

Planning Committee

Tuesday, 20th June, 2023

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Garrett (Chairperson);
Aldermen Lawlor, McCullough and Rodgers;
Councillors Anglin, Bell, Bradley, T. Brooks,
Carson, Doherty, P. Donnelly, Ferguson,
Groogan, Hanvey, Maskey, McCann and Whyte.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor;
Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager (Development
Management);
Ms. C. Reville, Principal Planning Officer;
Mr. D. O’Kane, Principal Planning Officer; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported for Councillors S. Douglas and Verner.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 18th and 20th April were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 2nd May, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Deferred Item

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the undernoted application in order to receive an outstanding re-consultation response from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and undertake a site visit to view the existing natural grass pitch at the Kingspan Stadium:

- **LA04/2023/2891/F** - Replacement of existing natural grass rugby pitch with new 3G surface and associated under pitch drainage and site works (Additional Information Received. Kingspan Stadium 134 Mount Merrion Avenue, Belfast, BT6 0DG.

Abandonments and Extinguishments

The Committee noted the proposed abandonments and extinguishments.

Appeals

The Committee noted the Appeals Decisions.

Planning Decisions Issued

The Committee noted the Planning decisions issued between 1st April and 31st May, 2023.

Miscellaneous Reports

Updates to the Planning Application Checklist

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an update on the Planning Service's Planning Application Checklist.

He reported that Phase 4 of the Application Checklist had been launched to coincide with the adoption of the Plan Strategy and reflect its new policy requirements.

He highlighted that the updated Application Checklist included the undernoted new information requirements:

- Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement (**Policy HOU7**);
- Affordable Housing Proposal Form (**Policy HOU5 and SPG**);
- Climate Change Statement (**Policies ENV2, ENV3, ENV5, GB1 and TRE1**);
- Community Cohesion and Good Relations Statement (**Policies CGR1 and CGR2**);
- Health Impact Assessment (**Policy HC1**);
- Householder Design Statement (**Policy RD2 and SPG**);
- Housing Mix Statement (**Policy HOU6 and SPG**);
- Masterplanning Statement (**Policy DES2**);
- Specialist Housing Statement (**Policy HOU8**);
- Tall Buildings Design Statement (**Policy DES3**); and
- Wind Energy Statement (**Policy ITU4**).

He stated that the Application Checklist would be subject to continuous improvement.

The Committee noted the report.

DfI Consultation on Revised Regional Strategic Planning Policy for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

The Principal Planning Officer informed the Committee that the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) had published its draft revised policy document for strategic planning policy on renewable and low carbon energy development for public consultation and was seeking views as to whether the proposed revised policy would provide an appropriate regional strategic policy framework for plan-making and decision-taking for all forms of renewable energy and low carbon development.

He reported that officers welcomed the review and broadly agreed that the proposed revised policy could contribute to ensuring that the planning system supported efforts to achieve the targets set out in the Climate Change Act as well as other decarbonising objectives.

He referred the Committee to a proposed response to the consultation and highlighted a number of points which had been raised by officers.

The Committee approved the draft response to DfI's revised regional strategic planning policy on renewable and low carbon energy.

Live Appeals

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an update on four live appeals which related to applications that had been refused by the Committee.

He explained that the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) had written to the Council seeking the current position on a number of live appeals following the adoption of the Plan Strategy and, whilst officers had responded to with regard to appeals against refusal decisions taken under delegated authority, there were four which had been refused by the Committee and, therefore, would be reported back to the Committee.

He summarised the following four applications to the Committee:

- **LA04/2022/1284/F** - Lands bounded by Library Street (to south); Stephen Street (to west); Little Donegall Street (to north); and Union Street (to east), Belfast, BT1 2J;
- **LA04/2020/0844/F** and **LA04/2020/0840/LBC** - Vacant Warehouse at Rathbone Street and former St Malachy's School at Sussex Place, Belfast, BT12 8LN;
- **LA04/2021/2519/F** - Lands at Nos. 348-350 Ormeau Road, Belfast, BT7 2FZ; and
- **LA04/2021/2825/A** - Former Belfast Telegraph Printworks, 124 - 32 Royal Avenue, Belfast, BT1 1DN.

The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to provide comments to the Planning Appeals Commission in respect of four live appeals relating to applications which had been refused by the Committee.

Planning Applications

THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN PURSUANCE OF THE POWERS DELEGATED TO IT BY THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 37(e)

**LA04/2022/0129/F - (Reconsidered item) Amended Proposal:
2.4m wall to rear of all proposed properties backing onto
Dermot Hill Housing Development. Proposed social
housing led mixed tenure residential development comprising
122 residential dwellings, pedestrian and cycle ways, public
open space, children's play area, landscaping (including 8
metre landscaped buffer to western boundary), boundary
treatments, parking, access (provision of a right turn lane)
and ancillary site works. Lands north of 14 Mill Race and
15 Belfield Heights and south of 2-15 St Gerards Manor**

The Planning Manager reported that the application had been considered by the Committee, at its meeting in February, 2023, when it had resolved to grant planning permission and delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and the Section 76 Planning agreement.

He explained that the decision had not been issued because of the need to conclude the Section 76 planning agreement and that, since the Committee's decision, the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan strategy had been adopted which provided a new policy framework for decision making and therefore the application was being reported back to the Committee in order that it could reconsider the application under the new policy framework.

He outlined the updated policy context, relevant planning policies and updated assessment to the Committee for consideration.

The Committee granted planning permission and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement.

LA04/2022/1280/F - (Reconsidered item) Proposed social housing led, mixed tenure residential development comprising of 52 no. dwellinghouses and 87 no. apartments with public open space, children's play park, landscaping, car parking, associated site works and infrastructure and access arrangements from Blackstaff Road (139 no. units in total). Former Kennedy Enterprise Centre (north of Westwood Shopping Centre) Blackstaff Road.

The Planning Manager reported that the application had been considered by the Committee, at its meeting in February, 2023, when it had resolved to grant planning permission and delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and the Section 76 Planning agreement, and resolve a technical issue which had been raised by DfI Roads.

He informed the Committee that the decision had not been issued because of the need to conclude the Section 76 Planning agreement and that, since the Committee's decision, the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan strategy had been adopted which provided a new policy framework for decision making and therefore the application was being reported back to the Committee in order that it could reconsider the application under the new policy framework.

He provided the Committee with an overview of the application with regard to the updated policy context, operational policies, proposal maps and relevant planning policies.

The Planning Manager explained that the proposal was contrary to some of the policies in the Plan Strategy but that it would not be unreasonable for the Committee to continue to resolve to approve the application in the planning balance should the Committee continue to give significant weight to the significant unmet need for affordable housing in the area.

The Committee:

- Approved the application, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement to secure the necessary planning obligations as per the addendum report; and
- Granted delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, resolve the technical highways issue, which had been raised by DFI Roads, and the requirement for more information in relation to thermal comfort, in consultation with Environmental Health.

**LA04/2019/0081/F - (Reconsidered item) - S.76 –
12 affordable housing apartments, on former site of
Maple Leaf at Park Avenue.**

**LA04/2020/2325/F - (Reconsidered item) - 21 dwellings
(affordable housing), on former site of Maple Leaf
at Park Avenue**

The Committee agreed to consider the above two applications together.

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the applications and explained that both applications had been approved at its meeting in March, 2022, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

He explained that the Committee was required to reconsider the application following the adoption of the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy and that the applicant had provided a Plan Strategy Statement to demonstrate compliance with the Plan Strategy.

He highlighted the works that had been proposed for the King George V Playing Fields, through a £65k financial contribution as part of the Section 76 agreement and referred the Committee to an updated assessment with additional conditions in relation to environmental mitigations and resilience measures.

He stated that, given the need for social housing in the area, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's support for the proposals, and tenure characteristics of nearby housing, the approach to tenure had been considered to be, on balance, acceptable.

He informed the Committee that the applications had been recommended for approval, with conditions and subject to a Section 76 planning agreement.

The Committee agreed:

- To grant planning permission in relation to application LA04/2019/0081/F with conditions and subject to a section 76 planning agreement;
- To grant planning permission in relation to application LA04/2020/2325/F with conditions and subject to a section 76 planning agreement; and
- To delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions and the Section 76 planning agreements.

LA04/2022/0742/F -Proposed new two storey/split level community hub building (including changing rooms) and a single storey modular changing room building with associated car parking; paths and landscape site-works. Paisley Park Sportsplex – West Circular Road

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

- Principle of development;
- Acceptability of community and leisure facilities at the location;
- Climate change;
- Loss of Open Space;
- Impact on Character and Appearance;
- Impact on Amenity;
- Access and parking;
- Drainage and Waste-water infrastructure; and
- Noise, odour and other environmental impacts.

She reported that, since the publication of the report, a consultation response had been received from Shared Environmental Services (SES) which advised that the project would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

She stated that, having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal had been considered acceptable and added that there would be substantial community benefits through the implementation of the proposed Community Hub that decisively outweighed the loss of open space and would not result in detriment to the overall green infrastructure provision on site.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the conditions and address any other matters which may arise.

LA04/2022/1841/F and LA04/2022/1840/A-Proposed new boundary treatment to Newtownards Road and Harland Drive and Floodlighting to Existing MUGA (Full) and Relocation of existing signage at Memorial Garden and Yardmen Sculpture and new Corten Totum signage with park information board (Ad). Dr Pitt Memorial Park- Newtownards Road

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

- Impact on the character and appearance of the area;
- Amenity; and
- Trees.

She reported that a late representation had been received following re - notification of neighbours in relation to an amended site layout and floodlighting elevation, which referred to potential overshadowing from the planting of a tree in close proximity to a neighbouring dwelling.

She informed the Committee that contact had been made with the agent and the tree concerned would be relocated away from the dwelling to prevent any overshadowing.

She stated that, having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal was considered acceptable.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the conditions and resolve the following:

- Any matters which may arise from the outstanding consultation response from Belfast City Council Trees Unit; and
- Any representations submitted following the re - notification of neighbours of an amended site layout and floodlighting elevation.

LA04/2023/3166/F - Change of roof profile from a hipped roof to a pitched roof with rear dormer and rooflights to front, 28 Wynchurch Road

The Committee considered the report and granted planning permission, subject to conditions, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and deal with any other matters which may arise.

Community Places Funding

Councillor Groogan explained that she wanted to raise the issue with regard to the funding situation for Community Places which provided free independent planning advice to communities and individuals across Northern Ireland. She stated that it was a concern that the Department for Infrastructure had been considering cutting funding to Community Places and requested that the Committee would write a letter of support to the Department of Infrastructure for Community Places.

The Committee agreed to write to the Department for Infrastructure in support of retaining funding the social enterprise, Community Places.

Chairperson