

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Planning Committee Meeting held in the Council Chamber and in Remote Locations on Monday, 4 August, 2025 at 10.02 am

PRESENT IN CHAMBER:

Alderman J Tinsley (Chair)

Aldermen O Gawith and M Gregg

Councillors S Burns, D J Craig, U Mackin, A Martin and N Trimble

PRESENT IN REMOTE LOCATION:

Councillors D Bassett and P Catney

IN ATTENDANCE:

Director of Regeneration and Growth
Head of Planning & Capital Development
Senior Planning Officers (MB, PMcF and GM)
Member Services Officers (CR and EW)

Mr B Martyn (Cleaver Fulton Rankin) – Legal Advisor

Commencement of Meeting

Councillor U Mackin arrived to the meeting at 10.03 am.

At the commencement of the meeting, the Chair, Alderman J Tinsley, welcomed those present to the Planning Committee. He pointed out that, unless the item on the agenda was considered under confidential business, this meeting would be audio recorded. The Head of Planning & Capital Development outlined the evacuation procedures in the case of an emergency.

1. **Apologies**

It was agreed to accept an apology for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of Councillor G Thompson.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

The following declarations of interest were made:

- Councillor U Mackin, in respect of application LA05/2024/0410/F as he was a member of the Board of Governors of Beechlawn School; and
- Councillor D J Craig, in respect of application LA05/2024/0410/F as he was a member of the Education Authority.

3. Minutes of Meeting of Planning Committee held on 7 July, 2025

It was proposed by Councillor U Mackin, seconded by Councillor P Catney and agreed that the minutes of the meeting of Committee held on 7 July, 2025 be confirmed and signed.

4. Report from the Head of Planning & Capital Development

4.1 Schedule of Applications

The Chair, Alderman J Tinsley, advised that there were 2 major and 3 local applications on the schedule for consideration at the meeting.

Councillor S Burns arrived to the meeting at 10.07 am.

4.1.1 Applications to be Determined

The Legal Advisor, Mr B Martyn, highlighted paragraphs 43-46 of the Protocol for the Operation of the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Planning Committee which, he advised, needed to be borne in mind when determinations were being made.

- (i) LA05/2024/0410/F – Extension to Beechlawn Special School to provide additional classroom accommodation together with demolition of existing buildings and removal of 5 mobiles. Minor alterations to the existing carpark at Beechlawn Special School, 3 Dromore Road, Hillsborough

Having declared an interest in this planning application, Councillors D J Craig and U Mackin left the meeting for its consideration (10.09 am).

The Senior Planning Officer (GM) presented the above application as outlined within the circulated report.

No-one was registered to speak on this application.

A number of Members' queries were responded to by Planning Officers.

Debate

During debate:

- Alderman M Gregg welcomed this application which would bring about much needed accommodation at this special school. He was in support of the recommendation of the Planning Officer to approve planning permission. However, in line with the Justification and Amplification in RE2, he stated that Officers should be encouraging the take-up of renewable energy, not just in relation to this application but across the board;
- the Chair, Alderman J Tinsley, welcomed this application. He stated that the teachers and pupils of Beechlawn School deserved this extension; and
- Councillor P Catney concurred with the previous speakers. He welcomed the application and was in support of the recommendation of the Planning Officer to approve planning permission.

- (i) LA05/2024/0410/F – Extension to Beechlawn Special School to provide additional classroom accommodation together with demolition of existing buildings and removal of 5 mobiles. Minor alterations to the existing carpark at Beechlawn Special School, 3 Dromore Road, Hillsborough (Contd)

Vote

Having considered the information provided within the report of the Planning Officer, the Committee agreed unanimously to adopt the recommendation to approve this application.

Councillors D J Craig and U Mackin returned to the meeting (10.30 am).

- (ii) LA05/2022/0821/F – Proposed mixed use development comprising housing (46 units) and 13 employment units (Classes B2 and B4) with associated public open space, new access to Rathfriland Road, parking, landscaping and ancillary site works at a site to the north of 60 Rathfriland Road and south and west of 52 Rathfriland Road, Dromara, Dromore

The Senior Planning Officer (MB) presented the above application as outlined within the circulated report.

The Committee received:

- Ms J Doyle to speak in opposition to the application;
- Alderman A McIntyre to speak in opposition to the application; and
- Mr B Starkey, accompanied by Mr J Sergeant and Mr T Cousins, to speak in support of the application.

A number of Members' queries were addressed by the above speakers.

A number of Members' queries were responded to by Planning Officers, as well as Mr B Finlay, DfI Roads, who was in attendance at the meeting.

Debate

During debate:

- Councillor N Trimble stated that his concern regarding this application had been flooding and the flood risk. This matter had been explored quite thoroughly. He stated that the reality was that, if this site remained as a field, Dromara still had flooding issues and those needed resolved. Councillor Trimble was satisfied that, in light of the water attenuation proposed here of mitigating the flow off the site, there would be no exacerbation of ongoing flooding issues. He appreciated the frustration of people directly impacted by flooding; however, if the Rivers Agency was signing off on this and from what he had heard at this meeting, he was in support of the recommendation of the Planning Officer to approve planning permission;

- (ii) LA05/2022/0821/F – Proposed mixed use development comprising housing (46 units) and 13 employment units (Classes B2 and B4) with associated public open space, new access to Rathfriland Road, parking, landscaping and ancillary site works at a site to the north of 60 Rathfriland Road and south and west of 52 Rathfriland Road, Dromara, Dromore (Contd)
- Councillor U Mackin appreciated the clarity received in respect of a number of issues which had removed some of his fears. However, he still had a major concern over the flooding issue. If relying on a 2017 Flood Alleviation Scheme, it was not working effectively today, so how could it work effectively in coming years when the proposed development was completed. Councillor Mackin was not convinced that there would not be increased flooding because of the proposed development. The River Lagan could only take so much water, no matter what measures were put in place landside. Councillor Mackin was not in support of the recommendation of the Planning Officer to approve planning permission;
 - Councillor D J Craig, as a qualified engineer, stated that he was intrigued by some of the engineering solutions proposed. This application was relying on a 2017 Flood Alleviation Scheme but he stated that that was not working. Unless something major was done by the Rivers Agency and Northern Ireland Water in the near future, flooding would continually happen on what looked like an annual basis. Councillor Craig was concerned that the engineering solution would guarantee a slower runoff of water, but a slower runoff would last for a much longer period, meaning relief of flooding for tenants would take a much longer period of time. There would be a continual flow out of oversized pipes on the site. Councillor Craig was not convinced that the Rivers Agency and Northern Ireland Water had got their acts together regarding the entire flooding issue in Dromara and he had serious concerns. He also queried the sensibility of linking two major developments from a road infrastructure point of view. He was convinced it would create a rat-run between the two and would have unforeseen consequences. Councillor Craig was not in support of the recommendation of the Planning Officer to approve planning permission;
 - Councillor P Catney welcomed the affordable housing units included in this application and was in support of the recommendation of the Planning Officer to approve planning permission;
 - Alderman O Gawith concurred with Councillors Mackin and Craig. He too had concerns regarding flooding and was not convinced with the response he had received regarding the wildlife issue. He had been told Officers had walked the land recently but he had not been told when. Lapwings nested at a particular time of the year. Alderman Gawith had not been given enough information to allay his concerns and he was not in support of the recommendation of the Planning Officer to approve planning permission;
 - Councillor A Martin concurred with Councillors Mackin and Craig and Alderman Gawith. He was not happy with traffic moving through a development maybe with children and young people and the option of HGVs using that route. He was also concerned regarding flooding. He did not consider the technology proposed would address the problem and he was not in support of the recommendation of the Planning Officer to approve planning permission; and

- (ii) LA05/2022/0821/F – Proposed mixed use development comprising housing (46 units) and 13 employment units (Classes B2 and B4) with associated public open space, new access to Rathfriland Road, parking, landscaping and ancillary site works at a site to the north of 60 Rathfriland Road and south and west of 52 Rathfriland Road, Dromara, Dromore (Contd)

- Alderman M Gregg concurred with Councillor Trimble. The explanation received regarding the hydro-brake that would be put in place had alleviated any concerns he had. The response from DfI Rivers advised that it allowed for the current flood plain, as well as for climate change. He did not consider that this development would create a rat-run. He was disappointed that an additional speed ramp was not provided at the bottom end of road 3. He had heard what both DfI Roads and the developer had said in that it complied with DMRB, but he did expect that residents would have concerns that one was not provided. Alderman Gregg was in support of the recommendation of the Planning Officer to approve planning permission.

Vote

On a vote being taken, it was agreed to adopt the recommendation of the Planning Officer to approve planning permission, the voting being:

In favour: Councillor D Bassett, Councillor S Burns, Councillor P Catney, Alderman M Gregg, Councillor N Trimble and Chair, Alderman J Tinsley (6)

Against: Councillor D J Craig, Alderman O Gawith, Councillor U Mackin and Councillor A Martin (4)

Adjournment of Meeting

The Chair, Alderman J Tinsley, declared the meeting adjourned at this point for a comfort break (12.16 pm).

Resumption of Meeting

The meeting was resumed at 12.25 pm.

- (iii) LA05/2024/0302/F – Replacement dwelling and garage and associated site works at 54 Creevytennant Road, Ballynahinch

The Senior Planning Officer (PMcF) presented the above application as outlined within the circulated report.

The Committee received Ms J Mawhinney, accompanied by Mr M Adamson, to speak in support of the application and a number of Members' queries were addressed.

- (iii) LA05/2024/0302/F – Replacement dwelling and garage and associated site works at 54 Creevytennant Road, Ballynahinch (Contd)

A number of Members' queries were responded to by Planning Officers.

Debate

During debate:

- Councillor D J Craig stated that he was not in support of the recommendation of the Planning Officer to refuse planning permission. There was a planning history at the site and there had clearly been a building there. Councillor Craig considered that it had been demonstrated by the evidence provided to the Committee that there was a health and safety issue with regard to the building staying where it was. For the developer to have demolished it but not started building work in a timely manner was something that only the developer could explain. Councillor Craig considered that the wording in COU3 was not that restrictive that it did not allow for interpretation of this application in the way previous applications had been interpreted under other legislation. He understood that this was a judgement call by Officers; however, he disagreed with their judgement call;
- Councillor N Trimble concurred with Councillor Craig and he too was not in support of the recommendation of the Planning Officer to refuse planning permission. There was a planning history on the site and the planning permission was extant on the site when the building had been demolished. Within a month, or possibly even weeks, of demolition of the building, an application had been submitted to renew permission but that had taken 2 years to decide on and refuse. Councillor Trimble could not understand how that had taken such a period time. He considered the wording in COU3 was not as restrictive as was being portrayed. He quoted "in cases where a dwelling has recently been destroyed, for example, by an accident or a fire, planning permission may be granted for a replacement dwelling". It did not state that the building must have been destroyed by an accident or a fire, rather those were just examples. Councillor Trimble considered that the building previously on the site had exhibited the essential characteristics of a dwelling and there was no question that was replaceable under COU3. He felt that the applicant here had been the victim of very poor timing in terms of when he had gone ahead with the demolition and when permission had lapsed. He also stated that there were no objectors to the application;
- Alderman M Gregg concurred with the previous speakers; this was a judgement call and he deemed the judgement call of Planning Officers to be flawed on this occasion. There was no debate as to whether there had been a dwelling on this site previously and whether it was eligible for replacement. If more weight was given to the planning history where this had been approved and, through the evidence provided, it was deemed to comply with COU3, then the other reasons for refusal would fall away. Alderman Gregg considered that approval could be granted for this application;

(iii) LA05/2024/0302/F – Replacement dwelling and garage and associated site works at 54 Creevytennant Road, Ballynahinch (Contd)

- Alderman O Gawith stated that he too was not in support of the recommendation of the Planning Officer to refuse planning permission. Given that the site had changed hands, he considered that using too much of the original history to affect a decision for the current applicant would be wrong. This was a balanced judgement and, in his view, Officers had made the wrong judgement; and
- Councillor U Mackin understood how finely balanced this decision was. He referred to the report from the health and safety company recommending that the previous building be made safe as soon as possible, with total demolition being the most practical solution given the nature of the building and its relationship with the road. Councillor Mackin could see no harm in replacing a building that had clearly been there. Whilst he understood the arguments offered by Officers and their interpretation, he was not in support of the recommendation of the Planning Officer to refuse planning permission.

Vote

On a vote being taken, it was agreed not to adopt the recommendation of the Planning Officer to refuse planning permission, the voting being:

In favour: Councillor S Burns, Councillor A Martin and Chair, Alderman J Tinsley (3)

Against: Councillor P Catney, Councillor D J Craig, Alderman A Gawith, Alderman M Gregg, Councillor U Mackin, and Councillor N Trimble (6)

Abstain: Councillor D Bassett (1)

Given that the Officer recommendation to refuse planning permission had fallen, the Chair, Alderman J Tinsley, stated that a new proposal was required. It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Councillor D J Craig and, on a vote being taken, agreed that planning application LA05/2024/0302/F be approved, the voting being as follows:

In favour: Councillor D Bassett, P Catney, Councillor D J Craig, Alderman A Gawith, Alderman M Gregg, Councillor U Mackin, Councillor N Trimble and Chair, Alderman J Tinsley (8)

Against: None (0)

Abstain: Councillor S Burns and Councillor A Martin (2)

In agreeing to approve the application, the following reasons were offered:

(iii) LA05/2024/0302/F – Replacement dwelling and garage and associated site works at 54 Creevytennant Road, Ballynahinch (Contd)

- COU3 was fulfilled with this application. The building that had since been demolished had exhibited the essential characteristics of a dwelling and had been demolished on health and safety advice. If COU3 was accepted, then COU15, COU16 and COU1 reasons fell away. That, coupled with previous planning history of approvals on the site, allowed the Committee to approve planning permission; and
- The engineer's report provided to the Committee indicated that, during some preparatory works relating to sightlines, the building had been made unsafe and was extremely high risk to those that worked or travelled adjacent to it. It had been recommended in that report that the building be made safe and that the most practical solution was total demolition, given the nature of the building and its relationship with the road. The applicant had acted in accordance with that professional advice and within the confines of a live application that was valid and had been passed. Giving significant weight to that evidence provided by the applicant gave the Committee weighting behind that evidence to approve the application.

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Councillor D J Craig and agreed that authority be delegated to the Head of Planning & Capital Development to formulate the precise wording of conditions.

Adjournment of Meeting

The Chair, Alderman J Tinsley, declared the meeting adjourned at this point for lunch (1.23 pm).

Resumption of Meeting

The meeting was resumed at 2.02 pm.

(iv) LA05/2023/0823/F – Retention of approved building (with alterations) for purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the occupants of No 86A Beechill Road, with associated increase in residential curtilage at 86A Beechill Road, Belfast

The Senior Planning Officer (MB) presented the above application as outlined within the circulated report.

The Committee received Mr D Donaldson, accompanied by Mr D Dummigan, to speak in support of the application and a number of Members' queries were addressed.

A number of Members' queries were responded to by Planning Officers.

Debate

There were no comments made during debate.

- (iv) LA05/2023/0823/F – Retention of approved building (with alterations) for purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the occupants of No 86A Beechill Road, with associated increase in residential curtilage at 86A Beechill Road, Belfast (Contd)

Vote

Having considered the information provided within the report of the Planning Officer, the Committee agreed unanimously to adopt the recommendation to refuse this application.

Alderman O Gawith and Councillor P Catney left the meeting (2.31 pm).

- (v) LA05/2023/0900/F – Proposal comprises 6 detached and 2 semidetached properties in lieu of 3 apartment blocks formerly approved under existing permission LA05/2020/0593/F on lands directly adjacent to 1-60 Moira Gate, Moira

The Senior Planning Officer (PMcF) presented the above application as outlined within the circulated report.

No-one was registered to speak on this application.

A number of Members' queries were responded to by Planning Officers.

Debate

During debate:

- Alderman M Gregg stated that he was unsure whether a 4 bedroomed house in Moira would meet the affordable housing threshold. This would be a difficult question for Council when the Section 76 Agreement was presented. Alderman Gregg referred to the reduction of 14 housing units within the settlement limits in Moira, which were 14 units that would require to be found elsewhere. However, there was no other location in Moira for this. That being said, Alderman Gregg remembered when this application had originally been presented to the Planning Committee and he had objected to it as he had not considered the apartment blocks were in keeping with the local surroundings. Had this current application been presented then, he would have approved it as the dwellings now proposed were more in keeping with the surroundings, but with considerably less density. On balance, Alderman Gregg was in support of the recommendation of the Planning Officer to approve planning permission.

Vote

Having considered the information provided within the report of the Planning Officer, the Committee agreed unanimously to adopt the recommendation to approve this application.

4.2 Statutory Performance Indicators – June 2025

Councillor D Bassett left the meeting at 2.52 pm.

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Councillor A Martin and agreed that information relating to Statutory Performance Indicators for June 2025 be noted.

4.3 Northern Ireland Annual Statistics – Annual Statistical Bulletin (April 2024 – March 2025)

It was proposed by Alderman M Gregg, seconded by Councillor A Martin and agreed that analysis of the 2024/25 Bulletin relating to this Council area, as well as the Northern Ireland Statistics Annual Statistical Bulletin (April 2024 – March 2025), be noted.

4.4 Appeal Decision – LA05/2024/0075/A

Members noted the report and decision of the Planning Appeals Commission in respect of the above appeal.

4.5 Appeal Decision – LA05/2021/0974/O

Members noted the report and decision of the Planning Appeals Commission in respect of the above appeal.

4.6 Appeal Decision – LA05/2024/0106/O

Members noted the report and decision of the Planning Appeals Commission in respect of the above appeal.

4.7 Enforcement Appeal Decision – 2024/E0043

Members noted the report and decision of the Planning Appeals Commission in respect of the above appeal.

4.8 Notification by Telecommunication Operator(s) of Intention to Utilise Permitted Development Rights

Members noted from the report, information regarding notification by telecommunication operators of intention to utilise Permitted Development Rights at a number of locations in the Council area.

4.9 Letter to Chief Executive in Respect of an Update on the Review of the Development Management Regulations

Members noted information regarding changes to the Development Management Regulations and that further changes were anticipated in a second phase of the project.

5. Any Other Business

5.1 Requirement to Enter into a Section 76 Planning Agreement for Planning Application LA05/2022/0033/F Chair, Alderman J Tinsley

The Chair, Alderman J Tinsley, having sought an update in respect of the above, the Head of Planning & Capital Development advised that this application had not been presented today as, shortly after the last meeting of the Committee, a pre-action protocol letter had been received and it took time to prepare a response to that. The letter had been issued by the applicant and indicated that there was no reason for the application to return to the Planning Committee. The Council had instructed Counsel and a response was in preparation. A slight extension to the time limit for responding had been sought in light of the letter having been received around the time of the Twelfth of July holidays. A response was due to issue soon and a decision could then be taken about the application coming back to the earliest available Committee meeting.

5.2 Date of Next Meeting Head of Planning & Capital Development

It was agreed that, in order to honour leave commitments of the Head of Planning & Capital Development, the meeting of the Planning Committee scheduled to take place on Monday, 1 September, 2025 be rearranged to be held on Monday, 8 September.

5.3 Change of Membership Chair, Alderman J Tinsley

The Chair, Alderman J Tinsley, advised that this was Councillor U Mackin's last Planning Committee meeting as he was being replaced by Councillor J Lavery. Alderman M Gregg and Councillor A Martin paid tribute to Councillor Mackin's contribution to the Planning Committee over the years.

5.4 Planning Application at Back Road, Drumbo Alderman M Gregg

Alderman M Gregg sought an update on a planning application at Back Road, Drumbo that was to have been brought back to Committee. The Senior Planning Officer (PMcF) advised that outstanding information had been received last week and it was anticipated that the application would be presented to Committee as soon as possible, potentially at the September meeting.

Conclusion of the Meeting

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chair, Alderman J Tinsley, thanked those present for their attendance.

There being no further business, the meeting was terminated at 3.09 pm.

Chair/Mayor