

NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Planning Committee Meeting of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council held on Wednesday 18 December 2024 at 1pm in the Boardroom Council Offices, Monaghan Row, Newry

Chairperson: Councillor D Murphy

Committee Members in attendance in Chamber:

Councillor P Campbell	Councillor C Enright
Councillor K Feehan	Councillor A Finnegan
Councillor G Hanna	Councillor C King
Councillor M Larkin	Councillor D McAteer
Councillor S Murphy	

Officials in attendance: Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director Regeneration
Ms A McAlarney, Development Manager: Planning
Ms L Jackson, Development Plan and Enforcement Manager
Mr M McQuiston, Senior Planning Officer
Ms M Fitzpatrick, Senior Planning Officer
Mr M Keane, Senior Planning Officer
Ms P Manley, Senior Planning Officer
Mr Peter Rooney, Head of Legal Administration (Acting)
Miss S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)
Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance: Mr C Fegan, Belfast Legal Services
Ms N Largey, Belfast Legal Services

P/111/2024: APOLOGIES AND CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were received from Councillors Rice and Tinnelly. It was noted that Councillor S Murphy was delayed.

P/112/2024: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Enright declared an interest in Item 8 – LA07/2023/2274/F.

P/113/2024: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ACCORDANCE WITH PLANNING COMMITTEE PROTOCOL- PARAGRAPH 25

Declarations of Interest in relation to Para.25 of Planning Committee Operating Protocol – Members to be present for entire item.

Item 6: Cllrs Campbell, Hanna, King, Larkin, McAteer & D Murphy attended a site visit on 28 November 2024.

Item 7: Cllrs Feehan, Finnegan, Larkin, D Murphy, S Murphy & M Rice attended a site visit on 4 December 2024.

FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION

P/114/2024: ADDENDUM LIST

Read: Addendum List of Planning Applications with no representations received or requests for speaking rights – Wednesday 18 December 2024. **(Copy circulated)**

Ms McAlarney advised the Committee that a late representation had been received in relation to Item 12, LA07/2023/3269/F on the addendum list, confirming that it did not raise any new issues or matters for consideration. She advised Members that it did comment on the application description, which referenced proposed works, but clarified to Members that it was a retrospective application as the works had already been carried out as outlined within the Case Officer's Report.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Campbell, it was agreed to approve the officer recommendations in respect of the following applications listed on the Addendum List for Wednesday 18 December 2024:**

- **LA07/2023/3269/F** - Lands Opposite 76 Upper Dromore Road, Warrenpoint, BT34 3PN - Proposed enabling works to create tiered land platforms and access road for future development.

APPROVAL

- **LA07/2022/0309/O** - Approx 30m south of No. 131 High Street Bessbrook, Newry - Proposed housing development

REFUSAL

ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2014

Agreed: **On the proposal of Councillor Campbell, seconded by Councillor Finnegan, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on the following items, which related to exempt information by virtue of para. Three of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) 2014 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding**

that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Larkin, seconded by Councillor Campbell, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

The Chairperson advised the following had been agreed whilst in closed session:

FOR DECISION

P/115/2024 **COUNTRYSIDE POLICIES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGIC POLICY FOR DRAFT PLAN STRATEGY**

Read: Report from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director of Economy, Regeneration & Tourism, regarding Countryside Policies and Sustainable Development & Climate Change Strategic Policy for Draft Plan Strategy. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Enright, seconded by Councillor Campbell, it was agreed to approve the final text, subject to additions as outlined during the meeting, of the enclosed draft Countryside Policies for publication in the draft Plan Strategy which is scheduled to occur before the end of the current financial year in accordance with the published timetable. It was noted that further delay on agreement of these policies will impact on the published LDP timetable.

Councillor S Murphy joined the meeting during the above discussions – 1.14pm

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

P/116/2024 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATION (WITH PREVIOUS SITE VISITS)**

(1) **LA07/2023/3370/O**

On agenda as a result of the Call-In Process

Location:

To the rear of 44 Bavan Road, Mayobridge, BT34 2HS

Proposal:

Infill dwelling and garage

Conclusion and Recommendation from Planning Official:

Refusal

Power Point Presentation:

Mr Keane outlined the details of the case, reminding Members that Policy CTY8 was a restrictive policy. The Planning Department considered this was not a gap site within an otherwise substantially and continuously built-up frontage, whereby the Ballykeel Rd broke and interrupted the frontage along Bavan Rd, therefore there was no continuous frontage.

Speaking rights:

In line with Operating Protocol, no further speaking rights were permitted on this application.

Mr Martin Bailie was present to answer any questions that Members may have had.

Councillor Hanna queried a reference made to agricultural buildings at the site visit, and how these were not considered as frontage, to which Mr Keane advised there were farm buildings beyond the junction with the Ballykeel Rd, which did have frontage to the Bavan Rd.

Councillor Hanna queried whether the application would have been recommended for approval if the Ballykeel road junction had been narrower at the entrance or just did not exist, as he believed the road narrowed to a one lane road just a few metres beyond the junction.

Mr Keane advised that he was unable to answer the hypothetical question as the road existed and it was the Planning Department's opinion that it broke the frontage.

Councillor Hanna then queried if Mr Bailie believed that the road broke the frontage, to which he advised that he did not believe so, further stating that at critical view points along the Bavan Road, the Ballykeel road was not visible.

Councillor Hanna requested legal advice on the two opinions that had been put forward, with Mr Peter Rooney advising that he believed Members had attended the site visit to view the area and decide for themselves if the Ballykeel Road did break the frontage. He confirmed that two opinions had clearly been put forward and it was now a matter of judgement for those who attended the site visit.

Following the discussions, Councillor Hanna proposed to overturn the officer's recommendation to an approval stating that although there was a junction to Ballykeel Road, it was in his opinion a narrow road and all other requirements were in place to comply with CTY 8. This was seconded by Councillor McAteer.

The proposal was put to a vote by way of a show of hands and voting was as follows:

FOR:	5
AGAINST:	1
ABSTENTIONS:	0

The proposal was declared carried.

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor McAteer, it was agreed to issue an approval in respect of planning application LA07/2023/3370/O

contrary to officer recommendation as contained in the Case Officer Report.

(2) LA07/2023/2827/F

On agenda as a result of the Call-In Process

Location:

Lands immediately NW of no. 48 Maytown Road, Bessbrook

Proposal:

Erection of dwelling

Conclusion and Recommendation from Planning Official:

Refusal

Speaking rights:

In line with Operating Protocol, no further speaking rights were permitted on this application.

Councillor D Murphy noted that as Councillor Rice was an apology for the meeting, there was not a quorum following the site visit and the application would have to be deferred to a future meeting date.

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor Finnegan, it was agreed defer planning application LA07/2023/2827/F to a future committee date.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

P/117/2024

PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATION

(1) LA07/2023/2274/F

On agenda as a result of the Operating Protocol and the Scheme of Delegation

Location:

Abbey Way Car Park, Abbey Way, Newry

Proposal:

Proposed Civic Hub building accommodating council room, meeting rooms, council offices and associated ancillary accommodation. Associated public realm works to part of existing surface car park.

Conclusion and Recommendation from Planning Official:

Approval

Councillor Enright stated that despite a request he had not received legal advice from the Chief Executive, and following advice he had sought and received from the Local

Government Ombudsman, he would withdraw from the meeting during discussions on the following application as there was a risk of predetermination on his part.

Having declared an interest, Councillor Enright left the meeting at this stage– 2.10pm

Power-point presentation:

Mr Keane confirmed the application description which included the demolition of an existing multi-storey car park, and also included alterations to the existing road network. He stated that the Planning Department had to have regard to the Local Development Plan, whereby the site was located within the boundary of Newry City Centre, within the Conservation Area boundary and within an area of Archaeological Potential. He further highlighted that the site was immediately adjacent to the Protected Route along Abbey Way, and was in close proximity to listed buildings, monuments, Newry river and canal and a Local Landscape Policy Area.

Mr Keane confirmed that there was also a pending demolition consent application for the removal of the existing multi-storey car park being processed by the Department for Infrastructure (DFI), however he advised legislation did not prevent the Planning Department from processing the associated full application as tabled. He highlighted to Members that the Planning Department had received direction from DFI to notify them in the event that Council's Planning Committee reached a recommendation in relation to the application. This recommendation would allow the Department the opportunity to assess, prior to a decision being issued on the application, and to decide if it required the application to be referred to it for determination. The direction did not commit the Department to 'calling' in the application, however reserved the right for it to intervene.

Mr Keane outlined the proposed build, which was to be roughly rectangular comprising of 3 floors of accommodation, would be modern in appearance and would provide frontages on all sides. He confirmed that a retaining wall along the boundary adjacent to Abbey Way was required, which would require technical approval.

Mr Keane confirmed that extensive statutory consultation had taken place with a number of departments with no objections being raised in principle to the proposals, subject to conditions which could be found detailed within the Officer's Addendum Report. He further confirmed that the application had been advertised and neighbourhood notification undertaken, with the most recent round of neighbour notification undertaken in October 2024, with some 2600 objections having been received. These representations raised a number of issues, some of which were not material planning considerations, however in the interest of openness, transparency and completeness these were listed in the Officers report. The planning matters had been fully considered and Mr Keane advised that in respect of PPS6, the size, design, layout and appearance of the building were considered appropriate and would preserve and enhance the character of the CA.

He also stated that HED Buildings Unit advised the siting, size, design, height, scale, massing, form, alignment, finishes and appearance of the development proposed would not adversely affect the setting of any listed building, and offered no objections in principle. Likewise, HED Monuments Unit offered no objections in principle.

In respect of the access, movement and parking, Mr Keane advised the building and site were enclosed by the existing road network. He stated the existing vehicular access from

Abbey Way would be retained, with a new road layout, whereby the building would be accessed from the Northern end.

In respect of parking provision, Mr Keane confirmed the proposals did not include any specific on-site or in-curtilage parking. Mr Keane set out the parking requirements for the development and outlined that a case was being made by the agents that the parking surveys undertaken, in 2023, demonstrated there was an abundance of parking provision which exceeded demand and that there was sufficient existing car parking capacity within Newry city centre at present. Notwithstanding the proposals to also provide additional town centre parking.

Mr Keane outlined that the issue of car parking associated with existing committed developments was also considered as the application progressed.

Mr Keane further clarified the building would accommodate a total of some 215 members of staff, who would be relocated from existing Council offices within Newry. Also, that the applicant had also confirmed that Newry Mourne & Down District Council operated a hybrid (agile) working policy and would only provide desks for 162 staff (75%). He advised that Transport Assessments and Travel Plans were also submitted.

Mr Keane advised the Planning Department had considered all relevant factors, and considered a case had been made to show there was sufficient parking capacity within the town centre to accommodate the proposal, while the central and highly accessible location of the site from various modes of travel, together with the active travel and measures proposed were considered to fit with the requirements of PPS3, Policy AMP 7, in relation to car parking provision, subject to appropriate conditions.

Mr Keane outlined the issue of the loss of existing public car parking spaces, should the proposal go ahead, due to the demolition of the multi storey car park, was also raised and had been fully considered.

Mr Keane also advised other issues including bio diversity, protected species, connection to mains and flooding, noise, nuisance and disturbance had also been fully considered.

Mr Keane updated Members, advising that since the Addendum Report had been finalised and published on 5th December 2024, 6 further representations in opposition to the proposals had been received from Matrix PI Consultancy and 1 representation from Ulster Architectural Heritage, and that these had been fully considered, with further comment provided by HED (via email).

Speaking rights:

In Objection:

Mr Andy Stephens and Mr Warke spoke in objection to the application, stating that the case officer's report did not take account of the true impact of the application on Newry and the cathedral, indicating that there were errors in the interpretation of HED responses. Mr Stephens focused on the removal of parking provision within the city, disagreeing with the Planning Department's position that there would be adequate parking available within the city. He stated that the parking survey conducted on behalf of the applicant was a snap shot that did not take account of varying times and requirements, and that the proposal to create a pay and display car park would dissuade people from shopping in the city. He stressed that he believed that the Planning Department had not taken account of all the relevant

information. He further outlined that he found it concerning that the most recent HED consultations were not available on the Planning Portal and stressed that the area was already over developed and the subsequent impact on the listed cathedral building would be nothing but detrimental.

Canon Brown also spoke in objection to the application, noting that while not opposed to change he was concerned with the Council's apparent disregard for the views and concerns of his parishioners. He reiterated the impact of the loss of car parking on parishioners with mobility issues attending services, further stressing that the size, scale and massing of the proposal would significantly detract from the ecclesiastical views of the cathedral. He stated that he would like to see the area enhanced but stated that it could not be to the detriment of critical views of the cathedral.

In Support:

Mr Mark Priestly, Mr Kieran Carlin and Mr Stephen Livingstone spoke in support of the application, highlighting that the proposals were a core component of the Newry City Centre Regeneration (NCCR) project largely supported by the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD). Mr Priestly further highlighted that the proposal aimed to consolidate the current spread of Council staff in Newry.

Mr Priestly noted that the multi storey car park made no contribution to the character or appearance of the area, confirming that it was proposed to maintain a portion of the existing car park for public use. He noted that careful consideration had been given to the setting of the civic hub, aiming to enhance and respect the prominence of the Grade A listed building through extensive consultation and engagement with HED with conceptual images being used to test the proposals from various viewpoints, with the outcome being that HED had approved the proposal as detailed. He further recognised that parking was a major concern but stated that parking was only 1 criterion of Planning Policy AMP7, that there were also 4 other criteria where reduced car parking could be justified, confirming that the application made a strong case for these criteria when taking into consideration the active travel plan and shuttle service that was proposed.

Mr Priestly stated that the application was supported by Planning Policy SPPS as the policy recognised the town centre first approach, and that a city centre needed diversity to help increase footfall to the city centre, and office space with a wedding venue clearly met those requirements.

Following the presentations, Members took the opportunity to discuss some of the key issues.

Councillor Hanna asked the applicants to briefly explain why they were so committed to their objections of the application, to which Mr Stephens stated that the applicant had not considered the impact of the views to the cathedral despite engagement with HED, and while the applicant referenced SPPS in terms of town centre first approach, it also referenced adequate car parking provision and relationships between buildings, which he did not believe the application met. Canon Brown noted his objections from the outset, and stated his parishioners would be disadvantaged by the loss of parking as the cathedral had a capacity of 1000.

Following a request for clarity from Councillor Hanna regarding the statement from Mr Stephens that the Planning Department had not considered all the relevant information, Mr

Stephens highlighted that consultations with HED had not been uploaded to the Planning Portal and were not readily available to the public. He further stated that the Planning Department's parking survey was dated 2023, and therefore not up to date when compared with the parking survey he had submitted and requested be considered.

Following a further query from Councillor Hanna, a lengthy discussion ensued regarding parking surveys and available parking within the city centre, the outcome of which was the following:

- Mr Stephens and Mr Warke detailed their parking assessment carried out in May, October and November 2024, stating that the proposal would result in a net loss of over 893 parking spaces in the city centre.
- The proposed conversion of two nearby spaces utilised as free parking into pay and display car parks would result in people not parking in the city due to costs.
- Mr Stephens highlighted the negative impact on the city, stressing that if people could not find accessible parking they would stop coming into the city.
- Mr Warke stated that as per the Transport Assessment Guideline people should not have to walk more than 200m from a car park and queried the scope of Mr Livingstone's parking survey.
- Canon Brown referenced complaints from parishioners who had been unable to get parked at a well-attended funeral service, highlighting other events such as communions or confirmations that would also result in parking difficulties.
- Mr Priestly and Mr Livingstone detailed their parking assessments carried out over 4 days (Thursday – Sunday) in June 2021, February 2022, June 2022 and November 2023.
- Mr Livingstone noted that a standard survey was dependent on the development, location and requirement and that 16 days of surveys was well above the required survey data for this type of application.
- A shuttle bus service was to be made available from the leisure centre to the hub at set times each day to help alleviate any potential parking and traffic pressures.
- The survey time during covid was queried, with Mr Livingstone noting that subsequent surveys yielded the same result, so the results were ratified.
- Mr Livingstone noted that there were planning applications under consideration to increase parking at North Street.
- Mr Carlin noted that if the loss of parking would have a negative impact on a town, then this would be addressed in planning policies when considering the town first approach, and it was not part of planning policy.
- Mr Livingstone confirmed that each car park would have its legislatively required mandatory disabled spaces and detailed the available parking spaces as surveyed over the time period.
- The Cathedral parishioners had not been surveyed as to their parking location, which was noted as a missed opportunity to analyse their parking needs.
- Mr Livingstone noted that larger events like funerals were an uncontrollable issue but stated that the evidence showed that there was ample parking within the city centre for regular services, not just at Abbey Way.

Following a query from Councillor McAteer, a further discussion ensued regarding the location of the surveys carried out, with the outcome being noted that Mr Stephens and Mr Warke's parking survey that showed a lack of parking availability had solely assessed the Abbey Way car park, while Mr Priestly and Mr Livingstone's assessment which showed

parking capacity within the city took into account 17 car parks and on street parking within a 1.2km radius or a 10-minute walk of the hub.

During the discussion regarding parking surveys methodology, Ms Largey noted that it was important for Members to bear in mind the distinction between planning policy and other reports that had less material weight. She urged Members to consider the application as submitted and not to confuse other documents and decisions as part of the application. She highlighted that Mr Keane had confirmed the methodology of the applicant's parking survey had been carried out in accordance with parking standards, noting that there were two different sets of information presented that required consideration by the Committee.

Councillor Hanna asked whether the Planning Department had considered all the evidence provided, to which Mr Keane confirmed that the Planning Department had considered all the information submitted, including the late submissions the night prior to the meeting. He acknowledged that parking surveys would have differing results at differing times of year. He also noted that of the 2600 objections received, 2530 were from the cathedral and were all detailed within the planning reports.

Councillor Hanna expressed his concern at satellite parking, stating this could be a challenge for those Councillors with mobility issues and queried whether parking should be provided for Councillors and Officers.

Mr Keane clarified that the proposal did not include any onsite parking, rather the case was being made that there is an abundance of parking to accommodate the proposals. He further noted that some parking would be retained at the Abbey Way site.

Councillor Hanna queried Canon Brown's statement of not having seen the proposed build until today, with Mr Keane confirming that a PAN had been submitted in 2019 and HED were involved since and were content with the proposal subject to conditions.

Councillor Hanna asked if he was correct in stating that DFI had called in the application, to which Mr Keane stated that DFI had issued a direction and reserved the right to call in the application but had not done so at this point.

Councillor King noted that this was a transformational project and queried what the benefits would be of such a project.

Mr Carlin referenced a statement made previously that this type of development would drive people out of the city but noted that in his experience this was not the case, reiterating the SPPS key principle was town first, to include retail, business, cultural and leisure facilities. He noted that bringing footfall to Newry could only be a benefit, and did not accept that people would be driven out of the city due to a perceived lack of parking.

Councillor King asked what measures Canon Brown could put in place with regard to his parishioners, querying if there was an opportunity for the diocese to provide some parking.

Canon Brown stated that it was difficult to provide parking when the parking was being removed, while Mr Stephens noted that there was a policy to mitigate the loss of open space therefore the Canon was unable to provide nearby parking. Mr Stephens further stressed that while they had only surveyed Abbey Way car park, other car parks were some distance from the retail centre which was at odds with the Transport Assessment Guidelines.

Mr Stephens noted at this point that some of the objections received stemmed from the business community which highlighted the fact that they had concerns about the vitality of Newry city centre.

Councillor D Murphy queried the suggestion that no other sites had been considered, to which Mr Priestly noted that the decision had been made regarding the site location by Council prior to Hamilton's being appointed, however confirmed that Council had considered 33 sites with Abbey Way being the preferred option.

Mr Stephens noted that he had no note of any inaccuracies but highlighted that the applicant's parking survey included 6 days during covid.

Following the discussions, Councillor D Murphy proposed to accept the officer's recommendation for approval, noting that having considered all evidence available he was satisfied that the application was compliant with policy. This was seconded by Councillor King.

FOR: 7
AGAINST: 1
ABSTENTIONS: 1

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor King, it was agreed to issue an approval in respect of planning application LA07/2023/2374/F supporting officer recommendation as contained in the Case Officer Report.

Councillor Enright rejoined the meeting at this stage – 3.42pm

The Chairperson advised that applications LA07/2023/2193/F and LA07/2023/2213/LBC would be heard together.

(2) LA07/2023/2193/F and LA07/2023/2213/LBC

On agenda as a result of the Operating Protocol and the Scheme of Delegation

Location:

1 Town Hall, Bank Parade, Newry

Proposal:

Proposed new four-storey theatre & conference centre extension to the Town Hall. Construction of atrium connecting theatre extension with town Hall. Demolition of the Sean Hollywood Arts Centre and No. 2 Bank Parade. Alterations and refurbishment of Town Hall. Public Realm proposals to portion of Sugar Island, portion of Needham bridge, portion of East side of Newry Canal, area around Bank Parade and Kildare Street.

Conclusion and Recommendation from Planning Official:

Approval

Power-point presentation:

Ms Manley outlined the details of the applications, noting that in line with legislation the demolition consent was to be overseen by the Department of Infrastructure under planning reference LA07/2023/2225/DCA, while the full application and listed building consent were tabled before the Committee.

Ms Manley confirmed that the site was contained within the city limits of Newry and was comprised of a development opportunity site that incorporated the Local Landscape Policy Area, the disused transport corridor and the Conservation Areas, noting that the Planning Department detailed how the proposals met and complied with all land zoning and development plan requirements within the Planning Report.

She confirmed that the application had been considered against all legislative requirements, including those specific to development with a Conservation Area and Listed Buildings in line with sections of the Planning Act, alongside the Regional Development Strategy, the Area Plan, SPPS, PSRNI, PPS 2, PPS 3, PPS 15 and PPS 6.

Ms Manley further outlined the proposed development of the Town Hall with the use of conceptual images to demonstrate the extension of the linkage through to the new theatre conference and atrium, pedestrian walkway along the canal, external performance area and platform, tree removal and landscaping. She stated that an application had been submitted under the Tree Preservation Order and was being considered by the Council's Tree Officer under reference number LA07/2024/2328/WPT.

Ms Manley stated that consultations had been carried out with Historic Environment Division (HED Buildings and HED Monuments), DFI Roads, Rivers Agency, Environmental Health, NIE, NIEA, NIW and Loughs Agency with no objections in principle subject to conditions, and all relevant conditions were available to view within the Planning Report. She noted that

Ms Manley noted that a number of late objections had been received raising heritage and demolition related issues and confirmed that these had been reviewed by HED Buildings and Monuments who confirmed that their position remained unchanged with regard to the application and all relevant communication was available to view on the planning portal.

In Support:

Councillor Hanna proposed to accept the officer's recommendations, noting that the application would be an asset to the city of Newry.

Councillor D Murphy noted that it was an end of an era with the loss of the Sean Hollywood Arts Centre but congratulated everyone involved in the application to date.

FOR:	10
AGAINST:	0
ABSTENTIONS:	0

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Hanna, seconded by Councillor McAteer, it was agreed to issue an approval in respect of planning application LA07/2023/2193/F and LA07/2023/2213/LBC supporting officer recommendation as contained in the Case Officer Report.

(3) LA07/2023/2606/F

Location:

Proposal:

13

Conclusion and Recommendation from Planning Official:

Approval

Councillor D Murphy advised the Committee that Councillor Bowsie had contacted him the night prior to the meeting to request that the application be deferred to allow further consideration of the demolition of buildings given their age.

Councillor Campbell proposed to hear the application, stating that it would be irresponsible to delay a social housing application given the social housing situation and the housing shortage.

Councillor Larkin seconded the proposal and queried if the Planning Department had also been approached by Councillor Bowsie.

Councillor D Murphy advised that he was unaware if the Planning Department had been approached, and while it had been a very late request to defer the application, it was for the Committee to decide how to proceed.

The Committee were unanimous in their decision to hear the application as tabled.

Power-point presentation:

Ms McAlarney outlined the application, noting that it included the proposal for the demolition of the existing terraced buildings on site and the erection of 14 apartments for social housing, confirming that the site was located within the village of Saintfield but outside the Conservation Area.

Ms McAlarney stated that following statutory consultations and neighbourhood notifications, all consultations had returned with no objections subject to conditions, but 9 letters of objection had been received which had all been considered and were detailed within the Case Officer's Report.

Ms McAlarney noted that the application had been considered against Planning Policies PPS 2, 3, 6, 7 and 15, as well as DCAN 8 and 15 and had been recommended for approval as the Planning Department were satisfied that the application was appropriate regarding the standards of a site adjacent to, but not contained within, a Conservation Area.

Ms McAlarney then referenced the late representation by Councillor Bowsie, which requested that the buildings to be demolished be included within the Conservation Area. She advised that the Planning Department had considered the representation and confirmed that the application site was not sited within the conservation area and the Planning Department could only assess applications against current Planning Policies and existing designated Conservation Areas.

Speaking rights:

In Support:

Mr Mark Hanvey was present to speak in support of the application.

Councillor Feehan proposed to accept the officer's recommendations, which was seconded by Councillor Hanna.

The proposal was put to a vote by way of a show of hands and voting was as follows:

FOR: 9
AGAINST: 0
ABSTENTIONS: 0

The proposal was declared carried.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Feehan, seconded by Councillor Hanna, it was agreed to issue an approval in respect of planning application LA07/2023/2606/F supporting officer recommendation as contained in the Case Officer Report.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 4pm.

Signed: _____ Chairperson

Signed: _____ Chief Executive

NB: 14% of decisions overturned