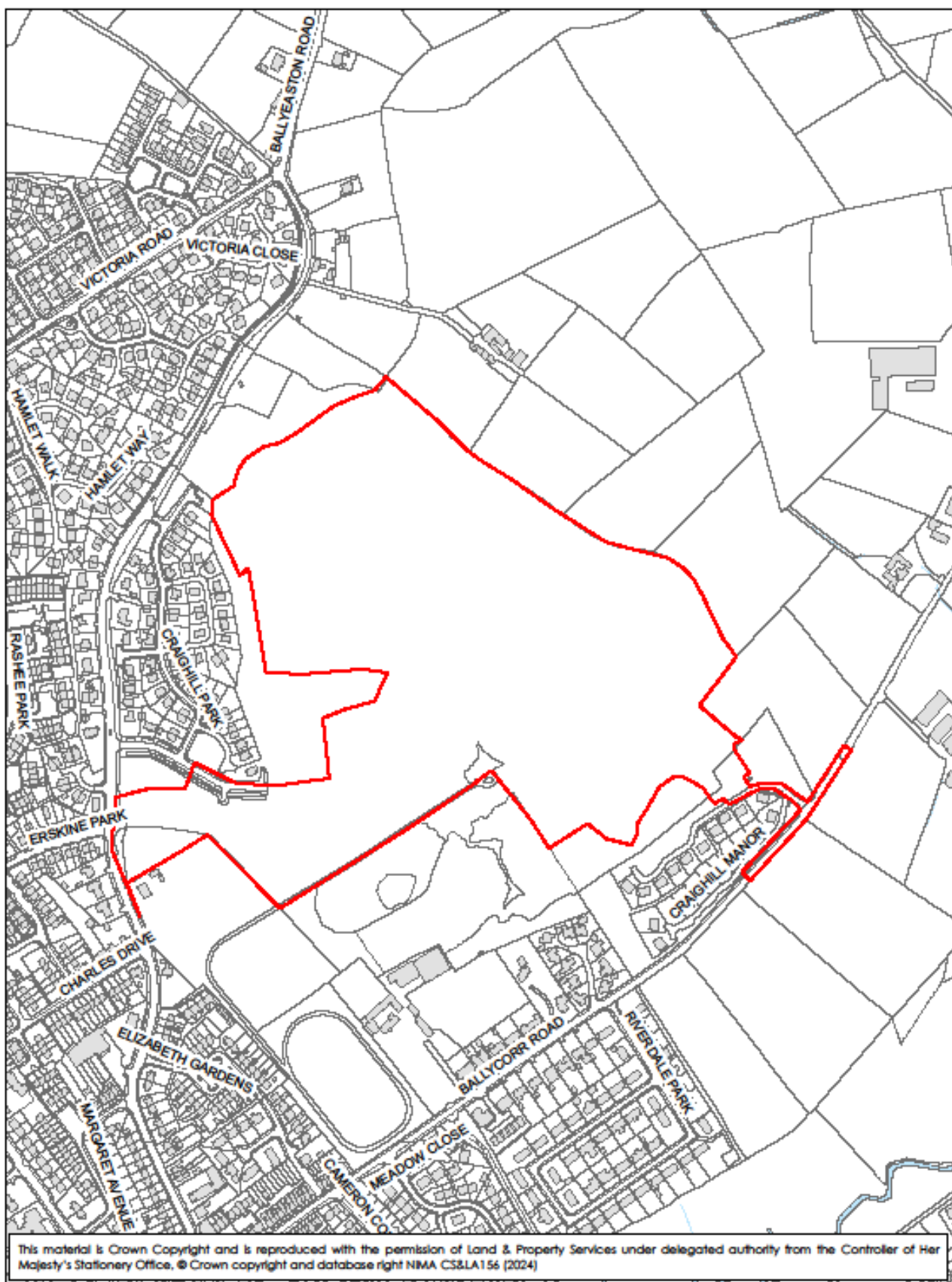
<b>PAN Reference:</b>	LA03/2025/0852/PAN
<b>Proposal:</b>	The proposal relates to the SONI Mid-Antrim Upgrade Project, with this application comprising the following elements (Phase 1 of the overall project): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- A new proposed switching substation at Whitesides Road (approximately 800m north east of the junction between Whitesides Road and Portglenone Road), Terrygowan, County Antrim (located within Mid &amp; East Antrim</li></ul>

	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)
<b>Location:</b>	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)
<b>Applicant:</b>	SONI Ltd
<b>Date Received:</b>	14 November 2025
<b>12-week expiry:</b>	6 February 2026

Proposed by Alderman Campbell  
Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

**the report be noted.**

*NO ACTION*



## Site Location Plan

1:5,000

Reference: LA03/2025/0851/PAN

Site Location



*Councillor Mallon returned to the Chamber at Item 3.13.*

### **ITEM 3.13**

#### **P/PLAN/1 DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE PIP - UPDATE OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN PRACTICE NOTES**

##### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was 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 were reminded of the Departments Planning Improvement Programme (PIP) which was progressing and DfI were 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 (circulated) was in line with DfI's aspirations of phase 2 of the PIP.

In this correspondence the Department had provided their review of DPPN 2, Statement of Community Involvement, DPPN3, Timetable, and DPPN 5, Preferred Options Paper (circulated). Officers considered the revision of these documents as minor amendments that would not have a considerable impact on assisting in the streamlining of the plan process.

The Department had indicated they had 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 was to provide Councils and their Elected Members with up-to-date advice and guidance on these 3 elements of the plan process. Councils were 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 was an ongoing process, and the reporting mechanism was through SOLACE. It was recommended by officers that the Chief Executive raises at SOLACE, the matter that a quarterly update should have been 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, was requested.

##### **3. Previous Decision of Council**

None.

#### 4. Financial Position/Implication

None.

Proposed by Councillor Bennington  
Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed 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.**

*ACTION BY: Sharon Mossman, Deputy Director of Planning and Building Control*

#### **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 considered the feasibility of formulating a Policy to consider future planning applications for Houses of Multiple Occupation**

#### **2. Introduction/Background**

A House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) was defined in Section 1 of the HMO Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 as a building or part of a building that met the following criteria:

- It was living accommodation.
- It was occupied by three or more persons as their only or main residence.
- Those residing form more than two households, and
- Rents were payable or other consideration was to be provided by at least one of the people living in the accommodation.

#### Advantages of HMOs

HMOs provided 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 increased population density within a local area which could result in an increased demand on services, infrastructure, and on-street parking provision. They could result in increased levels of noise and disturbance and reduced community cohesion through a high number of transient residents.

### Planning Requirements

All new HMOs (both new and conversion to) required both planning permission and building control approval. Under The Planning (Use Classes) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015, HMOs did not fall under a standard planning use class and were defined as a sui generis use. This meant that planning permission for residential use was not sufficient and with HMOs not benefitting from permitted development rights, planning permission must have been sought. All HMOs must have also been licensed by their local Council unless a temporary exemption was 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 were available at: <https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/checkhmolicence>

### HMOs in Antrim and Newtownabbey

There was a total of eighteen (18) HMOs identified within the Borough, fifteen (15) of which held an existing licence and three (3) of which benefited from planning approval, with a further two (2) HMO planning applications under consideration. It was noted that twelve (12) of the fifteen (15) licenced HMOs were located on Abbeyville Street, Whiteabbey (Newtownabbey) within two (2) buildings at 'nos. 1-12 Abbeyville Court'. Table 1 provided a list of the addresses which were 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 was detailed in Table 2 – circulated for Members information. There were already four (4) Councils in Northern Ireland with more than fifty (50) 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 were advised the Council's adopted Plan Strategy did not contain a dedicated HMO policy.

### HMO Planning Policy in Other Jurisdictions

Various examples of NI based approaches to HMO policy were detailed in Table 2 – circulated for Members information.

Generally, LPA's which had adopted a dedicated HMO policy followed one of two approaches; a 'street-by-street' method whereby HMOs must not have accounted for more than a set percentage of development along a single street, or a 'radius approach', whereby HMOs must not have accounted for more than a set percentage of development within a specified radius of the application property. Those councils that had brought forward such planning policy were 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 would have been 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 provided 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 would be writing to all Council Chief Executives outlining their obligations under the current legislation, (3) that Councils had powers to investigate, enforce, and punish those landlords acting outside the law, and (4) that the Department expected a Council to implement their own HMO policies, to include setting a limit on the percentage of HMOs in a certain area. These were matters for the Council to consider through legislation that was outside the planning process in terms of policy powers relating to HMOs and control through the Multiple Occupation Act.

Members were 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 existed and there was no policy in the current Plan to support supplementary planning guidance in a robust manner.

The current LDP process was subject to an Independent Examination (IE), and the PAC had indicated to officers that no IE could be accommodated until 2029. The Department for Infrastructure was seeking to appoint independent commissioners. The plan policy option, as well as being lengthy, would be at risk going forward unless it was supported by a robust evidence base. It was the view of officers that the current level of HMOs in the Borough may not have been substantial enough to defend a plan policy option, and such an emphasis would have had a significantly negative impact on delivery of the LDP Timetable.

### 3. Summary

The Council had no dedicated HMO planning policy or guidance which restricted the number of HMOs in an area. This was due to the low number of HMO applications (both through planning and licencing) that the Council received.

Given the small number of HMOs within the Borough, Officers considered that HMO policy was not required through the plan process to limit their over concentration as there was currently no pattern of over concentration in any area. This approach was consistent with that taken by other local Councils which had comparable numbers of HMOs. Any HMO development application scheme which might come forward could be considered under the current development management process (Plan Strategy policies SP1 'Sustainable Development, and/or 'SP4 'Homes').

Therefore, Officers recommended that whilst the matter should have continued to be monitored by the Council's Planning Section, no specific planning policy was brought forward at this time.

### 4. Previous Decision of Council

May Planning Committee - Officers considered 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 have been subject to Independent Examination and associated costs, alongside those associated with any delay in plan adoption.

Proposed by Councillor Flanagan

Seconded by Alderman Campbell and agreed that given the low number of Houses of Multiple Occupancy that exists within the Borough, their dispersed nature and the lengthy procedure and required evidence base to bring forward a policy through the Plan system, a bespoke HMO planning policy will not be brought forward at this time and that the situation was monitored through both Planning and Environmental Health.

On the proposal being put to the meeting 10 Members voted in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention, it was agreed that

**given the low number of Houses of Multiple Occupancy that exists within the Borough, their dispersed nature and the lengthy procedure and required evidence base to bring forward a policy through the Plan system, a bespoke HMO planning policy will not be brought forward at this time and that the situation was monitored through both Planning and Environmental Health.**

*ACTION BY: Simon Thompson, Local Development Plan and Enforcement Manager*

### 3.15 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

There were no Any Other Relevant Business (AORB) raised.

### **PROPOSAL TO PROCEED 'IN CONFIDENCE'**

Proposed by Councillor Cosgrove

Seconded by Alderman Boyle and agreed that

**the following Committee business be taken In Confidence.**

**The Chairperson advised that the livestream and audio recording would now cease.**

## **PART TWO OTHER PLANNING MATTERS – IN CONFIDENCE**

### **ITEM 3.16**

#### **G/LEG/3/GEN LEGAL UPDATE REPORT - IN CONFIDENCE**

### **1. Purpose**

**The purpose of this report was to provide a legal update in relation to the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC).**

## 2. Introduction / Background

At the October Planning Committee meeting it was agreed that officers would write a letter of complaint to the Planning Appeals Commission.

## Update

It was agreed at October Planning Committee that the Council write a formal letter of complaint to the PAC in relation to Planning application LA03/2023/0959/F and other appeals of concern and the NIAO be copied into the complaint. A copy of the PAC's response was circulated for information. It was noted that the PAC advised that if the Council disagreed with a decision, whilst a complaint could be made regarding process and procedure, the option was for the Council to judicially review the decision.

All appeals were reviewed by Senior Officers and presented to Planning Committee. Where an appeal was of concern, this would be brought to the attention of legal services either by officers or Members to seek advice regarding proceedings. In addition, officers had undertaken a review of internal processes and these included a review of all appeals by Senior Officers, referral to Legal Services where matters are of concern and specialist input where required, for example, retail expertise.

[illegible]

A copy of their correspondence was circulated for information.

Proposed by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Councillor Cosgrove and agreed that

**the response from the Planning Appeals Commission is unsatisfactory and that a letter be issued seeking a meeting with the Planning Appeals Commission Chief Commissioner.**

*ACTION BY: Majella McAlister, Director of Economic Development and Planning*

ITEM 3.17

P/FP/LDP/1 UPDATE ON DEPARTMENTAL SECTION 14 DIRECTION - **IN CONFIDENCE**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Proposed by Alderman Campbell

Seconded by Councillor Flanagan and agreed that

**the report be noted.**

NO ACTION

**PROPOSAL TO MOVE OUT OF 'IN CONFIDENCE'**

Proposed by Councillor Cosgrove

Seconded by Councillor Foster and agreed that

**any remaining Committee business be conducted in Open Session.**

**The Chairperson advised that the audio recording would recommence.**

There being no further Committee business the Chairperson thanked Members, for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 8.36 pm.

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**MAYOR**

***Council Minutes have been redacted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation, and legal advice.***