

May 11th, 2026

To Each Member of Committee

**NOTICE OF MEETING**

You are requested to attend a Meeting of the

Mid and East Antrim Planning Committee to be held on

Thursday, 14th May 2026 at 10:00 am in Council Chamber, The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street,  
Ballymena and via remote access.

Yours sincerely



Valerie Watts  
Interim Chief Executive, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

# Agenda

## 1 NOTICE OF MEETING

## 2 APOLOGIES

## 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and Officers are invited to declare any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests, including gifts and hospitality, they may have in respect of items on this Agenda.

## 4 SCHEDULE OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

### 4.1 Planning Application No. LA02/2024/0899/F – Lands to the North of Premier Inn Hotel and East of Rodgers Quay, Carrickfergus Waterfront, Carrickfergus BT38 8BE - Circulated

Demolition of Existing building and redevelopment for residential comprising of 33 no Apartments (9no. 2 bed and 24no. 3 Bed) within 3 No. Three and half storey buildings including access, car parking, cycle parking, landscaping and all associated site works.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve

**Lead Officer:** Gary McGuinness

[LA02.2024.0899.F Swift Bar.pdf](#)

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### 4.2 Planning Application No. LA02/2024/0900/DCA – Lands to the North of Premier Inn Hotel and East of Rodgers Quay, Carrickfergus Waterfront, Carrickfergus BT38 8BE - Circulated

Demolition of Existing building and redevelopment for residential comprising of 33 no Apartments (9no. 2 bed and 24no. 3 Bed) within 3 No. Three and half storey buildings including access, car parking, cycle parking, landscaping and all associated site works.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve

**Lead Officer:** Gary McGuinness

[LA02.2024.0900.DCA Swift Bar DCA.pdf](#)

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### 4.3 Planning Application No. LA02/2026/0140/F - 119 Broughshane Street, Ballymena, BT43 6EE - Circulated

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve

**Lead Officer:** Gary McGuinness

📄 [LA02.2026.0140.F HMO.pdf](#)

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#### **4.4 Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0590/F - Ballylumford Power Station, Ferris Bay Road, Islandmagee, Larne, BT40 3RS - Circulated**

300MW Battery Energy Storage System [BESS] facility comprising containerised battery units, transformer units, switch rooms, associated 275kv substation and control room building and all associated plant, equipment, machinery, drainage, underground cabling [including connection to existing 275kV NIE substation], internal access roads, CCTV, site fencing and ancillary development

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve

**Lead Officer:** Henry McAllister

📄 [LA02.2025.0590.F BESS Ballylumford.pdf](#)

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#### **4.5 Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0766/F - Lands approx. 150m SE of No. 37 Ballyhampton Road, Larne, BT40 2ST - Circulated**

Proposed Battery Energy Storage System [BESS] facility up to 17MW [4hr-duration] [amendment to previously approved BESS LA02/2022/0739/F] including electricity substation compound, access and ancillary development/site works

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve

**Lead Officer:** Henry McAllister

#### **4.6 Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0183/F - Lands at Lovers Lane, adjacent & South of 49 Gortgole Road, Portglenone - Circulated**

Proposed sports and community hub comprising multipurpose pavilion, 4G playing field, play park, 2no. spectator terraces, car parking, landscaping, floodlighting, new access onto and upgrading of Lovers Lane, fencing and ancillary site works

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve

**Lead Officer:** Sean O’Kane

### **5 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

#### **5.1 Local Development Plan Progress – Elected Members Briefing - Verbal**

### **6 PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE**

#### **6.1 New Appeals**

- LA02/2026/0087/F - Site Adjacent to 64 Mansefield Heights, Portglenone, BT44 8JR – Infill Townhouse
- LA02/2023/0287/CA - Land at 38 Lisnahilt Road, Broughshane, BT42 4OT - Alleged unauthorised change of use from 1st floor games room in domestic garage to apartment

#### **6.2 Appeal Decisions**

- LA02/2024/0203/F - east of 79 Middle Road, south of 1 Town Lane and north and northeast of 1, 3 & 5 Gobbins Road, Ballystrudder

**Appeal Dismissed**

## **7 ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION/DECISION**

### **7.1 Revised Statement of Community Involvement - Circulated**

 *Statement of Community Involvement May 2026.pdf*

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## **8 CORRESPONDENCE**

### **8.1 DfC Letter – Historic Environment and Site Selection in Local Development Plan Process - Circulated**

 *DfC Letter LDP.pdf*

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### Committee Application

<b>Development Management Officer Report</b>	
<b>Case Officer:</b> Norma Alexander	
<b>Application ID:</b> LA02/2024/0899/F	<b>Target Date:</b>
<b>Proposal:</b> Demolition of Existing building and redevelopment for residential comprising of 33 no Apartments (9no. 2 bed and 24no. 3 Bed) within 3 No. Three and half storey buildings including access, car parking, cycle parking, landscaping and all associated site works.	<b>Location:</b> Lands to the North of Premier Inn Hotel and East of Rodgers Quay, Carrickfergus Waterfront, Carrickfergus BT38 8BE
<b>Applicant Name and Address:</b> Massereene Developments Ltd 161-163 Upper Lisburn Road Belfast BT10 0LJ	<b>Agent Name and Address:</b> Sarah Barrett 20 May Street Belfast BT1 4NL
<b>Date of last Neighbour Notification:</b>	28 December 2024
<b>Date of Press Advertisement:</b>	2 January 2025
<b>EIA Determination:</b>	
<b>Consultations:</b> Environmental Health –should Council be minded to grant approval, Environmental Health have requested suitable controls by way of enforceable conditions, in order to ensure that nearby receptors suffer no loss of amenity. Noise levels at outdoor areas exceed guidelines. Environmental Health acknowledge that this is a higher noise area and it is outside their remit to determine if the outdoor noise level is acceptable.  DfI Roads – No objection subject to a condition requiring the visibility splays and forward sight distance prior to any other development.  NI Water – Refusal – Network capacity issues.	



Rivers Agency –while not being responsible for the preparation of the Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment accepts its logic and has no reason to disagree with its conclusions.

Historic Environment Division - Historic Monuments – No objections.

Historic Environment Division – Historic Buildings – no objections subject to condition in relation to materials.

DAERA Water Management Unit – Condition to ensure no development takes place until the method of sewage disposal has been agreed, is required to ensure protection to the aquatic environment.

DAERA Regulation Unit – No objection subject to conditions in relation to the management of land contamination.

DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division – Content that there should be no adverse impacts on marine protected areas, marine habitats and/or marine species subject to a condition to ensure no development takes place until the method of sewage disposal has been agreed, and DAERA pollution standing advice is adhered to.

Shared Environmental Services – Following an appropriate assessment in accordance with the Regulations and having considered the nature, scale, timing, duration and location of the project, SES advises 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 subject to conditions.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) – The scheme includes 7no. 2 bed general need apartments as requested.

Conservation Area Officer - satisfied that the scheme complies with the SPPS, Policy HE6, and the Carrickfergus Conservation Area Design Supplement. Recommends that planning permission and conservation area consent be granted.

**Representations:**

The application was advertised in the local paper on 02.01.2025 and neighbours were notified on 12.12.2024.

To date 47 objections have been received.

7 letters of support have been received.

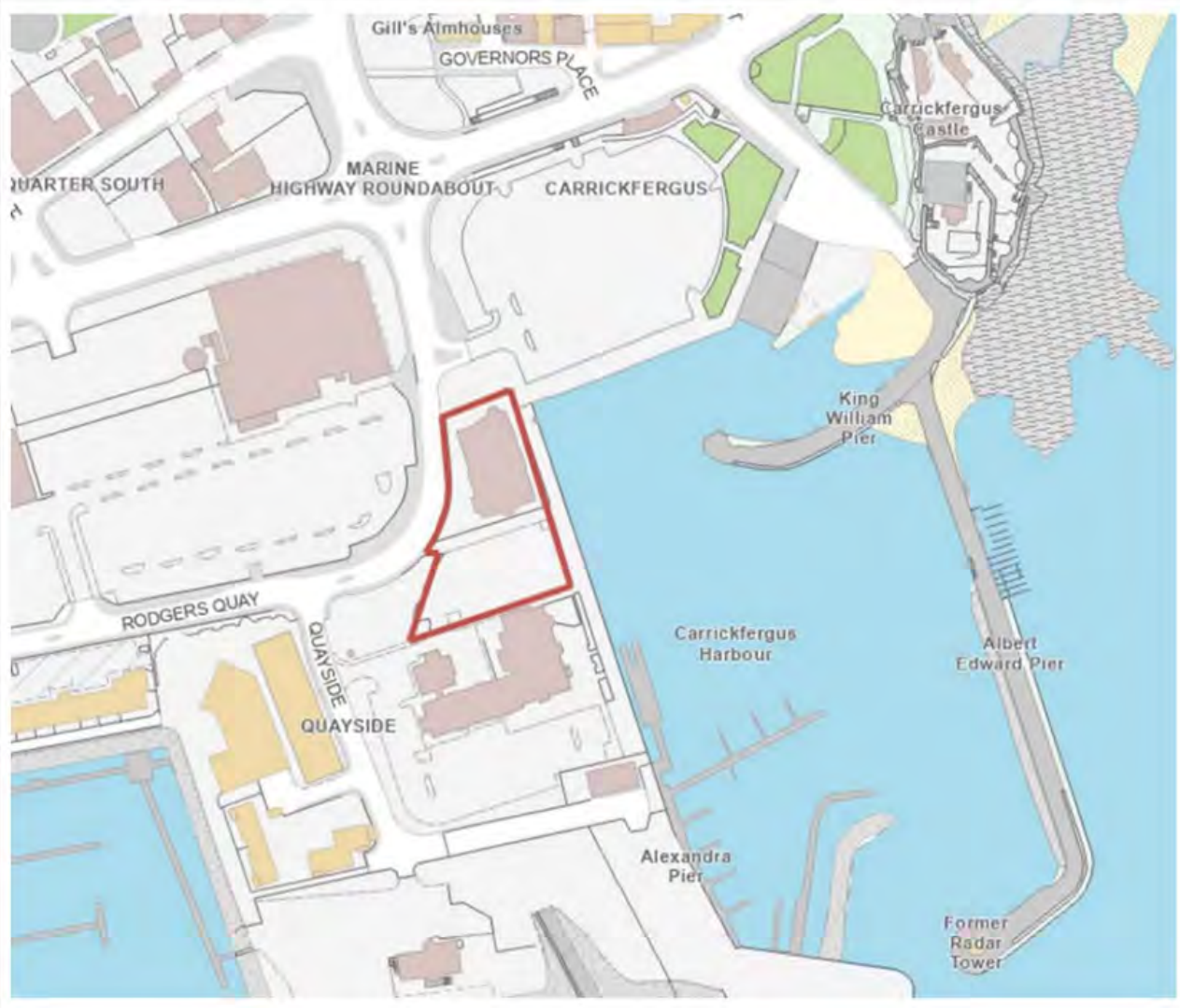
Letters of Support	7
Letters of Objection	47
Petitions	0
Signatures	0



Number of Petitions of Objection and signatures	
<p><b>Summary of Issues:</b></p> <p>A summary of the issues raised are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No need for apartments – already too many apartments in the area. – not zoned for residential use.</li> <li>• Other more suitable sites available for apartments.</li> <li>• Better suited for community/leisure/tourism use; something to rejuvenate the area.</li> <li>• No benefit to the local community.</li> <li>• Designated as commercial use.</li> <li>• Would erode conservation area.</li> <li>• Out of character.</li> <li>• Building too tall/ excessive height and will distract from views of the Castle.</li> <li>• Increased traffic – traffic management issues/ add to congestion.</li> <li>• Risk to individuals with mobility if the existing footpath adjacent to the Swift Restaurant is no longer accessible to the public.</li> <li>• Impact on utilities/ sewage system inadequate.</li> <li>• Objectors were told they would have uninterrupted views of the Castle and Belfast Lough.</li> <li>• Wider neighbour notification required.</li> <li>• Action should be taken against the owners of the property under public health and health and safety issues. Letting the site fall into disrepair</li> </ul>	

**Site Visit Report**

**Site Location Plan:**





**Date of Site Visit: 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

### **Characteristics of the Site and Area**

The site relates to land at 2 Rodgers Quay, on the site of a vacant restaurant and bar premises (formerly the Swift Bar).

This is an irregular shaped site, bound to the north and east by the Harbour Walkway, the south by the Premier Inn Hotel and to the west by Rodgers Quay.

The site currently comprises a one to two storey detached building with a surrounding surface level car park. The building was most recently in use as a public house and restaurant but is now vacant and has been since approximately 2019.

The site is located within the Town Centre limits of Carrickfergus as defined in the Local Development Plan 2030 – Plan Strategy, the extant Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001 and draft BMAP. The site is also within the Conservation Area and the Maritime Area as defined in CAP 2001.

The site is located approx. 200m west from Carrickfergus Castle.

To the south west of the site, directly opposite the Premier Inn, are 4-4 ½ storey apartment buildings which, alongside the 5 storey building known as Quayside Apartments.

The site is within the Urban Waterfront Area and located on a Development Opportunity Site as defined in draft BMAP.

The wider setting is characterised by a mix of historic assets, modern commercial developments, and open spaces, reflecting the evolving urban grain of Carrickfergus.

### **Description of Proposal**

Demolition of Existing building and redevelopment for residential comprising of 33 no Apartments (9no. 2 bed and 24no. 3 Bed) within 3 No. Three and half storey buildings including access, car parking, cycle parking, landscaping and all associated site works.

Block A contains 10no. apartments – 2no. 2-bed and 8 no. 3 bed.

Block B contains 6no. apartments – all 6 units are 3 bed.

Block C contains 17no. apartments – 10no. 3 bed and 7no. 2 bed social housing units.

### **Planning Assessment of Policy and Other Material Considerations**

#### **Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

This planning application is being considered in light of the assessment requirements of Regulation 43 (1) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended).



Shared Environmental Services have carried out an HRA of the proposal.

Following an appropriate assessment in accordance with the Regulations and having considered the nature, scale, timing, duration and location of the project, SES advises 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 subject to mitigation.

In reaching this conclusion, SES has assessed the manner in which the project is to be carried out including any mitigation. This conclusion is subject to mitigation measures being conditioned in any approval.

#### **Constraints:**

- Close proximity to Carrickfergus Castle (ANT 052:059).
- Close proximity to Grade B1 Listed Building (HB22/08/019) - King William III Pier, The Harbour.
- Close proximity to Grade B2 Listed Building (HB22/08/025) - Former Radar School, Albert Edward Pier.
- Partially within the Conservation Area.
- Carrickfergus Area of Archaeological Potential.
- Site lies within the 1 in 200 year coastal flood plain including the most up to date allowance for climate change.
- Potential area of inundation emanating from Dorisland Reservoir, South Woodburn Reservoir Upper, South Woodburn Reservoir Middle, South Woodburn Reservoir Lower and North Woodburn Reservoir.

#### **Relevant Planning History**

**LA02/2020/0802/F** – Demolition of existing building and redevelopment of site for residential comprising of 34 No. apartments (8 No. 2 bed and 26 No. 3 bed) within 3 No. four storey buildings including access, car parking, cycle parking, landscaping, waste water treatment works and all associated site works – **Refused and dismissed at appeal (2021/A0091)**.

**LA02/2020/0832/DCA** - Demolition of existing building and redevelopment of site for residential comprising 34 no. apartments (7 no. 2 bed and 27 no. 3 bed) within 3 no. four-storey buildings including access, car parking, cycle parking, landscaping, waste water treatment works (WWTW) and all associated site works – **Consent refused and dismissed at appeal (2021/0090)**.

**LA02/2024/0057/PAD** — Demolition of existing building and redevelopment of site for residential comprising 34 no. apartments (7 no. 2 bed and 27 no. 3 bed) within 3 no. four-storey buildings including access, car parking, cycle parking, landscaping, waste water treatment works (WWTW) and all associated site works - **Decided**.

The previous application for 34 no. apartments (LA02/2020/0802/F) was refused by the Planning Committee. The appeal decision acknowledged that the redevelopment of the site offers an opportunity to enhance the character and appearance of the Carrickfergus Conservation Area; however the proposal failed to do so due to the height, scale, mass, and



materials therefore the Council's first refusal reason was sustained. The Commissioner noted that the proposal failed to protect views from the Market Place.

This revised proposal addresses the fundamental design concerns raised by the Commissioner and Pre-Application Discussions (PAD) with Council confirmed that the revisions address many of the concerns originally held by Council in terms of the overall design and massing of the buildings.

#### **Planning Policy Context:**

Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) Edition 2

Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001 (CAP)

MEABC Local Development Plan 2030 - Plan Strategy

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

The Planning Act (NI) 2011 establishes a plan-led planning system which gives primacy to the plan in the determination of planning applications unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. Mid and East Antrim Borough Council adopted the Local Development Plan 2030 Plan Strategy on 16th October 2023. The Plan Strategy became effective from the date of adoption and is relevant to the consideration of this application.

The Council has yet to adopt its LPP, so in the interim, decisions fall to be made in light of current circumstances. The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 (as amended) (Regulations) makes provision for the preparation of a LDP by a Council. Part 9 and the Schedule contain the arrangements for the transition from departmental development plans made under the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 or the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 to the new council local development plans. It also defines what constitutes an LDP during the transition period until the council has fully adopted its own LDP.

In line with the transitional arrangements set out in the Schedule to the Regulations, the LDP is currently a combination of the departmental development plan (DDP) and the Plan Strategy read together. Any conflict between a policy contained in the DDP and those of the Plan Strategy must be resolved in favour of the Plan Strategy.

The Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001 comprises the DDP for this proposal, with draft BMAP a material consideration. The maps land use designations and zonings of the DDP remain relevant.



**The Local Development Plan 2030 Plan Strategy policies relevant to this proposal include:**

SGS1 – Spatial Growth Strategy

SGS2 – Settlement Hierarchy

SGS9 – Open Space Strategy

Policy GP1 – General Policy for All Development

Policy HOU 1 – Quality in New Residential Development in Settlements.

Policy HOU 5 – Affordable Housing in Settlements.

Policy HOU 6 – Housing Mix (Unit Types and Sizes).

Policy HOU7 – Adaptable and Accessible Homes.

Policy OSL4 – Public Open Space in New Residential Development.

Policy TR1 – Access to Public Roads.

Policy TR5 – Active Travel

Policy TR 6 – Parking and Servicing

Policy FRD1 – Development within Floodplains.

Policy FRD3 – Management of Development in regard to Surface Water Flood Risk

Policy FRD4 – Sustainable Drainage

Policy FRD6 – Development in Proximity to Controlled Reservoirs

Policy WW11 – Development Relying on Non-Mains Wastewater Infrastructure.

Policy HE1 – Archaeological Remains and their Settings.

Policy HE5 – Development affecting the Setting of a Listed Building

Policy HE6 – Conservation Areas

Policy NAT1 – European and Ramsar sites – International

Policy NAT2 – Species Protected by Law

Policy NAT3 - Sites of Nature Conservation Importance – National.

Policy NAT5 – Habitats, Species or Features of Natural Heritage Importance.

Creating Places guidance.

Carrickfergus Conservation Area Design Guide.

The Carrickfergus Town Plan Alterations Design Supplement.

**Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001 (CAP 2001)**



In the CAP the site is 'Whiteland' within the development limit of Carrickfergus Town Centre and it also falls within the limits of the Maritime Area and partially within the Conservation Area.

Policy HG1 of the CAP states that major housing development will be accommodated in the town. Policy TC1 states that appropriate uses consistent with maintaining a lively and viable town centre will be acceptable. Policy TC7 states that the design guidance in The Carrickfergus Town Plan Alterations Design Supplement (CTPADS) will be applied within the Town Centre. Policy TC9 relates to the Maritime Area and states that within this area development will be promoted which complements town centre uses and exploits the leisure potential of the waterfront location while respecting its unique historical context.

Policy MM ENV1 relates to Conservation Areas and states that in assessing development proposals within the CCA, the Department will continue to apply the policies contained in the published Design Guides. The design guidance in the CTPADS document referred to above supersedes the design guidance in the Carrickfergus Conservation Area booklet.

The relevant policies in CAP do not exclude residential development and the proposal for residential development would be compatible with a town centre location and thus acceptable in principle in accordance with the CAP.

#### **Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan**

The adoption of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP) was declared unlawful in May 2017. As a result, the Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001 (CAP) now operates as the local development plan for the area. However, a further consequence of the judgement is that the draft BMAP (dBMAP), published in 2004, remains as a material consideration.

The application site is located within the settlement limit and Carrickfergus Town Centre in dBMAP. This draft plan would support residential development in principle. The site is also within the Carrickfergus Urban Waterfront and located on a Development Opportunity Site which requires a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and access to be taken from Rodgers Quay. These requirements of dBMAP have been complied with and therefore the appeal proposal complies with the relevant provisions of dBMAP.

#### **Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) Edition 2**

Paragraph 6.133 states that good quality housing is a fundamental human need that plays a significant role in shaping our lives and our communities. In accordance with the regional policy approach for sustainable development, para. 6.137 states that sustainable housing developments should make use of brownfield land and more housing should be promoted in city and town centres. Housing development should be located in sustainable locations that facilitate a high degree of integration with community service, transport and take advantage of existing infrastructure

The proposal will be considered in detail below under the relevant policies of the **MEABC Local Development Plan 2030 - Plan Strategy**.



### **SGS1 - Spatial Growth Strategy**

Provides a strategic framework for realising the vision and objectives of the LDP.

The Spatial Growth Strategy seeks to focus major population growth and economic development in the three main towns of Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne, strengthening their roles as the prime locations for business, retail, housing, administration, leisure and cultural facilities within the borough. (SFG1, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12 & 15).

This application is for a proposed residential development on a brownfield site within the development limits of Carrickfergus. It is considered the proposal accords with the requirements of the Spatial Growth Strategy.

### **SGS2 – Settlement Hierarchy**

Provides the spatial framework for the delivery of the Spatial Growth Strategy. As highlighted in the Spatial Growth Strategy, the three main towns of Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne will be the focus for major population growth and economic development.

The proposal accords with this strategic policy.

### **Policy HOU 1 – Quality in New Residential Development in Settlements**

Planning permission will only be granted for new residential development where it is demonstrated that the proposal will create a high quality, sustainable and safe residential environment. All proposals for residential development will be expected to meet the General Policy and accord with other provisions of the LDP. The guidance in Appendix D will be taken into account when assessing proposals.

While appeal 2021/A0091 was dismissed, it was acknowledged that residential development is compatible with a town centre location and therefore acceptable in principle.

### **Relevant criteria in Appendix D:**

#### **Site Context:**

The previous scheme involved 3 no. 4 storey apartment blocks with flat roofs. The current proposal involves 3 no. 3 ½ storey apartment blocks with pitched and mansard roofs which address the previous concerns in relation to height and dominance. The ridge height has been reduced by 1.5m and the projecting gables by 0.6m.

The proposal incorporates 3 distinct blocks with varying footprints and avoids an over dominant single structure. The scale and massing of the proposed blocks are generally in keeping with the nearby 4 -4 ½ storey Quayside Apartments and are considered acceptable in the surrounding context.

The proposal respects the surrounding context in terms of the layout and scale of the built form. Contextual visualisations and sections demonstrate the relationship of the proposed



apartments with the nearby buildings. The overall building height has been established to be no higher than the height of the castle's curtain walls.

**Density:**

The density and ratio of built form to amenity space is generally reflective of the surrounding area.

**Layout considerations:**

The layout has been designed to provide a frontage along the harbour walkway and frontage onto Rodgers Quay. Spacing between the blocks avoids excessive massing and allows for visual breaks.

**Site Characteristics:**

There are no landscape feature on the site at present. The proposal includes areas of trees and shrub planting to help soften the proposal and provide an attractive layout.

**Privacy:**

The protection of the privacy of the occupants of residential properties is an important element of the quality of a residential environment and is particularly important where new development is proposed adjacent to existing development. The development has been designed to ensure no direct overlooking between apartments and there is more than 90m separation between the proposed apartments and Quayside Apartments. Due to the level of separation involved there is unlikely to be any direct overlooking or overshadowing between the proposed and existing apartments.

The ground floor apartments will site above the level of the adjacent harbour walkway with a 1.2m high and 1.5m high timber fence and pillars between, which will help protect the privacy of proposed occupants.

**Security from Crime:**

The proposal has been designed to enhance security from crime and discourage anti-social behaviour. Parking and pedestrian paths will be informally overlooked.

**Movement:**

The proposal has regard to sustainable movement patterns through the provision of pedestrian linkages and secure cycle storage. This is a relatively accessible location, in close proximity and easy walking distance to public transport links.

**Parking:**

The proposed layout indicates 41 on site car parking spaces. There are a further 5 spaces located in a public layby. The site is located within a highly accessible location and there is spare capacity in nearby car parks.

Therefore, a reduced level of parking is acceptable in this case.

**Form, Material and Detailing:**

The Conservation Area Officer considers the form, material and detail to be acceptable. This is considered under Policy HE6.

**Open Space:**

Creating Places states that in the case of apartment developments, private communal open space should range from a minimum of 10sqm to around 30sqm per unit with the appropriate level of provision to be determined having regard to the particular context of the development and the overall design concept.

Balconies and terraces comprise the private amenity spaces for individual apartments ranging from 7.5m<sup>2</sup> to 106.4m<sup>2</sup>. Larger units enjoy more generous spaces. A small communal open space is also provided for within the site with a marine garden which provides a seating / viewing area on to the harbour. A secondary area of amenity is provided in the south west corner of the site.

The site also benefits from proximity to the existing public amenity areas of the harbour walkway and wider marina environment.

In this case the level of amenity space provision is considered acceptable.

The proposal is in general compliance with Policy HOU1.

**Policy HOU5 – Affordable Housing**

Policy HOU5 of the Plan Strategy requires housing developments of 5 units or more, or sites of 0.2 hectares or more, to deliver a minimum 20% affordable housing where a need has been established.

In accordance with Policy HOU5 7no. social housing units are required as this equates to 20% of the proposed 33no. apartments.

NIHE have advised that they previously requested the provision of 7no. 2 bed social housing units, with one of these designed to generic wheelchair standard, to help meet an unmet need of social housing in Carrickfergus Town. Therefore, they can support the social housing provision as presented.

A condition restricting the use of these properties solely for the purposes of social housing will be attached to the decision notice and will ensure that they are completed prior to the occupation of any other residential units within that particular phase.

The social housing units shall be managed by a registered Housing Association in perpetuity with a s76 Planning Agreement in place to secure the social and affordable housing aspect of the proposal.

Policy HOU5 has been complied with.



#### **Policy HOU 6 – Housing Mix (Unit Types and Sizes).**

As the proposal is for a new residential development of more than 25 units Policy HOU6 is relevant. This policy requires a mix of house types and sizes and advises that there should be the provision for smaller homes to meet future household requirements in Mid and East Antrim.

The proposed development includes 9no. 2 bed units (7 of which are social housing units) and 24no. 3 Bed units. Apartment sizes range from approximately 65m<sup>2</sup> to 160m<sup>2</sup>.

NIHE are content with the social housing provision which will help meet unmet need in Carrickfergus Town.

It is considered that the housing mix is appropriate for this town centre location and the proposal is in general compliance with Policy HOU6.

#### **Policy HOU7 – Adaptable and Accessible Homes**

To assist with the delivery of adaptable and accessible homes, planning permission will be granted for a new dwelling, flat or apartment where a number of listed criteria are met.

In terms of this policy the proposed plans indicate sufficient sized rooms to allow space for turning a wheelchair. The living room is located on entrance levels and the window in the principle living space would enable outlook when seated. Bathrooms are on the same floor as bedrooms and allow space to turn a wheelchair. Four disabled parking spaces have been provided within the communal parking areas and there is space within the site to allow the enlargement of some parking spaces to 3300mm if required.

The proposal complies with Policy HOU7.

#### **Policy OSL 4 – Public Open Space in New Residential Development**

Council will only permit proposals for new residential development of 25 or more units, or on sites of one hectare or more, where public open space is provided as an integral part of the development.

The proposed apartments appear to rely primarily on balcony space as their private amenity space. The communal amenity space provision equates to 392.0m<sup>2</sup> which just falls short of the 10% requirement based on the site areas as required by Policy OSL4.

Policy permits an exception where residential development is designed to integrate with and make use of adjoining public open space.

The proposed apartments are adjacent to the Harbour walkway and wider waterfront and castle environment, which provide accessible public open space in close proximity to the site. These areas offer opportunity for recreation, walking and informal amenity for future residents. In this case, the site benefits from this existing area of public open space and the requirement to provide additional on-site open space is not considered necessary.

The proposal would meet the exception under Policy OSL4.

### **Policy GP1 - General Policy for all Development**

Planning permission will be granted for sustainable development where the proposal accords with the LDP and there is no demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance. Where this is not the case there will be a presumption to refuse planning permission.

#### **a) Criteria relating to Design Quality and Respecting Local Character and Distinctiveness**

The design whilst it is contemporary, it draws upon the heritage values associated with conservation area. The proposed development itself is in an area of reclaimed shoreline and is situated upon an existing modern structure, therefore it has been assessed as being of low archaeological potential. It is not anticipated that the proposal will have an adverse impact on natural heritage features.

#### **b) Criteria relating to Safeguarding Residential Amenity**

The proposed apartment are located over 90m from the closest residential properties at Quayside Apartments. Due to the separation involves, the proposal is unlikely to result in an adverse impact on the amenity of existing residents in terms loss of light, overshadowing, and loss of privacy.

Environmental Health acknowledge that the external amenity noise levels within this proposed development exceeds the guidance value. However, the noise guidance recognises that guideline values are not achievable in all circumstances where development may be desirable. In higher noise areas, such as city centres or urban areas development should be designed to achieve the lowest practicable levels in these external amenity spaces but should not be prohibited. Given the context of the area it is considered, on balance, that the external noise level is acceptable in this case.

Environmental Health are satisfied that the internal noise level can be achieved with mitigation.

The Preliminary Risk Assessment has identified a number of potential onsite sources of contamination; however no complete pollutant linkages were identified. No unacceptable environmental risks have been identified to human health. Environmental Health are content with the findings and have suggested a condition requiring development to cease if any previously unknown contamination is discovered.

The odour impact assessment concluded that the odour could have a slight adverse impact upon the proposed development if left unmitigated. The report recommends that the proposed apartments closest to the extraction system (i.e. the apartment located in Block C) should be fitted with mechanical ventilation, with the air vents positioned at roof level and at the furthest practicable position away from the extraction system to Brewers Fayre restaurant. Environmental Health are content subject to a condition requiring the applicant to carry out the odour mitigation measures.



#### **c) Criteria relating to Access/Movement/Car Parking**

As referred to in the assessment of the transportation policies, it is considered adequate access, parking and servicing arrangements are provided. The statutory consultee DfI Roads have not raised any issues regarding access and parking.

#### **d) Criteria relating to Safety and Safeguarding of Human Health/Wellbeing**

Mitigation measures are proposed to ensure internal noise levels are acceptable for proposed occupants. The proposed apartments will provide informal surveillance over the parking areas and harbour walkway which will help deter crime and promote personal safety.

Mitigation is proposed to provide protection against the risk of flooding, and the drainage proposals will not cause or exacerbate flooding elsewhere. The site is not within an area of known contamination or land instability. The necessary consultees have been consulted and suggested conditions are to be attached to any decision notice. It is not envisaged development will prejudice safety nor cause demonstrable harm to human health and wellbeing.

#### **e) Criteria relating to Sustainable Development**

Essential infrastructure to facilitate the development is available in close proximity to the site. Adequate bin storage has been provided within the site, in a designated bin storage areas within the site.

No unacceptable adverse impact on the quality and integrity of the environment is envisaged.

Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) have been included in the proposed development to manage surface water run-off.

The proposal is in general compliance with the relevant criteria of Policy GP1.

#### **Policy TR1 – Access to Public Roads**

The proposed access to the site will be from Rodgers Quay with visibility splays of 2.4m x 70m in both directions.

DFI Roads have been consulted and accept the proposed access and offer no objection subject to a condition requiring the access to be provided prior to any other development.

Based on the response from the statutory consultee it is considered that the access will not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of road users and therefore complies with Policy TR1.

#### **Policy TR5 – Active travel**

A new development proposal within an urban area should ensure the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are taken into account.



The proposal will provide safe and convenient pedestrian access in and out of the site and will link with the existing footpaths. Public transport links are available in close proximity; Carrickfergus railway station is approximately 650m away and bus stops are located approximately 200m away.

A large food store is located opposite the apartments and bars, restaurants and other facilities are closer than a 5-minute walk. Within an 8-minute walk (600m) from the site are three primary schools, churches, the town's library, off licenses, chemists and so on. The site is also well placed for walking to employment opportunities in the town.

In addition, a safe, convenience and secure cycle parking area is proposed within the site, adjacent to apartment blocks A and C.

It is considered that the proposed development has taken the needs of pedestrians and cyclists into account and assists in the promotion of active travel.

The proposal complies with policy TR5.

#### **Policy TR6 – Parking and Servicing**

A development proposal will be required to provide adequate provision for car parking and appropriate servicing arrangements. The precise amount of car parking will be determined according to the specific characteristics of the development and its location having regard to the Department's published standards. Approximately 55.5 spaces would be required based on the standards for green field sites or in low density areas. Lesser provision may be acceptable in inner urban locations and other high-density areas.

This proposal includes 41 on site car parking spaces; 4 of which are 3.3m wide spaces for those with disabilities or impaired mobility. There are a further 5 spaces located in a public layby.

DfI Roads have been consulted and have not raised any issue with the level of parking.

This site is located within the town centre location, near all of the towns facilities, with good access to public transport and spare capacity in nearby parking.

It is considered that this justifies a reduction in the number of parking spaces required and the proposal is in compliance with Policy TR6.

#### **Policy FRD1 – Development within Floodplain.**

DfI Rivers have confirmed that the site lies within the 1 in 200 year coastal flood plain including the most up to date allowance for climate change.

Policy FRD1 operates a presumption against development unless the applicant can demonstrate that the proposal constitutes an exception to the policy

It is considered that the proposal constitutes an exception under part b) which was previously established under application LA02/2020/0802/F.



Part b) 'New development within settlements in the coastal floodplain can be permitted where the site is raised (through infilling) to an acceptable level above the floodplain and meets the following criteria:

- i. The site is undefended and not dependant on the provision of new coastal flood defences. The proposed development includes land raising exceeding the effect of climate change.
- ii. This is a development site located within an engineered quay whose coastline is not of a type that would be subject to significant coastal erosion or instability.
- iii. The land is previously developed and the increased elevation will not affect existing servicing of the site or adjacent land.

The 1 in 200 year climate change flood level at this location is 3.38mOD. Rivers Agency recommends that all development is given a freeboard of 600mm above the 1 in 200 year climate change flood level, resulting in a finished floor level of 3.98mOD or above.

The Flood Risk Assessment advises that all buildings will have a finished ground floor level of 4.1 m OD. All external finished ground levels including green space are sited at levels of 3.95 – 3.9 m OD.

Car park / hard and soft landscaping is flood resilient and no additional mitigation is required. All external landscaping below the design level of 3.98mOD should be constructed from flood resilient materials.

Part of the Quay Access Path, which is a ramp that ties from an existing quay level of 2.8 m to the site level of 3.9 m would be affected by flooding. There are no flood pathways into buildings fronting onto the flooded area of the ramp.

Access to the development from the A2 dual carriageway is predicted to be flooded to a depth of 0.12m. Such a flood depth would cause nuisance but would not prevent access or egress to and from the site and would not prevent access by emergency services. No additional mitigation is required.

The FRA has also considered the effect of wave action and has found that this would be mitigated by the presence of a substantial harbour wall, the marina and the existing surrounding built development. Relatively shallow flooding from spray is mitigated by ensuring that building ground floor levels are raised relative to outlying ground and access levels.

DfI Rivers have reviewed the FRA and while not being responsible for the preparation of the Assessment, accepts its logic and has no reason to disagree with its conclusions.

Based on the response from the statutory consultee it is considered that the proposal complies with Policy FRD1.

### **Policy FRD3 – Management of Development in regard to Surface Water Flood Risk**

A proposal for development outside of floodplains will be permitted where the applicant has demonstrated that the risk of surface water flooding to the development, or elsewhere or



elsewhere as a result of the proposed development, can be effectively managed through adequate drainage assessment.

The Drainage Assessment advises that the proposed site will lead to a decrease of the extent of impermeable areas within the site boundary, resulting in a reduced rate and volume of runoff from the site when compared to the existing scenario.

The development will require a new connection to the existing NIW storm sewer within the site. NI Water has confirmed via a pre-development enquiry that the storm sewer traversing the site can serve the proposal at a discharge rate of 10lps/ha. As such, this has confirmed there is capacity and that the runoff can be accommodated without causing any significant effect on flood risk elsewhere.

Rivers Agency have advised that, while not being responsible for the preparation of this Drainage Assessment accepts its logic and has no reason to disagree with its conclusions.

Based on the information provided and the response from the statutory consultees it is considered that the risk of surface water flooding can be effectively managed and the proposal complies with Policy FRD3.

#### **Policy FRD4 – Sustainable Drainage (SuDS).**

A sustainable drainage solution for the management of surface water run-off will be required for any development that trigger the requirement for a drainage Assessment under Policy FRD3. The proposed development includes sustainable drainage in the form below ground surface water storage (hard SuDS), which limits flows to a greenfield rate of attenuation.

The proposal is in general compliance with Policy FRD4.

#### **Policy FRD6 – Development in Proximity to Controlled Reservoirs**

DfI Rivers Directorate reservoir inundation maps indicate that this site is in a potential area of inundation emanating from Dorisland Reservoir, South Woodburn Reservoir Upper, South Woodburn Reservoir Middle, South Woodburn Reservoir Lower and North Woodburn Reservoir.

Rivers Directorate is in possession of information confirming that Dorisland Reservoir, South Woodburn Reservoir Upper, South Woodburn Reservoir Middle, South Woodburn Reservoir Lower and North Woodburn Reservoir all have 'Responsible Reservoir Manager Status'. These reservoirs will be subject to regular inspection and maintenance regimes.

DfI Rivers Directorate has no reason to object to the proposal from a reservoir flood risk perspective.

The proposal is in compliance with Policy FRD6.



### **Policy HE1 – Archaeological Remains and their Settings.**

A development proposal which would adversely affect the integrity of archaeological remains of regional importance and their setting will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

The site is in close proximity to Carrickfergus Castle (ANT 052:059). The castle is one of the most significant regionally important archaeological monuments in Northern Ireland and is in State Care.

The updated Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) advises that the proposed development is sited within an area of reclaimed shoreline, having been reclaimed in the late 19th – early 20th century and is therefore assessed as being of low archaeological potential. The visual impact assessment concludes that the proposed development represents a modest increase in size and massing of development compared to that which currently occupies the site and that the new development appears to integrate well visually with the surrounding built environment of hotel and apartments.

HED (Historic Monuments) have considered the updated AIA and contextual drawings and concur with the conclusion of the Revised Archaeological Impact Assessment that no further archaeological mitigation is required. They consider the proposed apartments to be acceptable subject to conditions relating to the prevention of rooftop structures, such as masts, aerials and other roof plant/furniture.

HED HM are content that the proposal complies with Policy HE1, subject to condition.

### **Policy HE5 – Development affecting the Setting of a Listed Building**

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would adversely affect the setting of a listed building. The site is in close proximity to the HB22/08/019 King William III Pier, The Harbour and HB22/08/025 Former Radar School, Albert Edward Pier.

HED (Historic Buildings), has considered the impacts of the proposal on the setting of the listed buildings based the information provided and are content with the proposal subject to conditions in relation to materials.

HED (HB) consider the listed buildings are sufficiently removed in situation within the established setting to be relatively unaffected by development at the scale proposed.

Therefore, based on this response, it is considered that the proposal complies with Policy HE5.

### **Conservation Area**

Planning permission will only be granted for a new or replacement building in a Conservation Area, or which impacts on its setting, where it meets the General Policy, accords with other provisions of the LDP and satisfies the listed criteria under Policy HE6.

### **The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland, Edition 2 (SPPS)**

The SPPS is also a material consideration. Paragraph 6.18 states that, in managing development within a designated Conservation Area, the guiding principle is to afford special regard to the desirability of enhancing its character or appearance where an opportunity exists



or preserving its character or appearance where an opportunity to enhance does not arise. It further states that important views in and out of the Conservation Area should be retained.

Paragraph 6.19 of the SPPS advises that, in the interests of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, development proposals should be sympathetic to the characteristic built form of the area; respect adjoining buildings by way of scale, form, materials and detailing; not result in environmental problems such as noise, nuisance or disturbance; protect important views within, into and out of the area; protect trees and other landscape features contributing to character or appearance; conform with published Conservation Area design guidance; and only consider demolition of an unlisted building where the planning authority deems that the building makes no material contribution to the character or appearance of the area and where appropriate arrangements for redevelopment are in place.

### **Policy HE6 – Conservation Area**

The existing former Swift Bar building is unlisted and is not considered to make a material contribution to the character or appearance of the Carrickfergus Conservation Area or the Maritime Area. The building is vacant, of limited architectural quality and does not reinforce the historic, maritime or townscape character of this part of the waterfront. Its demolition is therefore considered acceptable in principle under paragraph 6.19 of the SPPS, subject to the acceptability of the proposed replacement development.

The proposal introduces a materially larger built form than the existing building. However, the relevant test is whether the replacement development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, having regard to its scale, form, massing, materials, detailing, layout and effect on important views. The scheme replaces a visually weak building and presents an opportunity to improve the appearance of this part of the waterfront.

The previous appeal decision is a material consideration. The Commissioner accepted that redevelopment of the site offered an opportunity to enhance the character and appearance of the Carrickfergus Conservation Area but found that the previous scheme failed to do so due to its height, scale, massing and materials, including its effect on views from Market Place. The current proposal has been considered in light of the Commissioner's findings, with particular regard to whether the revised height, scale, massing, roof form, materials and treatment of key public views now provide an acceptable response to the Conservation Area and its waterfront setting.

Although elements of the overall ridge height remain comparable with the earlier scheme, the revised mansard roof forms, stepped roofline, gables, chimneys and separation between the blocks materially alter the way in which the height and massing are perceived in public views. The revised roof form, together with the use of stepped ridge heights, gables and chimneys, reduces the visual weight of the development and provides a less imposing roofscape within the Conservation Area.

The perceived massing has also been broken up through the use of three distinct blocks, varied footprints, stepped ridge heights, gabled roof forms and articulated elevations. This avoids the appearance of a single dominant structure and provides a more compatible townscape rhythm. The use of vertically proportioned fenestration, shadow lines, ashlar-effect



relief lines and projecting elements provides further depth and articulation to the façades. This approach is considered sympathetic to the characteristic built form of the area and accords with Policy HE6(b) and paragraph 6.19 of the SPPS.

The revised scheme incorporates a material palette which seeks to balance traditional and contemporary elements in response to the Conservation Area and waterfront setting. The use of natural slate, smooth white render, ashlar relief lines and projecting string courses provides a traditional reference, while the controlled use of standing seam metal sheeting and cladding introduces a restrained contemporary element appropriate to the harbour context. The submitted drawings also identify fibre cement cladding, aluminium elements, frameless glass balustrades and concrete boundary features. These elements are acceptable in principle, subject to appropriate control through condition to ensure that the detailed finishes and external appearance preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and protect the setting of nearby listed buildings.

While balconies are not a traditional characteristic of historic buildings in Carrickfergus, their inclusion within a contemporary waterfront scheme is not inherently inappropriate. The use of frameless glass reduces visual clutter and allows the balconies to read as lightweight elements within the wider elevational composition.

The development responds positively to the site's density and plot layout by providing three separate blocks, maintaining visual breaks between them and creating frontage to the harbour walkway and Rodgers Quay. This assists in avoiding excessive massing and provides a more active edge to this part of the waterfront. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policy HE6(c).

Important views within, into and out of the Conservation Area have been considered in accordance with Policy HE6(d) and paragraph 6.19 of the SPPS. Particular regard has been given to views from Market Place, the castle environs, the harbour walkways, Rodgers Quay and the wider waterfront. The previous appeal decision identified harm arising from the prominence of the earlier scheme in views from Market Place. The revised proposal responds to this through varied roof heights, separation between the blocks, a more articulated façade treatment and a revised material palette. The contextual visualisations indicate that the development will be visible from public receptors, but that its revised form and massing would not dominate or materially erode important views of the castle, harbour or Maritime Area.

In relation to Policy HE6(e), matters relating to noise, odour and residential amenity are assessed elsewhere in this report. No environmental effects have been identified which would materially harm the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

There are no existing trees or landscape features on the site which make a material contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposal includes hard and soft landscaping which will assist in softening the development and improving its relationship with the harbour edge. The proposal is therefore acceptable having regard to Policy HE6(f) and paragraph 6.19 of the SPPS.

The proposal has been assessed against the Carrickfergus Conservation Area Design Supplement and the Carrickfergus Town Plan Alterations Design Supplement. It is considered to accord with the relevant guidance in respect of scale, form, roofscape, materials, detailing, townscape integration and the protection of important views. The proposal adopts a



contemporary waterfront form, but one which has been informed by traditional proportions, vertical emphasis, articulated elevations and a restrained material palette.

Having regard to paragraphs 6.18 and 6.19 of the SPPS, Policy HE6 of the Plan Strategy, the Carrickfergus Conservation Area Design Supplement, the Carrickfergus Town Plan Alterations Design Supplement, the previous appeal decision and the submitted contextual visualisations, the proposal is considered to preserve the character and appearance of the Carrickfergus Conservation Area and to respect important views within, into and out of the Conservation Area. The proposal therefore complies with paragraphs 6.18 and 6.19 of the SPPS and Policy HE6 of the Plan Strategy.

#### **Policy NAT1 – European and Ramsar sites – International**

Planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal that, either individually or in combination with existing and/or proposed plans or projects, is not likely to have a significant effect on:

- a) a European Site (Special Protection Area, proposed Special Protection Area, Special Areas of Conservation, candidate Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Community Importance); or
- b) a listed or proposed Ramsar Site.

The site is hydrologically linked to Belfast Lough Open Water SPA, Belfast Lough SPA, Belfast Lough Ramsar Site, East Coast (Northern Ireland) Marine Proposed SPA and North Channel SAC, via the adjacent marine environment and NI Water infrastructure.

The proposal generates the potential for polluting discharges to be released during the construction phase from vehicle, plant and machinery, and during the operational phase through incapacity within NI Water infrastructure.

The outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) sets out measures to mitigate any potential effects during the construction phase.

Provided the condition prohibiting any development until the method of sewage disposal has been agreed and DAERA Pollution Standing Advice are adhered to, DAERA Marine Conservation Branch do not anticipate any significant adverse impacts on designated sites.

A Habitats Regulations Assessment has been carried out by Shared Environmental Services on behalf of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. Following an appropriate assessment in accordance with the Regulations and having considered the nature, scale, timing, duration and location of the project, SES advises 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.

This is subject to conditions being attached to any approval conditions to ensure no development takes place until the method of sewage disposal has been agreed and the submission of a final CEMP Policy NAT1 has been complied with.

It is therefore considered NAT1 has been complied with.



### **Policy NAT2 – Species Protected by Law**

The proposal has the potential to have an adverse impact on Harbour Seal and Grey Seal which are protected under The Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 (as amended) and cetaceans which are protected under The Conservation (National Habitats, etc) Regulations (NI) 1995 (as amended) and other marine species of conservation importance.

DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division have advised that provided the condition and DAERA Pollution Standing Advice are adhered to, they do not anticipate any significant adverse impacts to marine mammals. Policy NAT2 had been complied with.

### **Policy NAT3 – Sites of Nature Conservation Importance - National**

The site is hydrologically linked to Belfast Lough ASSI. Provided the condition prohibiting any development until the method of sewage disposal has been agreed and DAERA Pollution Standing Advice are adhered to, DAERA Marine Conservation Branch do not anticipate any significant adverse impacts on Open Belfast Lough ASSI.

Policy NAT3 has been complied with.

### **Policy NAT5 – Habitats, Species or Features of Natural Heritage Importance.**

The proposal has the potential to have an adverse impact on large shallow inlets and bays and mudflats and sandflats. Provided the condition prohibiting any development until the method of sewage disposal has been agreed and DAERA Pollution Standing Advice are adhered to, DAERA Marine Conservation Branch do not anticipate any significant adverse impacts to marine habitats.

Policy NAT 5 has been complied with.

### **Policy WWI1 – Development Relying on Non-Mains Wastewater Infrastructure.**

A proposal for new development relying on non-mains wastewater infrastructure will only be permitted where the applicant has demonstrated, through the submission of sufficient information on the means of wastewater treatment and disposal that it will not create or add to a pollution problem.

NI Water have recommended a refusal based on network capacity issues. The public system cannot presently serve this development proposal without significant risk of environmental harm.

NI Water go on to advise that the applicant will need to submit an application for a Wastewater Impact Assessment. NI Water will assess the proposal to see if an alternative drainage or treatment solution can be agreed.

Therefore, it is considered that a condition can be added to ensure no development commences until a suitable means of sewage disposal has been agreed in writing with



Northern Ireland Water or a Consent to discharge has been granted under the terms of the Water (NI) Order 1999.

This condition will ensure that the proposed development will not increase the risk of pollution. Policy WW11 has been complied with.

### **Consideration of Issues**

#### **Too tall/impact on castle**

The impact on the castle has been considered in consultation with Historic Environment Division. HED are content with the scale of the proposed apartments and are satisfied that the development will not have a detrimental impact subject to conditions.

#### **Out of character/impact on conservation area.**

The scale, form, massing, materials and design of the proposal have been considered in detail in consultation with HED and the Council's Conservation Officer. The proposal has also been assessed having regard to the previous appeal decision, the submitted contextual visualisations, the Carrickfergus Conservation Area Design Supplement, paragraphs 6.18 and 6.19 of the SPPS and Policy HE6 of the Plan Strategy. While the development will introduce a larger built form than the existing building, it is considered to provide an acceptable replacement scheme which preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and respects important views within, into and out of the area. The proposal is therefore considered compliant with the SPPS and Policy HE6.

#### **Increased traffic/risk to individuals with mobility issues**

Construction traffic may impede movement in the surrounding area. However, disruption associated with the construction phase is temporary, and upon the development's completion, construction traffic will cease. The Council acknowledge that there will be an increase in traffic upon occupation of the apartments, however given that this is already a busy area within the town centre, the additional traffic will not be significantly disproportionate to the area. DfI Roads have been consulted and have not raised any objection to the additional traffic generation.

#### **Impact on sewage network**

No development can take place until the method of sewage disposal has been agreed. Therefore, there will be no pollution risk.

#### **No need for apartments/site better suited for other uses**

The principle of apartments was deemed acceptable under the previous application and PAC decision. The proposal for housing aligns with strategic policy which encourages more housing in urban areas and the use of brownfield land in sustainable and accessible locations. The Housing Executive support the provision of 7 no. social housing units within the scheme.

No such proposal for alternative uses has been forthcoming. The planning authority can only assess the proposal as submitted, and limited weight is given to the prospect of other speculative uses.



<p><b>Loss of views</b></p> <p>The loss of a view is not a determining material planning consideration.</p> <p><b>Wider neighbour notification required</b></p> <p>Objectors feel that due to the scale of the proposal and the wider reaching effect that the wider population should have been notified.</p> <p>The Council are satisfied that the neighbour notification procedure has been carried out in accordance with the statutory requirement. The application has also been advertised in the local paper in line with the statutory requirement.</p> <p><b>Action to be taken on landowner</b></p> <p>Objectors feel that the landowner has let the site fall into a state of disrepair in order to benefit from redevelopment. This is not a material planning consideration and safety of the existing building falls outside the remit of this planning application.</p> <p>For the reasons considered above, and in accordance with Section 6(4) of the Act, the proposal complies with the Local Development Plan 2030 – Plan Strategy and there are no material considerations to indicate otherwise.</p>	
<p><b>Neighbour Notification Checked</b></p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p><b>Summary of Recommendation</b></p> <p>Approve</p>	
<p><b>Conditions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p>The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission.</p> <p>Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.</p> </li> <li> <p>The vehicular access including visibility splays and any forward sight distance, shall be provided in accordance with Drawing No. 02/1 prior to the commencement of any other development hereby permitted. The area within the visibility splays and any forward sight line shall be cleared to provide a level surface no higher than 250mm above the level of the adjoining carriageway and such splays shall be retained and kept clear thereafter.</p> </li> </ol>	



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

3. No development shall take place on site until the method of sewage disposal has been agreed in writing with Council or a consent to discharge has been granted under the terms of the Water (NI) Order 1999.

Reason: To ensure protection to the aquatic environment.

4. A Final Construction Environmental Management Plan must be submitted by the appointed contractor to the planning authority prior to work commencing. This shall reflect all the mitigation and avoidance measures outlined in the oCEMP (McCloy Consulting, December 2024 Rev 2). The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the planning authority.

Reason: To ensure the project will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site.

5. Prior to the construction of the drainage network, the applicant shall submit a Final Drainage Assessment, compliant with the Local Development Plan 2030 Plan Strategy (LDP), to be agreed with the Council which demonstrates the safe management of any out of sewer flooding emanating from the surface water drainage network, in a 1 in 100 year event with an additional allowance for climate change.

Reason: To safeguard against flood risk to the development and from the development to elsewhere.

6. If during the development works, new contamination or risks are encountered which have not previously been identified, works should cease and the Planning Authority shall be notified immediately. This new contamination shall be fully investigated in accordance with the Land Contamination: Risk Management (LCRM) guidance available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/landcontamination-how-to-manage-the-risks>. In the event of unacceptable risks being identified, a remediation strategy shall be agreed with the Planning Authority in writing, and subsequently implemented and verified to its satisfaction.

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

7. After completing the remediation works under Condition 6; and prior to occupation of the development, a verification report needs to be submitted in writing and agreed with Planning Authority. This report should be completed by competent persons in



accordance with the Land Contamination: Risk Management (LCRM) guidance available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/landcontamination-how-to-manage-the-risks>.

The verification report should present all the remediation, waste management and monitoring works undertaken and demonstrate the effectiveness of the works in managing all the risks and wastes in achieving the remedial objectives.

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

8. The social housing units, as identified on the approved Drawing No. 08 Revision 1 and Drawing No. 09 Revision 1 uploaded to the planning portal on 9 February 2026, shall be completed prior to the occupation of any other residential units within the development.

Reason: To ensure the provision of the 7 no. social housing units within the development and to comply with Policy HOU5 of the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Local Development Plan 2030 – Plan Strategy.

9. No aerials, masts, meter boxes, ventilation grilles, flues or other rooftop features shall extend above the external elevations and ridge heights shown on the approved drawings, without the prior consent in writing of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council in consultation with Historic Environment Division.

Reason: To ensure compliance with Policy HE1 of the Mid and East Antrim Local Development Plan 2030 Plan Strategy and prevent adverse impact on the setting of Carrickfergus Castle.

10. The external materials and finishes shall be carried out in accordance with the Proposed Finishes/Materials schedules shown on the approved plans and shall include:

- natural 'Celtic' grade 9mm slate and standing seam jointed metal sheeting to the roof;
- aluminium rainwater goods;
- metal fascias and soffits;
- timber framed windows and aluminium casements, finished RAL 7040 Grey;
- aluminium or hardwood timber doors, as shown on the approved drawings;
- smooth render to walls, incorporating ashlar relief lines to first floor level and projecting string courses;
- aluminium copings and window cills.

No substitution or alteration of the above external materials or finishes shall take place unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the external materials and finishes are of appropriate quality in the interests of preserving the character and appearance of the Carrickfergus



Conservation Area and protecting the setting of nearby listed buildings, in accordance with Policy HE6 and Policy HE5 of the Mid and East Antrim Local Development Plan 2030 Plan Strategy.

11. Prior to the occupation of any residential apartment hereby approved, the applicant shall carry out noise mitigation measures to achieve daytime internal noise levels within living rooms of no greater than 35dB LAeq,16hour, dining rooms/areas of no greater than 40dB LAeq,16hour, bedrooms no greater than 35dB LAeq,16hour, and night-time internal noise levels within bedrooms of no greater than 30dB LAeq,8hour, as specified within the noise impact assessment entitled, 'Noise & Odour Impact Assessment P941-1', dated October 2025.

Reason: To protect nearby residential amenity from excessive noise.

12. Prior to the occupation of any residential apartment hereby approved, the applicant shall carry out odour mitigation measures as presented within the odour impact assessment report entitled, 'Noise & Odour Impact Assessment, P941-1', dated October 2025.

Reason: To protect nearby residential amenity from odour impact.

13. All soft and hard landscaping shall be in accordance with the details indicated on Drawing No. 02/1 and in accordance with the appropriate British Standard or other recognised Codes of Practice in the first available planting season following commencement of the development or before occupation of the first residential unit in the development, whichever is the later.

Reason: To ensure the provision of a high standard of landscape and adequate amenity space.

**Case Officer Signature:**

*N Alexander*

**Date:** 30 April 2026

**Appointed Officer Signature:**

*G McQuinn*

**Date:** 30 April 2026



**Development Management Consideration**

**Details of Discussion:**

Approve as per this report

Letter(s) of objection/support considered:      Yes

Group decision:

*G McQuinn*

*N Alexander*

**D.M. Group Signatures**

**Date**                                      **30.04.2026**



## Committee Application

<b>Development Management Officer Report</b>	
<b>Case Officer:</b> Norma Alexander	
<b>Application ID:</b> LA02/2024/0900/DCA	<b>Target Date:</b>
<b>Proposal:</b> Demolition of Existing building and redevelopment for residential comprising of 33 no Apartments (9no. 2 bed and 24no. 3 Bed) within 3 No. Three and half storey buildings including access, car parking, cycle parking, landscaping and all associated site works.	<b>Location:</b> Lands to the North of Premier Inn Hotel and East of Rodgers Quay, Carrickfergus Waterfront, Carrickfergus BT38 8BE
<b>Applicant Name and Address:</b> Massereene Developments Ltd 161-163 Upper Lisburn Road Belfast BT10 0LJ	<b>Agent Name and Address:</b> Sarah Barrett 20 May Street Belfast BT1 4NL
<b>Date of last Neighbour Notification:</b>	
<b>Date of Press Advertisement:</b>	2 January 2025
<b>EIA Determination:</b>	
<b>Consultations:</b> Conservation Area Officer - The demolition of the existing Swift Bar is acceptable in principle, provided an agreed redevelopment scheme is in place for the site	
<b>Representations:</b> The application was advertised in the local paper on 02.01.2025. 7 objections have been received in relation to this demolition consent application.	
Letters of Support	0
Letters of Objection	7
Petitions	0
Signatures	0
Number of Petitions of Objection and signatures	
<b>Summary of Issues:</b>  The issues raised relate to the proposed redevelopment scheme.	

## Site Visit Report

### Site Location Plan:



**Date of Site Visit: 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

### Characteristics of the Site and Area

The site relates to land at 2 Rodgers Quay, on the site of a vacant restaurant and bar premises (formerly the Swift Bar). This is an irregular shaped site, bound to the north and east by the Harbour Walkway, the south by the Premier Inn Hotel and to the west by Rodgers Quay.

The site currently comprises a one to two storey detached building with a surrounding surface level car park. The building was most recently in use as a public house and restaurant but is now vacant and has been since approximately 2019.



The site is located within the Town Centre limits of Carrickfergus as defined in the Local Development Plan 2030 – Plan Strategy, the extant Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001 and draft BMAP. The site is also within the Conservation Area and the Maritime Area as defined in CAP 2001.

The site is located approx. 200m west from Carrickfergus Castle. To the southwest of the site, directly opposite the Premier Inn, are 4-4 ½ storey apartment buildings which, alongside the 5 storey building known as Quayside Apartments. The site is within the Urban Waterfront Area and located on a Development Opportunity Site as defined in draft BMAP.

#### **Description of Proposal**

Demolition Consent for the existing building and redevelopment proposal for residential comprising of 33 no Apartments (9no. 2 bed and 24no. 3 Bed) within 3 No. Three and half storey buildings including access, car parking, cycle parking, landscaping and all associated site works.

#### **Planning Assessment of Policy and Other Material Considerations**

##### **Planning History:**

**LA02/2020/0802/F** – Demolition of existing building and redevelopment of site for residential comprising of 34 No. apartments (8 No. 2 bed and 26 No. 3 bed) within 3 No. four storey buildings including access, car parking, cycle parking, landscaping, wastewater treatment works and all associated site works – **Refused and dismissed at appeal (2021/A0091)**.

**LA02/2020/0832/DCA** - Demolition of existing building and redevelopment of site for residential comprising 34 no. apartments (7 no. 2 bed and 27 no. 3 bed) within 3 no. four-storey buildings including access, car parking, cycle parking, landscaping, waste water treatment works (WWTW) and all associated site works – **Consent refused and dismissed at appeal (2021/0090)**.

**LA02/2024/0057/PAD** — Demolition of existing building and redevelopment of site for residential comprising 34 no. apartments (7 no. 2 bed and 27 no. 3 bed) within 3 no. four-storey buildings including access, car parking, cycle parking, landscaping, wastewater treatment works (WWTW) and all associated site works - **Decided – Advice given**.

**LA02/2024/0899/F** - Demolition of Existing building and redevelopment for residential comprising of 33 no Apartments (9no. 2 bed and 24no. 3 Bed) within 3 No. Three and half storey buildings including access, car parking, cycle parking, landscaping and all associated site works – **Current application – recommended for approval**.

##### **Planning Policy Context**

Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) Edition 2

Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001 (CAP)

MEABC Local Development Plan 2030 - Plan Strategy



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

The Planning Act (NI) 2011 establishes a plan-led planning system which gives primacy to the plan in the determination of planning applications unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. Mid and East Antrim Borough Council adopted the Local Development Plan 2030 Plan Strategy on 16th October 2023. The Plan Strategy became effective from the date of adoption and is relevant to the consideration of this application.

The Council has yet to adopt its LPP, so in the interim, decisions fall to be made in light of current circumstances. The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 (as amended) (Regulations) makes provision for the preparation of a LDP by a Council. Part 9 and the Schedule contain the arrangements for the transition from departmental development plans made under the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 or the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 to the new council local development plans. It also defines what constitutes an LDP during the transition period until the council has fully adopted its own LDP.

In line with the transitional arrangements set out in the Schedule to the Regulations, the LDP is currently a combination of the departmental development plan (DDP) and the Plan Strategy read together. Any conflict between a policy contained in the DDP and those of the Plan Strategy must be resolved in favour of the Plan Strategy.

The Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001 comprises the DDP for this proposal, with draft BMAP a material consideration. The maps land use designations and zonings of the DDP remain relevant.

The Local Development Plan 2030 Plan Strategy policies relevant to this proposal include: Policy HE6 – Conservation Areas

#### **Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland, Edition 2 (SPPS)**

The SPPS is a material consideration in the determination of this application. Paragraph 6.18 advises that, in managing development within a designated Conservation Area, the guiding principle is to afford special regard to the desirability of enhancing its character or appearance where an opportunity exists or preserving its character or appearance where an opportunity to enhance does not arise. It further advises that there will be a general presumption against the grant of Conservation Area Consent for demolition of unlisted buildings where proposals would conflict with this principle.

Paragraph 6.19 advises that, in the interests of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, development proposals should only consider the demolition of an unlisted building where the planning authority deems that the building makes no material contribution to the character or appearance of the area and where appropriate arrangements for redevelopment are in place.



**Policy HE6 Demolition within a Conservation Area**

Policy HE6 of the Plan Strategy states that there will be a presumption in favour of retaining unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas. A development proposal involving the demolition of an unlisted building in a Conservation Area will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where it is demonstrated that the existing building makes no material contribution to the character and appearance of the area, and it is demonstrated that the new building enhances the character or appearance of the area.

The Conservation Area Officer has considered the proposal and is of the opinion that the demolition of the existing former Swift Bar building is acceptable in principle, provided an agreed redevelopment scheme is in place for the site.

The existing building is unlisted and is not considered to make a material contribution to the character or appearance of the Carrickfergus Conservation Area or the Maritime Area. It is a vacant former public house/restaurant of limited architectural quality, set within a surface-level car parking area, and does not display traditional architectural detailing, historic fabric, or townscape qualities which would warrant its retention. Its scale, form, materials and relationship with the harbour edge do not reinforce the historic, maritime or townscape character of this part of the waterfront. The building is therefore not regarded as a positive or significant element within the Conservation Area, and its removal would not result in the loss of a building which contributes materially to the area’s character or appearance.

The associated redevelopment proposal under LA02/2024/0899/F is recommended for approval and is considered to preserve the character and appearance of the Carrickfergus Conservation Area. Appropriate arrangements for redevelopment are therefore considered to be in place.

Demolition should only proceed once the associated redevelopment scheme is capable of implementation, to avoid the creation of a vacant or gap site which could harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This can be secured by condition requiring evidence of a legally binding contract for the redevelopment works approved under LA02/2024/0899/F before demolition takes place.

Having regard to paragraphs 6.18 and 6.19 of the SPPS, Policy HE6 of the Plan Strategy and the associated redevelopment proposal under LA02/2024/0899/F, the demolition of the existing building is considered acceptable. The proposal therefore complies with the SPPS and Policy HE6 of the Plan Strategy.

<b>Neighbour Notification Checked</b>	N/A
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<b>Summary of Recommendation</b> Approve
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<b>Conditions:</b>
1. The works hereby permitted shall be begun not later than the expiration of 5 years beginning with the date on which this consent is granted.
Reason: As required by Section 105 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.



- 2. In accordance with Section 105 of The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, the buildings shall not be demolished until a contract for the carrying out of works, in accordance with planning approval LA02/2024/0899/F, has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Council.  
  
Reason: To ensure the vacant site does not harm the conservation area.
- 3. The demolition works hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents.  
  
Reason: To ensure that the development is developed/operated in accordance with the approved plans and documents.

**Case Officer Signature:** *N Alexander*  
**Date:** 5 May 2026

**Appointed Officer Signature:**  
*G McQuinn*  
**Date:** 5 May 2026



**Development Management Consideration**

**Details of Discussion:**

**Approve as per this report**

**Letter(s) of objection/support considered:** N/A

**Group decision:**

*G McGuire*

*N Alexandre*

**D.M. Group Signatures**

**Date** 05.05.2026

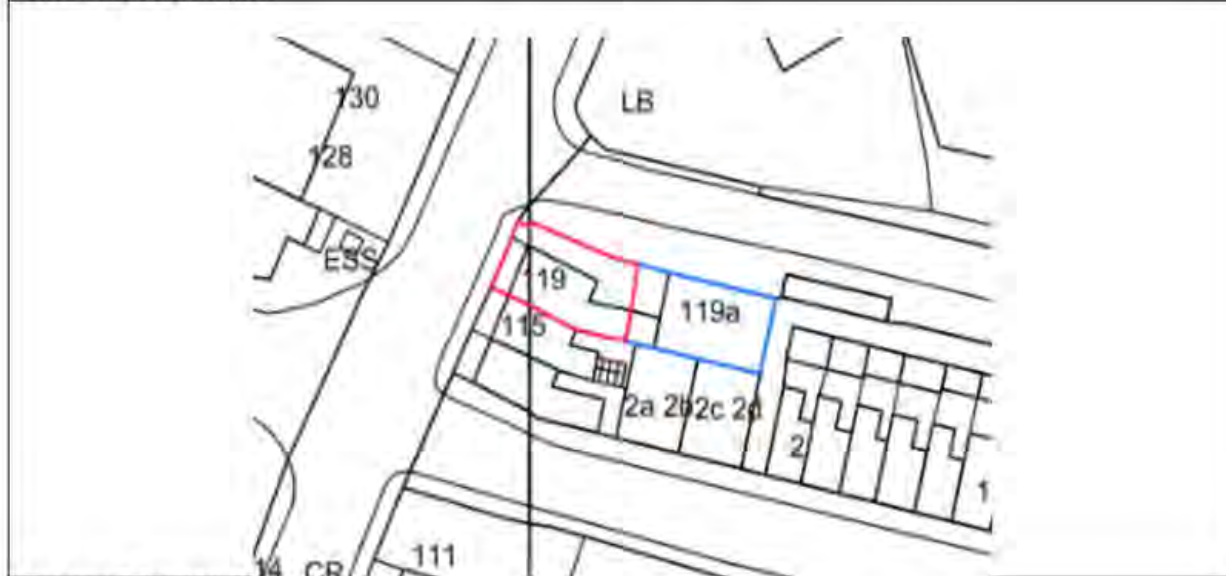
## Committee Application

<b>Development Management Officer Report</b>	
<b>Application ID:</b> LA02/2026/0140/F	<b>Target Date:</b>
<b>Proposal:</b> CHANGE OF USE FROM DWELLING TO HOUSE OF MULTIPLE OCCUPATION WITH 2ND FLOOR REAR EXTENSION	<b>Location:</b> 119 BROUGHSHANE STREET TOWN PARKS BALLYMENA BT43 6EE
<b>Applicant Name and Address:</b> JOE MCLAUGHLIN 75 LOUGHBEG ROAD TOOME	<b>Agent Name and Address:</b> NORMAN MCKERNAN 12 CENNICK ROAD GRACEHILL BALLYMENA BT42 2NH
<b>Date of last Neighbour Notification:</b>	11 March 2026
<b>Date of Press Advertisement:</b>	12 March 2026
<b>EIA Determination:</b>	
<b>Consultations:</b> NI Water – No objections DfI Roads – No objections – substandard parking Environmental Health Department – No objections with informative	
<b>Representations:</b>  The application was advertised in the local press and notifiable neighbours were contacted by letter. 12 Letters of objection have been received to date.	
Letters of Support	0.0
Letters of Objection	12
Petitions	0.0
Signatures	0.0
Number of Petitions of Objection and signatures	
<b>Summary of Issues:</b> Objections submitted raised the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alter the character of the area,</li> <li>- Loss of community cohesion,</li> <li>- Loss of a large family home,</li> <li>- Insufficient parking/more demand on on-street parking,</li> <li>- Traffic congestion/road safety,</li> <li>- Overdevelopment of the site/rooms not up to standard size</li> <li>- Overcrowding.</li> </ul>	

- Precedent for further HMOs,
- Anti-social behaviour,
- Noise impact,
- Potential for accumulation of waste and rubbish,
- Intensification of site could lead to a fire safety,
- Increased pressure on water and sewage infrastructure,
- Devaluation of properties
- concerns regarding future occupants of the proposed HMO.

**Site Visit Report**

**Site Location Plan:**



**Date of Site Visit:** 2 March 2026

**Characteristics of the Site and Area**

The site is located at 119 Broughshane Street, Ballymena, currently on site is an end of terrace three storey dwelling with a storey and a half rear return. The external finishes include roughcast render and red facing brick, to the front of the dwelling there is a small, enclosed yard which is defined by a roughcast render 1m high wall, there is an access to the rear yard abutting the northern gable.

The surrounding area has a mix of commercial, retail, residential and community buildings. The adjacent properties at No 117 & 115 have previously underwent conversion to apartments.

The site is located within the central area of Ballymena as defined in the Ballymena Area Plan 1986-2001 and the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Local Development Plan 2030 - Plan Strategy.

**Description of Proposal**

Full application for change of use from Dwelling to House of Multiple Occupation with 2nd floor rear extension.

The application pertains to the change of use of the existing dwelling to a house in multiple occupation. The proposal includes an extension to the rear of the property at 2nd floor level to provide an additional bathroom. The dwelling currently has 6 bedrooms and will retain 6 bedrooms with the addition of 2 ensuites (to the existing bedrooms at 1st & 2nd Floor) and 2 bathrooms – one on first floor and second floor extension.

The dwelling has an approximate existing external floor area of 196sqm.

The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of commercial, retail, office, community and residential properties. The adjacent terrace dwellings in the row No's 117 & 115 have previously been approved for conversion to apartments with an extension to No 115 to provide an additional 4 apartments. There is a current application for No 119a for the erection of 4 storey residential building consisting of 4 x 2-bedroom apartments.

### **Planning History**

G/1985/0279/F – Change of use from vacant domestic store to showroom - Approved  
G/1992/0504/F – Change of use from showroom to licensed restaurant – Approved

### **Planning Assessment of Policy and Other Material Considerations**

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS 2035).  
Strategic Planning Policy Statement (NI) – Planning for Sustainable Development Edition 2 2025  
Ballymena Area Plan 1986-2001  
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Local Development Plan 2030 - Plan Strategy  
SGS1 – Spatial Growth Strategy  
SGS2 – Settlement Hierarchy  
Policy HOU1 – Quality in New Residential Development in Settlements  
Policy HOU2 – The Conversion or Change of Use of Existing Buildings to Flats or Apartments  
Policy TR5 – Active Travel  
Policy TR6 – Parking and Servicing  
Policy GP1 – General Policy for all Development  
Policy FRD1 – Development within Floodplains  
Creating Places - Achieving Quality in Residential Environments  
Development Control Advice Note 15 – Vehicle Access Standards  
Parking Standards (2005)

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

The Planning Act (NI) 2011 establishes a plan-led planning system which gives primacy to the LDP in the determination of planning applications unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council adopted the Local Development Plan 2030 Plan Strategy on 16th October 2023. The Plan Strategy became effective from the date of adoption and is relevant to the consideration of the following planning application.

The Council has yet to adopt its Local Policies Plan. In the interim, in line with the transitional arrangements set out in the Schedule to the Regulations, the LDP is currently a combination of the departmental development plan (DDP) and the Plan Strategy read together. Any conflict between a policy contained in the DDP and those of the Plan Strategy must be resolved in favour of the Plan Strategy.

The Ballymena Area Plan comprises the DDP for this proposal. The land use designations and zonings of the DDP remain relevant.

A House in Multiple Occupancy (HMO) is deemed to be sui generis use for the purpose of the Planning (Use Classes) Order (NI) 2015) and planning permission is required for a change of use from a dwelling to HMO.

Based on the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 an HMO is living accommodation that is the main residence of three or more people who are from more than two households rented by at least one of the people living in the accommodation.

### **Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland Edition 2 2025 (SPPS)**

Strategic Policies pertaining to housing are detailed within the SPPS. The policy approach must be to facilitate an adequate and available supply of quality housing to meet the needs of everyone.

A key strategic aim of both the SPPS and the RDS is to achieve balanced communities and strengthen community cohesion. The provision of good quality housing offering a variety of house types, sizes and tenures to meet different needs, is fundamental to the building of more balanced communities.

Under the SPPS the guiding principle in determining planning applications is that sustainable development should be permitted, having regard to the development plan and all other material considerations, unless the proposed development will cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance.

### **Ballymena Area Plan 1986-2001 (BAP)**

Part 2, Section 5.0 of the BAP sets out the strategic vision for Housing in Ballymena for that Plan period. Of note is section 5.8 when discussing appropriate density in housing areas, it states that regard will be had to local conditions including the nature and character of surrounding development as well as the detailed design and layout of the proposed development. The Department (Council) will give favourable consideration to high density development in the centre of Ballymena. The site falls within the central area of Ballymena and the density in this area has moved away from single family homes in the immediate area over a number of years and comprises mainly of apartments.

### **Local Development Plan 2030 – Plan Strategy**

#### **SGS1 – Spatial Growth Strategy**

The Spatial Growth Strategy seeks to manage growth to secure sustainable patterns of development across Mid and East Antrim. Major population growth and economic development is focused in the three main towns of Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne, strengthening their roles as the prime locations for business, retail, housing, administration, leisure and cultural facilities within the borough.

In line with strategic policy this proposal is located within the existing urban fabric and

on developed land and will provide a sustainable form of development.

### **SGS2 – Settlement Hierarchy**

The application site is located within the Main Town of Ballymena, designated as such for the range of services on offer, including transport links within and beyond the borough and its strength of economic base. All these considerations underline the regional status of Ballymena, as set out in the RDS. As highlighted in the Spatial Growth Strategy Ballymena will be the focus for major population growth and economic development together with Larne and Carrickfergus.

The proposal accords with this strategic policy.

### **Policy HOU1 - Quality in New Residential Development in Settlements**

Although it has been set out that an HMO is a sui generis use class, it is practical to consider such proposals under the policy context associated with housing due to comparable implications.

Planning permission will only be granted for new residential development where it is demonstrated that the proposal will create a high quality and sustainable residential environment. All proposal will be expected to meet the General Policy and accord with other provisions of the LDP.

In established residential areas, planning permission will only be granted for the redevelopment of existing buildings to accommodate new housing where the proposed density is not significantly higher than that found in the established residential area and the pattern of development is in keeping with the overall character and environmental quality of the established residential area.

The guidance in Appendix D of the Plan Strategy will be taken into account when assessing proposals. Not all elements will be applicable to this proposal. The assessment will reflect those elements that are relevant having regard to the scale and nature of the proposal.

## **Appendix D**

### **Site Context:**

The proposal includes a 2nd floor rear extension to provide an additional bathroom; there are no alterations to the front façade of the dwelling. The proposal would result in what is essentially a residential end use which is compatible with the area. The neighbouring dwellings are of a similar style and the character and design of the existing dwelling will be maintained.

### **Density:**

The dwelling currently has 6 bedrooms and will retain 6 bedrooms with the addition of 2 ensembles (to the existing bedrooms at 1st & 2nd Floor) and 2 bathrooms – one on first floor and second floor extension. There will be no increase in density and as such the proposal would remain consistent with the overall established residential character of the area.

**Privacy:**

The protection of the privacy of the occupants of residential properties is an important element of the quality of a residential environment.

The proposed changes relate to a rear extension at 2nd floor level to provide an additional bathroom, it is unlikely that the development would have any additional impact on the privacy of nearby residents compared to the current situation.

**Movement and Parking:**

As the proposal is for a change of use of an existing residential property, the parking arrangements are already in place on street without assigned spaces. The site is within close proximity to public car parks and within walking distance to public transport links, Ballymena Train and Bus Station is within less than 1 mile and a 20 mins walking distance of this site, this is a sustainable location and will help reduce the dependency upon the private car.

**Private Open Space:**

There are no changes to the current level of amenity space. The rear yard, which is approx. 55sqm will be retained.

The dwelling in question currently has six double bedrooms and in theory could accommodate a family of twelve without restriction.

The site benefits from proximity to areas of public open space such as People Park within walking distance which will provide opportunity for outdoor amenity, on balance, the level of private amenity space is considered acceptable.

It is considered that the proposal complies with Policy HOU1.

**HOU2 The Conversion or Change of Use of Existing Buildings to Flats or Apartments**

The conversion or change of use of existing buildings to flats or apartments, including those for multiple occupancy will be permitted where Policy HOU1 Quality in New Residential Development in Settlements, and all the additional criteria set out below are met:

a) The proposal maintains or enhances the form, character and architectural features, design and setting of the existing building.

The addition of a modest rear extension at 2nd floor level will have no impact on overall external appearance of the dwelling and therefore it is considered that the proposal maintains the existing form, character and architectural features of the existing building. This criterion has been met.

b) The original property is greater than 150 square metres gross internal floorspace in the case of sub-division of an existing dwelling.

The existing dwelling has an approximate floor area 196 sqm which will increase to 215sqm following the addition of the rear extension

c) All flats or apartments are self-contained (i.e. having separate bathroom, w.c. and kitchen available for use only by the occupiers).

The proposal is not providing flats or apartments. As is the nature of HMOs, the proposal provides a communal living and kitchen area, each bedroom will have access to a bathroom/ensuite.

d) The development does not contain any flat or apartment which is wholly in the rear of the property and without access to the public street.

This criterion is not applicable.

e) Adequate refuse storage space (large enough to allow for the separation of recyclable waste) is provided; and

There is a sufficiently sized enclosed yard which provides ample space to accommodate refuse and recycling storage while retaining adequate space for amenity use. Being enclosed, the yard will ensure that waste storage will be screened from public view, thereby avoiding any adverse visual impact. This criterion has been met.

Proposals above shops and other business premises do not prejudice the operations of any commercial business below. N/A

It is considered that the proposal complies with all the relevant criteria of Policy HOU2.

#### **Policy GP1 – General Policy for all Development**

All development proposals requiring planning permission with the exception of minor proposals, will be assessed against the following general policy criteria a) - e)

##### **a) Criteria relating to Design Quality and Respecting Local Character and Distinctiveness.**

The proposal will result in, what is essentially, a residential end use and is considered compatible with surrounding area and established social character that has moved away from single family homes. As mentioned above, the changes to the proposal are minimal and will therefore not detract from the character of the area.

The proposal is in general compliance with the relevant criteria of Part a).

##### **b) Criteria relating to Safeguarding Residential Amenity**

Residential Amenity has been considered in the assessment of this proposal. Local residents have raised concerns in relation to noise and general disturbance. A HMO licence obliges landlords or their managing agents to have policies and procedures in place to effectively address any noise and disturbance that may arise. A breach in compliance could result in the licence being revoked.

MEABC Environmental Health have been consulted and have not raised any objection to the proposed development.

Based on the response from the above consultee it is not anticipated that the proposal will result in an unacceptable adverse impact upon the amenity of existing residents.

### c) Criteria relating to Access/Movement/Car Parking

As the proposal is for a change of use of an existing residential property, the parking arrangements are already in place in the form of on street parking. The dwelling is within close proximity to Ballymena Town Centre, transport links and Ballymena Train and Bus Station and would be considered a sustainable location which will help reduce the dependency upon the private car.

Movement and carparking is considered in more detail under the Transportation Policies.

### d) Criteria relating to Safety and Safeguarding of Human Health/Wellbeing

The proposal is for residential use which would be considered compatible with existing residential properties in the surrounding area. Through the HMO Licencing process, it will be the landlord's responsibility to ensure that the property is fit for human habitation, and all safety certificates are in place.

The discharge of sewage arising from the development will be regulated by NI Water who have indicated that there is capacity and they have no objections to the proposal.

The site is not within an area of known flooding or instability or contamination.  
The proposal is in general compliance with the relevant criteria of part d)

### e) Criteria relating to Sustainable Development

As this proposal relates to a change of use, the essential infrastructure and services are already in place.

Given the urban location, the proposed development is not expected to have any unacceptable impact on the quality or integrity of the surrounding environment. There is a sufficiently sized enclosed yard which provides ample space to accommodate refuse and recycling storage.

#### Policy TR5 – Active Travel

A new development proposal within an urban area should ensure the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are considered. Given the town centre location and proximity to the train station, this is a sustainable location and will help reduce the dependency upon the private car. Existing footpaths provide safe and convenient access to public transport, and the site is in close proximity to services within the Town Centre. There is an enclosed rear yard which will allow bicycles to be securely stored, if required.

It is considered that the location will help promote active travel and the proposal complies with Policy TR5.

#### Policy TR6 - Parking and Servicing

A development proposal will be required to provide adequate provision for parking and appropriate servicing arrangements. The precise amount of car parking will be determined according to the specific characteristics of the development and its location having regard to the Department's published standards.

As the proposal is for a change of use of existing dwelling to HMO, there are existing access and parking arrangements in place. On street parking is available on streets adjacent to the property within this central location in Ballymena.

DfI Roads have advised that they could accept the proposal if the Planning Authority are minded to approve this application with sub-standard parking.

Parking for the existing dwelling is accommodated on-street, consistent with the established pattern of parking within this area of Ballymena. Reliance on on-street parking is the norm in this area, and the proposed change of use would not significantly alter the existing parking arrangements or create a precedent beyond what already exists in the area.

The policy permits a reduced level of car parking where the development is in a highly accessible location well served by public transport. The site benefits from a location with the central area close to the town centre with a high level of pedestrian accessibility to local services and facilities. The site is also within walking distance to the train and bus station, and local bus services are available in the area.

Given these factors, the reliance on the private car is reduced and car ownership is less necessary. It is therefore considered there is no requirement to provide additional parking in this case as the proposal offers, insofar as possible, adequate and convenient access to public transport.

It is considered this proposal complies with Policy TR6.

### **Consideration of Representations**

The application was advertised in the local press and Neighbours were notified on the 25 February 2026 – 12 objections have been received to date. Most of these were received in a copy and paste format outlining a range of issues such as:

- Alter the character of the area,
- Loss of community cohesion,
- Loss of a large family home,
- Insufficient parking/more demand on on-street parking,
- Traffic congestion/road safety,
- Overdevelopment of the site/rooms not up to standard size
- Overcrowding,
- Precedent for further HMOs,
- Anti-social behaviour,
- Noise impact,
- Potential for accumulation of waste and rubbish,
- Intensification of site could lead to a fire safety,
- Increased pressure on water and sewage infrastructure,
- Devaluation of properties
- Some objectors have raised concerns regarding the future occupants of the proposed HMO.



The Council consider that the proposed HMO will not significantly alter the density of the site, nor will it alter the overall character of the area given the established mixed housing stock in the area including HMOs and apartments.

Policy does not require there to be a need for an HMO in a particular area and each application will be assessed on its individual merits, taking account of the specific site context and relevant planning policies. As such, the approval of one proposal does not set a precedent for other applications in the area.

A significant increase in demand on water supply or sewage infrastructure is not anticipated. Any necessary connections or capacity matters will be managed by NI Water.

There is a sufficiently sized enclosed yard which provides ample space to accommodate refuse and recycling storage.

The impact on traffic and parking concerns have been considered under the Transportation policies and have been found to be acceptable.

Through the HMO Licencing process, it will be the Landlord's responsibility to ensure that all rooms are up to standard, all safety certificates are in place, which are excepted to include the risk of fire hazards.

The HMO licencing regime will specify and control the number of occupants that the property can accommodate and requires a plan to be in place to deal with any potential anti-social behaviour linked to the premises. Breaches of HMO licencing conditions could result in the licence being withdrawn.

The identity or personal characteristics of future occupants are not material planning considerations and cannot be taken into account in the assessment of this proposal.

No evidence has been presented to demonstrate that a loss of community and devaluation of properties would occur as a direct result of the proposal.

All these issues raised by objectors have been considered in the assessment of this change of use proposal.

<b>Neighbour Notification Checked</b>	Yes
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<b>Summary of Recommendation</b>
Based on the above policy and material consideration the proposal is recommended for approval.

<b>Conditions:</b>
<p>1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission. Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.</p>



2. The development hereby approved shall be developed and operated in accordance with the plans and documents referenced at the beginning of this decision notice.  
 Reason: To ensure that the development is developed/operated in accordance with the approved plans and documents.

Informative

1. The applicant is advised to refer to the informative advice provided by consultees in their responses which are available to view at <https://planningregister.planningssystemni.gov.uk/simple-search>. The applicant is also advised that this permission does not confer title. Please ensure that you control all the lands necessary to carry out the proposed development.

**Case Officer Signature:**

**Date:** 16 April 2026

**Appointed Officer Signature:**

**Date:** 23/04/2026

**Development Management Consideration**

**Details of Discussion:**

As per CO Report

**Letter(s) of objection/support considered:** Yes

**Group decision:**

Approve as per CO recommendation

**D.M. Group Signatures**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_



## Committee Application

<b>Development Management Officer Report</b>	
<b>Case Officer:</b> Henry McAlister	
<b>Application ID:</b> LA02/2025/0590/F	<b>Target Date:</b>
<b>Proposal:</b> 300MW Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facility comprising containerised battery units, transformer units, switch rooms, associated 275kv substation and control room building and all associated plant, equipment, machinery, drainage, underground cabling (including connection to existing 275kV NIE substation), internal access roads, CCTV, site fencing and ancillary development	<b>Location:</b> Ballylumford Power Station Ferris Bay Road, Islandmagee, Larne, BT40 3RS
<b>Applicant Name and Address:</b> EP Ballylumford Ballylumford Power Station Ferris Bay Rd Islandmagee Larne BT40 3RS	<b>Agent Name and Address:</b> Adam Larkin Unit 1, Pavilions Office Park Kinnegar Drive Holywood
<b>Date of last Neighbour Notification:</b>	14 August 2025
<b>Date of Press Advertisement:</b>	14 August 2025
<b>EIA Determination:</b>	
<b>Consultations:</b> DFI Roads, NI Water, DFI Rivers, NIEA, MEABC Environmental Health, SONI, NIE, NI Fire and Rescue Service, Shared Environmental Service.	
<b>Representations:</b> One representation received from a local resident who had concerns about noise levels from the proposal and the resultant impact on residential amenity. The Planning Department have given this consideration along with consultation with MEABC Environmental Health. Appropriate mitigation is proposed in the form of an acoustic barrier to be secured by condition. Noise emanating from the proposed development is not considered to have a significant adverse impact on residential amenity.	
Letters of Support	0
Letters of Objection	1
Petitions	0



Signatures	0.0
Number of Petitions of Objection and signatures	

**Site Visit Report**

**Site Location Plan:**





**Date of Site Visit: 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025 (Pre-Application Site Meeting)**

**Characteristics of the Site and Area**

The site is located within the eastern side of Ballylumford Power Station at Ferris Bay Road, Islandmagee on an area of concrete surfaced hard standing that previously housed large scale fuel storage tanks. The site boundaries are marked by concrete walls and mature trees to the north and east with the main power station complex of buildings and associated structures located to the west. The total site area is 17.5 hectares.

The site is located within the countryside, outside of any settlement as designated in the Larne Area Plan.

**Description of Proposal**

300MW Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facility comprising containerised battery units, transformer units, switch rooms, associated 275kv substation and control room building and all associated plant, equipment, machinery, drainage, underground cabling (including connection to existing 275kV NIE substation), internal access roads, CCTV, site fencing and ancillary development



## **Planning Assessment of Policy and Other Material Considerations**

### **CONSULTATIONS**

DFI Roads Service – no objections  
DFI Rivers – no objections  
Historic Environment Division – no objections  
NI Water – no objections  
SONI – no objections  
NIE – no objections  
MEABC Environmental Health – no objections  
NI Fire and Rescue Service – no objections  
NIEA – no objections  
Shared Environmental Services – no objections

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The proposal falls within Category 3 (a) of Schedule 2 of the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 in that the site area exceeds the 0.5 hectare threshold. In accordance with Regulation 12(1), the Council's Planning Department has determined that the planning application does not need to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

### **HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT**

This planning application was considered in light of the assessment requirements of Regulation 43 (1) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) by Shared Environmental Service on behalf of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council which is the competent authority responsible for authorising the project.

Following an appropriate assessment in accordance with the Regulations and having considered the nature, scale, timing, duration and location of the project, SES advises 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. In reaching this conclusion, SES has assessed the manner in which the project is to be carried out including any mitigation. This conclusion is subject to mitigation measures being conditioned in any approval.

### **REPRESENTATIONS**

One representation was received from a local neighbour who had concerns regarding noise impact from the proposal. The objection has been carefully considered, and



consultation has taken place with the Council's Environmental Health Department who are satisfied with the noise levels emanating from the proposal. Whilst there would be inevitable noise and disturbance during construction, the operational noise levels would not be significant and would be mitigated by separation distances to neighbouring properties, existing and proposed boundary treatments including an acoustic barrier and would be secured by planning conditions.

### **EVALUATION**

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

The Planning Act (NI) 2011 establishes a plan-led planning system which gives primacy to the LDP in the determination of planning applications unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council adopted the Local Development Plan 2030 Plan Strategy on 16th October 2023. The Plan Strategy became effective from the date of adoption and is relevant to the consideration of the following planning application.

The Council has yet to adopt its Local Policies Plan. In the interim, in line with the transitional arrangements set out in the Schedule to the Regulations, the LDP is currently a combination of the departmental development plan (DDP) and the Plan Strategy read together. Any conflict between a policy contained in the DDP and those of the Plan Strategy must be resolved in favour of the Plan Strategy.

The Larne Area Plan comprises the DDP for this proposal. The site contains no particular zoning on the DDP and is located outside of any designated settlement in the Plan.

### **Regional Development Strategy 2035**

The Regional Development Strategy 2035 (the RDS) provides an overarching strategic planning framework to facilitate and guide the public and private sectors. Regional Guidance RG5 seeks to deliver a sustainable and secure energy supply through the delivery of reliable and secure sources of energy to communities and businesses across the region.

### **Strategic Planning Policy Statement Edition 2 (published December 2025)**

The aim of the SPPS for this renewable and low carbon energy is to maximise sustainable renewable and low carbon energy from a wide range of technologies, at



various scales, in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment, without compromising other environmental assets of acknowledged importance.

All renewable and low carbon energy development, any associated buildings, and supporting infrastructure will be permitted where the proposal will not result in an unacceptable adverse impact (alone or in combination with other developments) on the following planning considerations:

• **public safety, such as roads, rail, and aviation safety (including communications interference);**

There would be no adverse impact on public safety, road, rail or aviation safety due to the site location within the secure compound of the existing Ballylumford Power Station. There is sufficient separation distance to neighbouring roads, and the proposed structures are low level, subordinate in scale to the existing built form of the power station.

• **human health;**

There are no anticipated adverse issues on human health as a result of the proposal. There are separation distances of around 100m from existing neighbouring residential properties to the closest proposed plant. Existing operations at Ballylumford Power Station are already strictly controlled in accordance with the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations (NI) 2015. These regulations require the site operator to take all measures necessary to prevent major accidents and to limit their consequences for people and the environment. This is achieved through appropriate plant design, process control, mitigation measures and emergency procedures. As an addition to the Ballylumford site, the BESS proposal will be considered as part of the COMAH planning.

• **residential amenity and impacts on other such sensitive receptors (communities and individuals, including future occupants of committed developments);**

Due to the separation distances involved with gaps of around 100m to the closest dwelling, and the established strong boundary treatments in the form of concrete walls, mature trees and security fencing, there are no anticipated impacts on residential amenity. Further mitigation is proposed in the form of an acoustic barrier. This is a long-established power station site where surrounding residents would be accustomed to occasional noise disturbance, light spill and construction/maintenance traffic. The proposal would not contribute to any significant adverse impact on residential amenity.

• **visual amenity and landscape character, including cumulative impact.**

The proposed works would be subordinate in scale to the established built form of the power station and would be screened from main public views by the strong boundary treatments already in place.



• **biodiversity and geodiversity, nature conservation, archaeological or built heritage interests;**

This is a previously developed site within a power station, mainly covered in hard standing with limited biodiversity potential. There are still some built structures in the form of fuel tanks that may have bat roosting potential. The applicant has submitted a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Bat Survey and Habitat Creation and Management Plan. Consultation has taken place with NIEA Natural Environment Division who offer no objections subject to the addition of condition numbers 2, 3, and 4.

There are no archaeological or built heritage interests affected by the proposal.

• **local natural resources, such as air quality, water quality or quantity;**

There are no anticipated adverse impacts on air quality, water quality or quantity.

• **the capacity of and effects on the transportation network;**

There will be traffic generated during the construction phase of development, however once constructed there would only be very limited traffic generated to allow for monitoring and maintenance. There is sufficient space for parking either within the existing power station complex or along Ferris Bay Road on the approach to the main entrance. DFI Roads Service have offered no objections to the proposal.

• **impacts on tourism, recreation, and public access to the countryside.**

As the application site is within an existing, secure power station complex the proposal will not impact on tourism, recreation or public access to the countryside and will have very limited visual impact when viewed from the surrounding countryside.

**Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Local Development Plan**

The Spatial Growth Strategy seeks to facilitate sustainable development in the open countryside, balancing the need to protect the environment and rural character while sustaining a strong and vibrant rural economy.

**Policy CS1** sets out the opportunities for sustainable development in the countryside and this includes utilities, telecommunications or infrastructure development.

**Policy TE1 – Telecommunications and Electricity Infrastructure**

The Plan Strategy states that modern utilities such as electricity infrastructure are essential and beneficial elements of everyday living for everyone who lives, works or visits the borough. Being home to Kilroot and Ballylumford power stations, Mid and East Antrim occupies a key strategic location in relation to the Northern Ireland energy network.

A proposal for electricity infrastructure including overhead cables together with any necessary enabling works will be permitted where it meets the General Policy and



accords with other provisions of the LDP. The applicant is required to demonstrate that all of the following criteria are met:

**(a) There is a need for the proposed development at that location.**

The application site is located within Ballylumford Power Station, currently a gas fired generating station which has operated at this location since the 1940s. The power station had previously been fired by coal and oil which required significant storage space on site, which is now unused. There is an existing substation within the complex. The purpose of the proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) is to store electricity when there is a surplus supply and then to discharge electricity into the network when a deficit occurs either through high demand or when production is lower – for example when wind or solar sources cannot operate to full capacity.

The technology involved with energy infrastructure is ever evolving and BESS facilities are seen as important elements in providing additional support in terms of electricity production, storage and supply in order to meet Northern Ireland's commitments in achieving Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The BESS facility works by absorbing the electricity, converting it to chemical energy and storing it until additional supply is needed, at which stage it is re-converted to electrical energy.

As the BESS requires a connection to the electricity grid, this becomes an important factor in site selection and the proximity to the existing substation at Ballylumford Power Station appears to be the main consideration and alternative locations have not been considered.

**(b) The proposal minimises visual intrusion.**

There are very limited short range public views into the site from surrounding roads and properties due to screening by existing boundary walls and mature trees that are to be retained. The built form of the proposed battery units would have a lesser visual impact than the fuel storage tanks previously in place on the site and in terms of longer-range views, the proposed structures would read in conjunction with the existing buildings and structures on the power station site.

**(c) The proposal avoids sensitive locations or features, unless it is clearly demonstrated to the satisfaction of Council as to why this cannot be achieved.**

The application site consists mainly of a previously developed, concrete surfaced plot within the power station complex which was in use as a tank farm for the storage of fuel to be used in the power station. There are no water courses or built structures within the site and the site is not affected by flooding.

This area of Islandmagee contains various established elements of energy infrastructure including Ballylumford Power Station, the Moyle Interconnector and the



Gas Pipeline operated by Mutual Energy, with nearby applications for Battery Storage being granted under application reference LA02/2023/1283/F and LA02/2025/0690/F at Quarterland Road to the south east of the site and LA02/2023/1577/F at Ballylumford Road, south of the site. Large pylons with overhead electricity lines run along the western shore of Islandmagee from the power station.

An Archaeological Impact Assessment was submitted along with the application. This established that there were no significant archaeological remains within the site. DfC Historic Environment Division were consulted and offered no objections to the proposal and noted that the site had been previously developed and ground disturbed as part of the power station development.

The Biodiversity Checklist and bat surveys submitted with the application indicates that the development of the site as proposed would not impact upon protected species. NIEA Natural Environment Division have not offered any objections, subject to conditions.

There are European designated sites associated with Larne Lough, the North Channel SAC and the East Coast Marine pSPA. The site is not located within any of these designated sites, but the Ballylumford Power Station site is on the shores of Larne Lough. Having carried out an appropriate assessment of the proposal, including the impact of dealing with surface water run-off following an outbreak of fire at the site, Shared Environmental Services have concluded that the proposal would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site.

**Policy NAT1** of the Local Development Plan has therefore been complied with. There are no specific zonings or designations in the extant Departmental Development Plan – the Larne Area Plan affecting the site.

A Special Countryside Area (SCA) has been designated in the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy. This is associated with the Gobbins coast and is intended to protect the exceptional landscape, unique amenity value and the environmental assets of the natural and built heritage of the area. The application site is outside of this designation and the scale of development as proposed on the site would not impact on the SCA.

**(d) The proposal meets the ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure to electromagnetic fields.**

ICNIRP guidelines relate to telecommunications infrastructure and are not applicable to this proposal.

Policy TE1 also requires applicants to ensure that upon decommissioning, all above ground redundant structures, plant, buildings and associated infrastructure shall be removed and the site restored to an agreed standard appropriate to its location. These



matters will need to be agreed with Council before planning permission is granted and appropriate conditions applied to any approval. This aspect of the policy will be secured by way of planning condition number 10.

**Policy GP1 – General Policy for all Development** states that planning permission will be granted for sustainable development where the proposal accords with the LDP and there is no demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance. All development proposals in the countryside will be assessed against general policy criteria (a)-(f).

**(a) Criteria relating to Design Quality and Respecting Local Character and Distinctiveness**

This proposal involves the development of a Battery Energy Storage System within the confines of the existing Ballylumford Power Station site. There are very limited views into the site from the Ballylumford Road and Ferris Bay Road, and overall the proposed battery units would have a lower visual impact than the previous fuel storage tanks on the site. Whilst there are longer range views of the Power Station site from the western side of Larne Lough, the proposal would read in conjunction with the established built form of the existing power station buildings and structures and is an appropriate form of development for this location.

Criteria (a) has been complied with.

**(b) Criteria relating to Safeguarding Residential Amenity:**

The separation between the proposed battery units and the closest existing dwelling at 10 Ferris Bay Road to the north of the site is approximately 100m with a gap of around 110m to the rear of dwellings at Loughview Bungalows to the west of the site.

There would be no impacts with overlooking or over shadowing of neighbouring properties.

Whilst there would be some disturbance associated with the construction phase of the development this would be a temporary scenario. Once developed, this type of infrastructure would not be likely to attract large numbers of vehicular traffic or people. In practise, the only visitors would be involved in the ongoing maintenance of the facility.

A Noise Impact assessment has been submitted and following consultation with the Environmental Health Department, the Council are satisfied that there would be no significant adverse impact on residential amenity due to the low noise levels produced and the separation distances involved. Condition numbers 6, 7 and 8 relate to noise levels associated with the proposal.



The site is well screened with an existing boundary wall and mature trees. The separation distances involved will help to mitigate any additional light spill over and above that already existing on the power station site.

Criteria (b) has been complied with.

**(c) Criteria relating to Access/Movement/Car Parking**

DFI Roads service have not offered any objections through the consultation process to the proposed access arrangements or the internal manoeuvring space within the site. A Transport Assessment Form had been completed which indicated low levels of vehicle movements associated with the proposed development. Sufficient car parking is available within the power station complex or externally off Ferris Bay Road. The nature of a BESS is such that, once constructed, it would not normally attract any significant volumes of traffic apart from regular visits for site maintenance. The Planning Department are satisfied that criteria (c) has been complied with.

**(d) Criteria relating to Safety and the Safeguarding of Human Health/Wellbeing**

The main issues regarding safety and safeguarding of human health and well being relate to factors arising should a fire occur at the proposed development. There are potential fire and safety risks associated with BESS facilities due to the nature of the Lithium Iron Phosphate (LFP) in the battery cells to store electrical energy.

The Outline Emergency Response Plan submitted by the applicants highlights the mitigation measures incorporated into the design and management of the proposed facility which allows isolation between racks, modules and cells in the event of a thermal runaway event. Testing has demonstrated that in this event flames would not be present, there would be no propagation between adjacent cells and no risk of flying debris or explosions. Built in fire suppression systems would also help to prevent any fire issues arising.

The Council have carried out extensive consultation with the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service and with the Health and Safety Executive.

Should planning permission be granted the applicant would be required to liaise with NIFRS to agree details on facilities, access, water supplies etc in order to develop emergency planning procedures. The BESS would become 'relevant premises' as defined by the Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and the Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010. NIFRS as the enforcing authority would audit the relevant premises to ensure compliance.

CCTV is included as part of the proposal which may also be useful in providing an improvement in the general security of the surrounding area.



The proposal involves the addition of a septic tank. A separate Consent to Discharge application will be necessary.

The site is not affected by flooding. A Drainage Assessment was submitted and DFI Rivers have been consulted as the relevant statutory consultee – they accept the findings of the Drainage Assessment and have offered no objections.

The site consists of previously developed lands within a power station complex and due to the proposed land use, there are no significant issues with ground contamination to address.

Criteria (d) has been complied with.

**(e) Criteria relating to Sustainable Development**

The proposal aligns with the Council's LDP Spatial Growth Strategy which seeks to facilitate sustainable development in the open countryside, balancing the need to protect the environment and rural character while sustaining a strong and vibrant rural economy.

All essential infrastructure to facilitate the development is either already available or is to be included as a part of the proposed development.

The Drainage Assessment submitted indicates that Sustainable Drainage Solutions (SuDS) are to be utilised on the site with the use of permeable paving, filter drains, attenuation tanks and rainwater harvesting.

The site is currently in hard standing and had previously been used to house fuel tanks associated with Ballylumford Power Station. There would be no unacceptable adverse impact on the quality and integrity of the environment or on local biodiversity.

The levels of waste associated with the proposal are not likely to be significant, however the removal of waste materials associated with the build and maintenance can be facilitated within the site.

Shared Environmental Services have been consulted with no objections offered. This planning application was considered in light of the assessment requirements of Regulation 43 (1) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) by Shared Environmental Service on behalf of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council which is the competent authority responsible for authorising the project.

Criteria (e) has been complied with.



**(f) Criteria relating to Development in the Countryside**

Whilst the site is outside of any settlement as designated in the Departmental Development Plan, the actual location is within the established built form of Ballylumford Power Station. The proposed development will be screened from public views by the existing boundary walls to the power station as well as mature trees along the Ballylumford Road and Ferris Bay Road sides of the site.

The proposal is appropriate for this particular rural location in terms of the design, scale, height and massing of built structures and it will integrate with the established built form of the power station.

The surrounding area contains numerous examples of energy infrastructure including Ballylumford Power station, the Moyle Inter-Connector, the gas pipeline, electricity pylons and overhead lines and the addition of the proposed BESS to supplement the existing infrastructure would be appropriate.

Criteria (f) has been complied with.

**Policy TR1 – Access to Roads**

The proposal seeks to utilise the existing access point to Ballylumford Power station from Ferris Bay Road. DFI Roads Service have not offered any objections in their consultation response, and the Planning Department are satisfied that the proposal complies with Policy TR1.

**Policy TR6 – Parking and Servicing**

Proposed parking is to be within the site or at the Ferris Bay Road entrance. DFI Roads Service who have offered no objections to the proposal in terms of parking, and post construction the proposed battery energy storage facility would not attract significant volumes of traffic.

Policy TR6 has been complied with.

**Policy FRD3 - Surface Water Flood Risk**

A Drainage Assessment was submitted with the application and DFI Rivers Agency have been consulted. No objections were offered by DFI Rivers.

Policy FRD3 has been complied with.

**Policy FRD4 – Sustainable Drainage (SuDS)**

The proposal includes the use of sustainable drainage solutions to manage water run-off within the site.

Policy FRD4 has therefore been complied with.

**NAT1 – European and Ramsar Sites – International**

Ballylumford Power Station is located on the shores of Larne Lough which is designated as an SPA and Ramsar Site. The main areas of concern relate to the potential hydrological links to Larne Lough from the site both during construction and once operational. The Drainage Assessment indicates that SuDS and permeable surfacing would be utilised to slow down the rate of surface water run-off and that in the event of



emergency the discharge point could be isolated so that all water is retained within the site. Due to the separation distances involved and the percolation effects of water through the sub-strata there would be no effect from surface water or sewage leaving the site and entering Larne Lough on the designated sites.

Shared Environmental Services have been consulted and they conclude from the information submitted that there would be no impact on the European Designated Sites subject to condition numbers 4 and 7.

#### **NAT2 – Species Protected by Law**

Bats are protected species and the application site and surroundings contains a number of disused buildings and former fuel tanks that could potentially contain bat roosts. A Bat Survey has been carried out which identified very low levels of bat roost potential within existing built structures. There may also be birds breeding within the site.

Mitigation is proposed in the form of compensatory habitat creation to the west of the site and Condition 2 ensures that no demolition takes place during the bird breeding season.

Consultation has taken place with NIEA who have offered no objections. Conditions 2, 3 and 4 are added to limit and mitigate any harm to any species protected by law within the site.

Policy NAT2 has been complied with.

#### **NAT5 – Habitats, Species or Features of Natural Heritage Importance**

The application site has been previously developed and the built structures such as derelict buildings, disused fuel tanks and hard surfacing have become home to some priority species and habitats. This has been acknowledged by the applicant and a significant body of work has been undertaken through the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Bat Survey and Landscape Creation and Management Plan.

NIEA have been consulted and offer no objections to the proposal, subject to the addition of condition numbers 2, 3, and 4 to manage and mitigate impacts on habitats, species or features of natural heritage importance.

Policy NAT5 has been complied with.

The Planning Department are satisfied that the proposal complies with the requirements of the Council's Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy and would represent a sustainable form of development within an established power station site.

**Neighbour Notification Checked**

Yes



### Summary of Recommendation

Full Permission is recommended subject to the conditions listed below.

### Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission.

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

2. No demolition, alteration or renovation of buildings or structures shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a detailed check for active bird's nests immediately before clearance/demolition and provided written confirmation that no nests are present, birds will be harmed or there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting birds. Any such written confirmation shall be submitted to the Planning Authority within 6 weeks of works commencing.

Reason: To protect breeding birds.

3. The Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) (Document 7) dated July 2025 shall be implemented in full in accordance with the approved details and all works on site shall conform to the approved CEMP, unless otherwise approved in writing by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.

Reason: To minimise the impact of the proposal on the biodiversity of the site, including protected/priority species/habitats and nearby designated sites.

4. The Habitat Creation and Management Plan (HCMP), (Document 18) completed by Blackstaff Ecology, dated March 2026 shall be implemented in full in accordance with the approved details and all works on site shall conform to the approved HCMP, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.

Reason: To protect Northern Ireland Priority Habitats and Protected Species

5. The development shall not become operational until the site drainage has been constructed in accordance with Document 06, Drainage Assessment including an emergency control shut-off isolation valve, an impermeable membrane, an oil detector pump and a bypass separator (for transformers), and the specified fire suppression attenuation volumes, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council.

Reason: To ensure the project will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site.

6. Prior to the development becoming operational, a 1.5m high, close boarded, timber acoustic barrier shall be constructed and maintained around the northern and eastern boundary of the site as indicated in Figure 2, Page 16 of Document 16, Noise Impact Assessment.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity.

7. Noise levels from the permitted development shall not exceed those as stipulated within Table 1:

Table 1: External Noise Levels LAeq,1hour dB(A)

Location	Co-Ordinates	LAeq,1 Hour dB(A)
NSR 1 - Ferris Bay Road	342100 402108	34.7
NSR 2 - Ferris Bay Road	342102 402130	33.6
NSR 3 - Ferris Bay Road	342107 402154	32.7
NSR 4 - Ferris Bay Road	342107 402179	32.1
NSR 5 - Ferris Bay Road	342103 402206	32.3
NSR 6 - Ferris Bay Road	342096 402230	34.5
NSR 7 - Ferris Bay Road	342095 402252	34.9
NSR 8 - Ferris Bay Road	342085 402274	34.1
NSR 9 - Ferris Bay Road	342079 402291	33.8
NSR 10 - Ferris Bay Road	342079 402312	35.8
NSR 11 - Ferris Bay Road	342074 402333	35.7
NSR 12 - Ferris Bay Road	342072 402355	35.6
NSR 13 - Ferris Bay Road	342029 402410	32.7
NSR 14 - Ferris Bay Road	342221 402453	36.1
NSR 15 - Ferris Bay Road	342258 402515	33.2
NSR 16 - Ferris Bay Road	342508 402550	36.5
NSR 17 - Quarterland Road	342655 402078	35.4
NSR 18 - Quarterland Road	342691 402116	35.2
NSR 19 - Quarterland Road	342753 402219	34.2
NSR 20 - Quarterland Road	342751 402256	34.6

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity.

8. Within four weeks of a written request by the Council, following a noise complaint from the occupant of a dwelling which lawfully exists or has planning permission at the date of this consent, the battery storage facility operator shall, at his/her expense, employ a suitably-qualified and competent person, approved by the Council, to assess the level of noise emissions from the battery storage facility at



the complainants property, following the procedures described in British Standard BS4142:2014+A1 'Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound'. Details of the Noise Monitoring Survey/Methodology and commencement date shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Council prior to any monitoring commencing. All monitoring shall be carried out as per agreed.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity.

9. In the event that previously unknown contamination is discovered, development on the site shall cease pending submission and agreement of a written report, detailing the proposed investigation, risk assessment and remediation scheme, by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. Development works shall not resume until the approved written report has been fully implemented to the satisfaction of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

Reason: In the interests of public health.

10. If the proposed BESS facility hereby permitted ceases to operate for a continuous period of 6 months, then a scheme for the decommissioning and removal of the BESS facility and any other ancillary equipment and structures shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Council within 6 months of the end of the cessation period. The scheme shall include details for the restoration of the site and shall be implemented within 6 months of the agreement by the Council.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

**Case Officer Signature:**

**Date:** 30 April 2026

**Appointed Officer Signature:**

**Date:** 30 April 2026



## Development Management Consideration

### Details of Discussion:

The proposal represents a sustainable form of development and accords with the Strategic Planning Policy Statement Edition 2 and the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy.

**Letter of objection/support considered:** Yes

**Group decision:** Full permission is recommended, subject to the above listed planning conditions.

**D.M. Group Signatures**

**Date**

**30 April 2026**



## Committee Application

<b>Development Management Officer Report</b>	
<b>Case Officer:</b> Henry McAlister	
<b>Application ID:</b> LA02/2025/0766/F	<b>Target Date:</b>
<b>Proposal:</b> Proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facility up to 17MW (4hr-duration) (amendment to previously approved BESS LA02/2022/0739/F) including electricity substation compound, access and ancillary development/site works.	<b>Location:</b> Lands approx. 150m southeast of No. 37 Ballyhampton Road, Larne, BT40 2ST
<b>Applicant Name and Address:</b> Larne Battery Storage Limited Unit 1 Wallace Studios 27 Wallace Studios Lisburn BT27 4AE	<b>Agent Name and Address:</b> Bell Rolston The Corner House 183 - 185 Ballyclare Road Newtownabbey BT36 5JP
<b>Date of Neighbour Notification:</b>	30 October 2025 26 February 2026
<b>Date of Press Advertisement:</b>	30 October 2025 5 March 2026
<b>EIA Determination:</b>	
<p><b>Consultations:</b>            NIEA Water Management Unit – Content subject to conditions.            NIEA Natural Environment Division – no response received. The Planning Department are satisfied that the proposed development would not have any significant impact on features of natural heritage importance. The site currently consists of an agricultural grass field, and existing vegetation in the form of native species hedges and trees are to be retained around the site boundaries and this is to be augmented by further native species planting. The submitted Lighting Plan also ensures that light spill emanating from the site would not be significant.            DFI Roads – no objections            DFI Rivers – no objections            NI Water – no objections            Shared Environmental Services – no objections subject to conditions            MEABC Environmental Health Department – no objections subject to conditions            NI Fire and Rescue Services – no objections            NIE – no objections            DFE Energy – no objections            SONI – no objections</p>	



**Representations:**

19 written objections received following neighbour notification and advertisement. Many of the objections raised the same points and these included visual impact, noise and disturbance, light spill, traffic congestion, construction disruption, safety concerns relating to potential fire and chemical leaks and resultant environmental impacts, impact on archaeology and impact on property values.

Letters of Support	0
Letters of Objection	19
Petitions	0
Signatures	0
Number of Petitions of Objection and signatures	

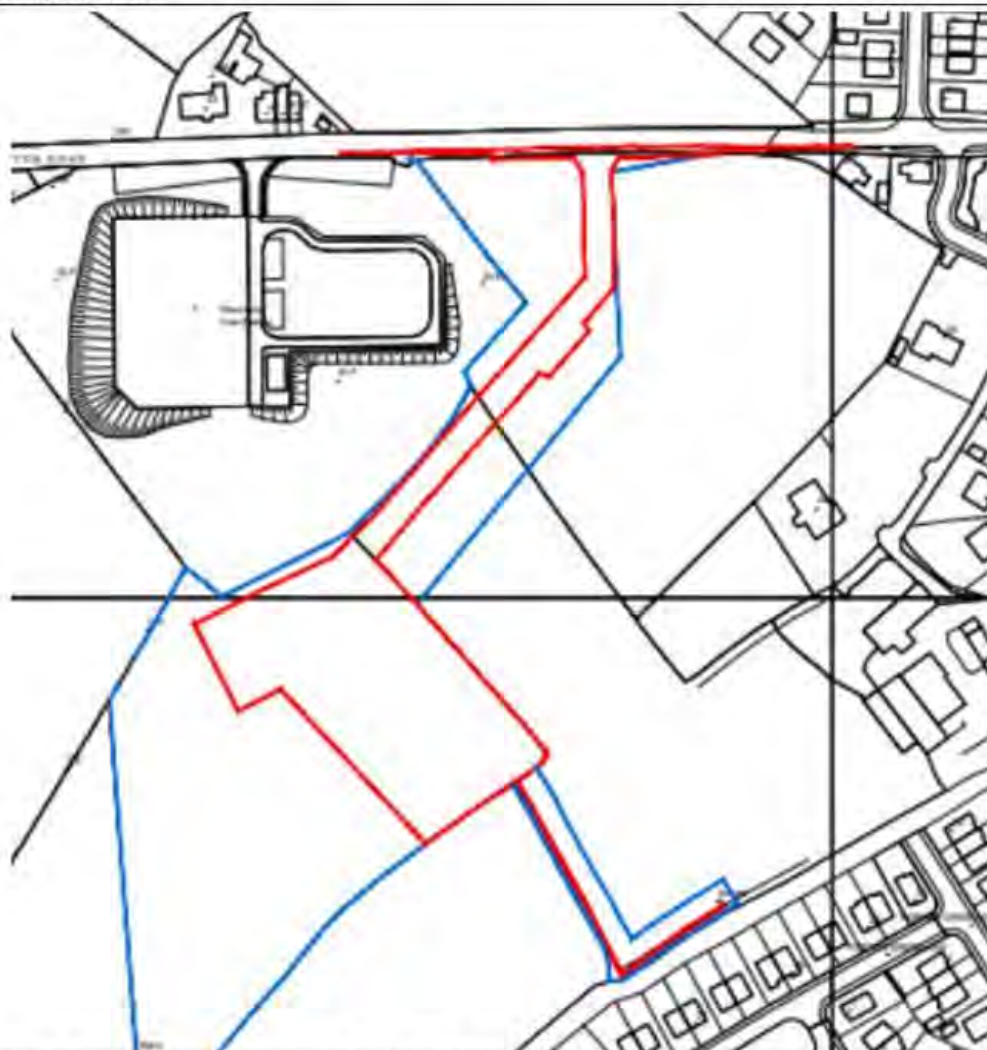
**Summary of Issues:**

In considering the objections received, the Planning Department have attached weight to the previous planning approval on the site for battery storage under LA02/2022/0739/F which offers a fallback position.

The proposal would read in conjunction with existing electricity infrastructure including pylons, overhead lines and the existing substation at Ballyhampton Road. The proposal includes the retention of most existing boundary hedges and trees with compensatory planting included where hedging is to be removed for the site access arrangements. A Noise Impact Assessment has been submitted, and consultation has taken place with the Council's Environmental Health Department who have offered no objections subject to the addition of planning conditions which includes the addition of an acoustic barrier and limits on noise emitting from the proposed development. Traffic has been considered both during construction and during the operational phase of the development and this is not likely to be significant. Battery Storage Systems do need to be carefully managed to ensure fire safety and chemical leakages are mitigated but this would not be a reason to withhold the grant of planning permission. The site is not known to have any archaeological significance and is outside the consultation zone for any features of archaeological importance. No evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that there would be any impact on property values and little weight can be given to this issue.

## Site Visit Report

### Site Location Plan:



**Date of Site Visit: 40<sup>th</sup> October 2025, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

### Characteristics of the Site and Area

The site is located off Ballyhampton Road to the western edge of Larne and consists of an agricultural field adjacent to an existing electricity sub-station. The site is traversed by pylons carrying overhead electricity lines. There is a gentle slope across the site with the site falling away from the Ballyhampton Road entrance.

The site is located within the open countryside, outside the settlement limits for Larne as designated in the extant Larne Area Plan. There is recently constructed housing developments located to the south and east of the site.



### **Description of Proposal**

Proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facility up to 17MW (4hr-duration) (amendment to previously approved BESS LA02/2022/0739/F) including electricity substation compound, access and ancillary development/site works

### **Planning Assessment of Policy and Other Material Considerations**

#### PLANNING HISTORY

##### Planning

Application Number: LA02/2022/0739/F Decision: Permission Granted Decision Date: 27 September 2023

Proposal: Proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), associated electricity substation compound, access and associated ancillary development/site works

Application Number: LA02/2025/0531/CLOPUD Decision: Permitted Development  
Decision Date: 23 July 2025

Proposal: Works to comprise of replacement of existing substation 110/33kV transformers with two new 110/33kV transformers within Larne Main Substation compound and addition of cable sealing end equipment on existing steel pylon

#### SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Document 01 - Construction Environmental Management Plan

Document 02 – Drainage and Flood Risk Appraisal

Document 03/1 – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Document 04 – Emergency Response Plan

Document 05 – Fire Risk Assessment

Document 06 – Landscape and Visual Assessment

Document 07 – Noise Impact Assessment

Document 08 – Hazardous Substances Consent Assessment

Document 09 – Planning Supporting Statement

Document 10 – Photomontages

Document 11 – Lighting Report

#### REPRESENTATIONS

19 written objections received following neighbour notification and advertisement. Many of the objections raised the same points and these included visual impact, noise and disturbance, light spill, traffic congestion, construction disruption, safety concerns relating to potential fire and chemical leaks and resultant environmental impacts, impact on



archaeology and impact on property values. The objections have been considered above and in the below report.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The proposal falls within Category 3 (a) of Schedule 2 of the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 in that the site area at 0.85ha exceeds the 0.5 hectare threshold. In accordance with Regulation 12(1), the Council's Planning Department has determined that the planning application does not need to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

#### HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

This planning application was considered in light of the assessment requirements of Regulation 43 (1) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) by Shared Environmental Service (SES) on behalf of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council which is the competent authority responsible for authorising the project.

Following an appropriate assessment in accordance with the Regulations and having considered the nature, scale, timing, duration and location of the project, SES advises 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. In reaching this conclusion, SES has assessed the manner in which the project is to be carried out including any mitigation. This conclusion is subject to mitigation measures being conditioned in any approval.

#### EVALUATION

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

The Planning Act (NI) 2011 establishes a plan-led planning system which gives primacy to the LDP in the determination of planning applications unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council adopted the Local Development Plan 2030 - Plan Strategy on 16 October 2023. The Plan Strategy became effective from the date of adoption and is relevant to the consideration of the following planning application.

The Council has yet to adopt its Local Policies Plan. In the interim, in line with the transitional arrangements set out in the Schedule to the Regulations, the LDP is currently a combination of the departmental development plan (DDP) and the Plan Strategy read together. Any conflict between a policy contained in the DDP and those of the Plan Strategy must be resolved in favour of the Plan Strategy.



The Larne Area Plan 2010 comprises the DDP for this proposal. The site contains no particular zoning on the DDP and is located outside of any designated settlement in the Plan but in close proximity to residential properties located within the settlement limits for Larne.

### **Regional Development Strategy 2035**

The Regional Development Strategy 2035 (the RDS) provides an overarching strategic planning framework to facilitate and guide the public and private sectors. Regional Guidance RG5 seeks to deliver a sustainable and secure energy supply through the delivery of reliable and secure sources of energy to communities and businesses across the region.

### **Strategic Planning Policy Statement Edition 2 (published December 2025)**

The aim of the SPPS for this renewable and low carbon energy is to maximise sustainable renewable and low carbon energy from a wide range of technologies, at various scales, in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment, without compromising other environmental assets of acknowledged importance.

Paragraph 6.223 states renewable and low carbon energy development, any associated buildings and supporting infrastructure, will be permitted where the proposal will not result in an unacceptable adverse impact (alone or in combination with other developments) on the following planning considerations. These will each be considered in turn:

- **public safety, such as roads, rail, and aviation safety (including communications interference);**

There would be no adverse impact on public safety, road, rail or aviation safety due to the site location off the Ballyhampton Road on the outer edge of Larne. The proposal includes upgrades to the access to Ballyhampton Road to include space for larger vehicles to manoeuvre, and DfI Roads Service have offered no objections as the statutory consultee. There is sufficient separation distance to neighbouring roads, and the proposed structures are low level, similar or subordinate in scale to the existing built form of the sub station and pylons in the area.

- **human health;**

There are no anticipated adverse issues on human health as a result of the proposal. There are residential dwellings at Ballyhampton Road and Porter Green Avenue in close proximity to the application site. There is the potential for noise and disturbance during construction works which is temporary and unavoidable. Operationally, there would be low level noise associated with the proposed plant. A Noise Assessment has been submitted and the views of the Council's Environmental Health Department have been sought. Environmental Health offer no objections to the proposal, subject to the addition of condition numbers 6, 9 and 10.



The Health and Safety Executive for NI confirm that, should permission be granted, the scale of the proposed operations of the site is such that it would fall below the thresholds in place for Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations (NI) 2015. The construction and operation of the proposal will be subject to the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978 requirements and relevant statutory provisions. The operator is legally required to reduce risks to the lowest reasonably practicable level.

• **residential amenity and impacts on other such sensitive receptors (communities and individuals, including future occupants of committed developments);**

There are residential properties at Ballyhampton Road and within newer housing developments such as Porter Green in close proximity to the application site.

There is the potential for some disturbance to residential amenity by way of noise and light spill from the operation of the proposed battery energy storage facility. There would also be expected impacts on residential amenity through the construction phase, however this would be temporary and can be mitigated by conditions requiring a Construction Environmental Management Plan to be agreed prior to the commencement of development. Further mitigation would be provided through the proposed landscaping scheme which includes new native species planting and acoustic barriers. The Council's Environmental Health Department have not offered any objections to the proposal on the grounds of impact on neighbours, subject to a number of conditions being attached to any planning approval.

• **visual amenity and landscape character, including cumulative impact.**

There would be short range views of the site from the Ballyhampton Road to the north, and from the rear of residential properties at Porter Green and Ballyhampton Road. The undulating landform to both the north and west of the site means that the proposal would sit be surrounded by rising ground. This would provide a significant degree of integration when new landscaping matures, and the proposal would read in conjunction with existing electricity infrastructure such as the substation and pylons which cross the local landscape.

• **biodiversity and geodiversity, nature conservation, archaeological or built heritage interests;**

The applicant has submitted a significant level of detail in support of their proposal including a Biodiversity Checklist, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Construction Environmental Management Plan and Drainage Assessment.

The site has hydrological links to national, European and international designated sites - Larne Lough Ramsar Site, Larne Lough SPA and North Channel SAC and Larne Lough ASSI. A Habitats Regulation Assessment was carried out by Shared Environmental Service and adopted by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended). This found



that the proposal would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

The proposal does include the removal of native species hedgerow along the site frontage to create the access arrangements. This includes the hedges to be removed as part of the previously approved development on the site under LA02/2022/0739/F. The plans include significant levels of compensatory planting along the road frontage, access lane and around the site perimeter which include native species hedges.

The trees and hedges around the site do provide suitable habitat for nesting birds which are protected under the wildlife order. Hedgerow removal should only take place outside the bird breeding season of 1st March to 31st August, and this can be secured by condition.

Consultation has taken place with NIEA who offer no objections to the proposal.

There are no archaeological or built heritage interests affected by the proposal.

• **local natural resources, such as air quality, water quality or quantity;**

There are no anticipated adverse impacts on air quality, water quality or quantity.

• **the capacity of and effects on the transportation network;**

There will be traffic generated during the construction phase of development, however once constructed there would only be very limited traffic generated to allow for monitoring and maintenance. A new access arrangement is proposed from the Ballyhampton Road. All construction vehicles can be accommodated within the site confines. Once operational, the facility would require small levels of vehicular traffic to provide servicing and maintenance and again the parking can be facilitated within the site. DfI Roads have offered no objections to the proposal.

• **impacts on tourism, recreation, and public access to the countryside.**

As the application site is within an existing farm unit and not generally open to the public the proposal will not impact on tourism, recreation or public access to the countryside and will have very limited visual impact when viewed from the surrounding countryside. There could be some inevitable disruption during construction which could have a temporary impact on the use of Ballyhampton Road for access to the countryside, but this would not be considered significant.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Local Development Plan 2030 - Plan Strategy

The Spatial Growth Strategy within the Plan Strategy seeks to facilitate sustainable development in the open countryside, balancing the need to protect the environment and rural character while sustaining a strong and vibrant rural economy.



**CS1** sets out the opportunities for sustainable development in the countryside and this includes utilities, telecommunications or infrastructure development.

### **Policy TEI1 – Telecommunications and Electricity Infrastructure**

The Plan Strategy states that modern utilities such as electricity infrastructure are essential and beneficial elements of everyday living for everyone who lives, works or visits the borough. Being home to Kilroot and Ballylumford power stations and the associated electricity network installations, Mid and East Antrim occupies a key strategic location in relation to the Northern Ireland energy network.

A proposal for electricity infrastructure including overhead cables together with any necessary enabling works will be permitted where it meets the General Policy and accords with other provisions of the LDP. The applicant is required to demonstrate that all of the following criteria are met:

(a) **There is a need for the proposed development at that location.**

The purpose of the proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) is to store electricity when there is a surplus supply and then to discharge electricity into the network when a deficit occurs either through high demand or when production is lower – for example when wind or solar sources cannot operate to full capacity.

The technology involved with energy infrastructure is ever-evolving and BESS facilities are seen as important elements in providing additional support in terms of electricity production, storage and supply in order to meet Northern Ireland's commitments in achieving Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The BESS facility works by absorbing the electricity, converting it to chemical energy and storing it until additional supply is needed, at which stage it is re-converted to electrical energy.

As the BESS requires a connection to the electricity grid, this becomes an important factor in site selection and the proximity to the existing electricity network infrastructure and the associated sub stations appears to be the main consideration, and alternative locations have not been considered.

(b) **The proposal minimises visual intrusion.**

There are very limited short range public views into the site from surrounding roads and properties, but the proposal would read alongside existing electrical infrastructure in the immediate area. The existing tree and hedge coverage along field boundaries also aids screening of the site and extensive new planting is proposed as part of the proposal along with an earth bund to the northern edge of the site. This will mature over time to significantly reduce the overall visual impact. Longer range views would see the proposed BESS integrated into the landscape by rising landform to the north and west and whilst the proposal would be visible, the visual intrusion would not be significant.



**(c) The proposal avoids sensitive locations or features, unless it is clearly demonstrated to the satisfaction of Council as to why this cannot be achieved.**

There are no sensitive features within the application site. There are national, European and International designated sites associated with Larne Lough (approximately 2.4km away from the site) – Larne Lough Ramsar Site, North Channel SAC and Larne Lough ASSI. Having carried out an appropriate assessment of the proposal, including the impact of dealing with surface water run-off following an outbreak of fire at the site, Shared Environmental Services have concluded that the proposal would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site.

There are no known archaeological features or any built structures of heritage importance within the site.

**(d) The proposal meets the ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure to electromagnetic fields.**

ICNIRP guidelines relate to telecommunications infrastructure and are not applicable to this proposal.

Policy TE11 also requires applicants to ensure that upon decommissioning, all above ground redundant structures, plant, buildings and associated infrastructure shall be removed and the site restored to an agreed standard appropriate to its location. These matters will need to be agreed with Council before planning permission is granted and appropriate conditions applied to any approval. This aspect of the policy will be secured by way of planning condition 12 should approval be granted.

It is considered the requirements of Policy TE11 have been complied with.

**Policy GP1 – General Policy for all Development** states that planning permission will be granted for sustainable development where the proposal accords with the LDP and there is no demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance. All development proposals in the countryside will be assessed against general policy criteria (a)-(f).

**(a) Criteria relating to Design Quality and Respecting Local Character and Distinctiveness**

This proposal involves the development of a Battery Energy Storage System within a rural area, on the outskirts of Larne which is characterised by significant energy development already in place. A previous battery energy storage scheme has already been granted permission on the site under application reference LA02/2022/1008/F. This proposal is a substitution for the previous approval.

The proposal involves the regrading of land to form a level surface with a change of levels of approximately 4 metres from existing to accommodate an enclosed compound



with a palisade fence for security and the individual battery units having an overall height of approximately 2.5 metres and 12.5 metres in length.

The Landscape Plan and site plans show the retention of existing mature trees and hedges around the site with significant boundary planting also proposed in the form of native species hedges. It is acknowledged that the planting scheme will take time to mature.

The set-back distance from the minor Ballyhampton Road, undulating landform and proposed planting will ensure that views of the proposal from public viewpoints are very limited. There would be no significant adverse impact on the local character or distinctiveness as a result of the proposal which would read in conjunction with existing electricity infrastructure.

Criteria (a) has been complied with.

**(b) Criteria relating to Safeguarding Residential Amenity:**

A Noise Impact Assessment has been submitted. Mitigation measures include the addition of acoustic barriers, and following consultation with the Environmental Health Department, the Council are satisfied that there would be no significant adverse impact on residential amenity due to the relatively low noise levels produced and the separation distances involved. Conditions 6, 9 and 10 relating to noise levels associated with the proposal will be attached to any approval.

Whilst there would be some disturbance associated with the construction phase of the development this would be a temporary scenario. Once developed, this type of infrastructure would not be likely to attract large numbers of vehicular traffic or people. In practise, the only visitors would be involved in the ongoing maintenance of the facility.

The proposal includes lighting which has been designed to avoid adverse impacts on features of the natural heritage and neighbouring properties, however there is the potential for some light spill, although this is not likely to be significant. Consideration should also be given to the site location on the outer edge of the Larne settlement limits where there are residential housing developments, street lighting and other sources of light already emitting.

Criteria (b) has been complied with.

**(c) Criteria relating to Access/Movement/Car Parking**

DfI Roads have not offered any objections through the consultation process to the proposed access arrangements or the internal manoeuvring space within the site. A Transport Assessment Form had been completed which indicated low levels of vehicle movements associated with the proposed development. The proposal includes works to



widen the access point and provide improved visibility splays. The nature of a BESS is such that, once constructed, it would not normally attract any significant volumes of traffic apart from regular visits for site maintenance.

The Planning Department are satisfied that criteria (c) has been complied with, subject to the addition of condition number 4.

**(d) Criteria relating to Safety and the Safeguarding of Human Health/Wellbeing**

The main issues regarding safety and safeguarding of human health and well-being relate to factors arising should a fire occur at the proposed development. There are potential fire and safety risks associated with BESS facilities due to the nature of the Lithium Iron Phosphate (LFP) in the battery cells to store electrical energy.

The Emergency Response Plan submitted by the applicants highlights the mitigation measures incorporated into the design and management of the proposed facility which allows isolation between racks, modules and cells in the event of a thermal runaway event. Testing has demonstrated that in this event flames would not be present, there would be no propagation between adjacent cells and no risk of flying debris or explosions. Built in fire suppression systems would also help to prevent any fire issues arising.

The Council have carried out extensive consultation with the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service and with the Health and Safety Executive.

Should planning permission be granted the applicant would be required to liaise with NIFRS to agree details on facilities, access, water supplies etc in order to develop emergency planning procedures. The BESS would become 'relevant premises' as defined by the Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and the Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010. NIFRS as the enforcing authority would audit the relevant premises to ensure compliance.

CCTV is included as part of the proposal which may also be useful in providing an improvement in the general security of the surrounding area.

There are no connections proposed to foul sewage.

The site is not affected by flooding and there are no concerns with flooding occurring elsewhere as a result of the proposal.

A Drainage Assessment was submitted and DFI Rivers have been consulted as the relevant statutory consultee – they accept the findings of the Drainage Assessment and again have offered no objections. The proposal includes the formation of swales, attenuation basins, filter drains, and most surfaces within the site are to be permeable crushed gravel which would allow surface water to percolate into the ground.



The site consists of mainly previously undeveloped lands and there are not thought to be any significant issues with ground contamination to address.

Criteria (d) has been complied with.

**(e) Criteria relating to Sustainable Development**

The proposal aligns with the Council's LDP Spatial Growth Strategy which seeks to facilitate sustainable development in the open countryside, balancing the need to protect the environment and rural character while sustaining a strong and vibrant rural economy.

All essential infrastructure to facilitate the development is either already available or is to be included as a part of the proposed development.

The Drainage Assessment submitted indicates that a Sustainable Drainage Solution (SuDS) is to be utilised on the site with the use of permeable gravel surfaces and underground culverts to provide attenuation void space for water arising from fire-fighting measures and to slow down the discharge of surface water from the site.

The levels of waste associated with the proposal are not likely to be significant during its operational phase, however the removal of waste materials associated with the build and maintenance can be facilitated within the site.

Shared Environmental Services have been consulted with no objections offered. This planning application was considered in light of the assessment requirements of Regulation 43 (1) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) by Shared Environmental Service on behalf of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council which is the competent authority responsible for authorising the project.

Criteria (e) has been complied with.

**(f) Criteria relating to Development in the Countryside**

The proposed development will be screened from main public views due to the topography of the local landscape with rising ground levels to the north and west of the application site. In time the proposed planting around the site will mature to further screen the site from public view.

The proposal is considered appropriate for this particular rural location, close to Larne, given there is a previous planning approval for battery storage on part of the site and where there is other significant existing energy infrastructure already in place.

The surrounding East Antrim area contains numerous examples of energy infrastructure including Ballylumford and Kilroot Power Stations, the Moyle Inter-Connector, the Scotland to NI gas pipeline, electricity pylons and overhead lines and the addition of the proposed BESS to supplement the existing infrastructure would be appropriate.



Criteria (f) of GP1 has been complied with.

#### **Policy TR1 – Access to Roads**

The proposal seeks to provide a new vehicular access from the Ballyhampton Road. DfI Roads have not offered any objections in their consultation response and the Planning Department are satisfied that the proposal complies with Policy TR1.

#### **Policy TR6 – Parking and Servicing**

Proposed parking is to be provided wholly within the site. DfI Roads have offered no objections to the proposal in terms of parking, and post construction the proposed battery energy storage facility would not attract significant volumes of traffic.

Once constructed there are unlikely to be any significant regular vehicle movements required for servicing of the site. Any waste arising is likely to be due to ongoing maintenance or repair and can be removed from the site by contractors.

Policy TR6 has been complied with.

#### **Policy FRD3 - Surface Water Flood Risk**

A Drainage Assessment was submitted with the application and DfI Rivers have been consulted. The proposal includes permeable surfaces and underground culverts to provide attenuation void space. No objections were offered by DfI Rivers.

Policy FRD3 has been complied with.

#### **Policy FRD4 – Sustainable Drainage (SuDS)**

The proposal includes the use of a sustainable drainage solution with permeable surfacing and underground culverts to manage water run-off within the site.

Policy FRD4 has therefore been complied with.

#### **NAT1 – European and Ramsar Sites – International**

The site is not within or adjacent to any designated sites. There is a separation distance of approximately 2.3km from the site boundary to Larne Lough, which is designated as an SPA and Ramsar Site. The main areas of concern relate to the potential hydrological links to Larne Lough from the site both during construction and once operational. The Drainage Assessment indicates that SuDS would be utilised to slow down the rate of surface water run-off and that in the event of emergency the discharge point could be isolated so that all water is retained within the site in underground attenuation void space. Due to the separation distances involved and the percolation effects of water through the sub-strata there would be no effect from surface water or sewage leaving the site and entering Larne Lough on the designated sites.

Shared Environmental Services have been consulted, and they concluded from the information submitted that there would be no adverse impact on the European Designated Sites subject to condition numbers 3 and 5 which requires compliance with the Construction Environmental Management Plan and Drainage Solutions submitted. It is considered Policy NAT1 has been complied with.

**NAT2 – Species Protected by Law**

The application site consists of agricultural farmland. Field boundaries are marked by post and wire fences with native species hedges and trees.

As part of the planning application submission, detailed reports have been submitted in relation to the ecological potential of the site. A Biodiversity Checklist was submitted along with an Ecological Appraisal.

The main issue to consider would be breeding birds and bats. A condition is to be attached to ensure that no tree or hedge removal takes place during the bird breeding season of 1st March to 31st August. The Landscape Management Plan and proposed site plan shows significant levels of compensatory planting that will in time provide a positive ecological improvement from the current situation on site. The lighting plans proposed show the lights being directed into the site rather than to the surrounding countryside or residential properties. Consultation has taken place with NIEA Natural Environment Division who have not responded to their latest consultation; however the Planning Department are content that the proposal along with the associated mitigation measures would not have any significant adverse impact on the natural heritage. Policy NAT2 has been complied with.

**NAT5 – Habitats, Species or Features of Natural Heritage Importance**

The main site consists of agricultural pasture of limited natural heritage importance with native species hedges marking site boundaries to the Ballyhampton Road. In an initial consultation response, NIEA Natural Environment Division requested an updated Ecological Appraisal from that submitted with the previous approval on the site LA02/2022/0739/F and identified three potential factors that could impact on the natural environment – these were hedge removal, pollutants entering watercourses and impacts from external lighting.

Most mature hedging and trees around the site are to be retained. The proposal includes the removal and trimming back of native species hedgerow, which is considered to be a priority habitat, to create the required visibility splays. Significant levels of compensatory planting is proposed to the rear of visibility splays and to all site boundaries including along the access lane. This will have an overall positive impact on the natural heritage, albeit time will be required for the proposed planting to mature. A condition to ensure that no hedge or tree removal takes place during the bird breeding season on 1<sup>st</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> August would provide appropriate mitigation.

A Construction Environmental Management Plan has been submitted and identifies best practice during construction to ensure that construction waste or run-off does not enter watercourses. The Drainage Assessment submitted includes consideration of water emanating from fire suppression with sustainable drainage solutions to retain all contaminated water within the site.



An updated Lighting Plan was also submitted. This includes all lighting columns directed internally within the site so as to minimise impact on any nocturnal animals or on residential amenity. Consideration should also be given to the actual site location, close to the edge of Larne with residential developments with street lights and existing light spill already occurring. The proposal will not add any significant additional light spill.

The statutory consultee NIEA Natural Environment Division have been reconsulted with the updated information but have not responded. The Planning Department are content with the submitted information and mitigation measures and are satisfied that there would be no significant adverse impact on features of the natural heritage arising.

Policy NAT5 has been complied with.

### Conclusion

The proposal involves quite a significant level of development within a rural area on the outskirts of Larne, however it would be read in conjunction with the existing electrical infrastructure in the immediate area which include numerous pylons and a large electricity sub-station at Ballyhampton Road. There is a fall-back position in the form of an extant planning approval for battery storage approved under application reference LA02/2022/0739/F.

The Planning Department have undertaken a significant level of consultation to fully consider the detailed information submitted by the applicants and are satisfied that the proposal complies with the requirements of the Council's Local Development Plan 2030 - Plan Strategy and would represent a sustainable form of development in the countryside.

### Neighbour Notification Checked

Yes

### Summary of Recommendation

Full permission is recommended, subject to the addition of the planning conditions listed below.

### Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission.

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

2. There shall be no removal of trees, hedges or other vegetation on the site during the bird breeding season of 1st March to 31st August.

Reason: In order to prevent loss or damage to protected habitat.



3. The Construction Environmental Management Plan Memo (Document No. 01, published 1st October 2025), shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the council.

Reason: To ensure the project will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site.

4. The vehicular access, including visibility splays and any forward sight distance, shall be provided in accordance with Drawing No. 03 published 16/10/25, prior to the commencement of any other development hereby permitted. The area within the visibility splays and any forward sight line shall be cleared to provide a level surface no higher than 250mm above the level of the adjoining carriageway and such splays shall be retained and kept clear thereafter.

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

5. The development shall not become operational until the site drainage has been constructed in accordance with Document No. 02 - Drainage and Flood Risk Memorandum, published 1st October 2025.

Reason: To ensure the project will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site.

6. Prior to the development becoming operational, a 3.5m high acoustic barrier shall be constructed and maintained along the eastern, southern and western boundaries of the permitted development as shown in stamped, approved Drawing 03 to achieve the noise limits as stipulated within Table 1 of Condition 9.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity.

7. All lighting installed shall be in accordance with the details indicated in Document No. 11 – Lighting Report, published 24th December 2025.

Reason: In the interests of visual and residential amenity and to protect features of the natural environment.

8. All soft and hard landscaping shall be in accordance with the details indicated on Drawing No. 03 Rev 1, published 3rd February 2026, and the Landscape and Visual Assessment – Document No. 6, published 1st October 2025, in the first available planting season following the commencement of the development or before the development becomes operational, whichever is the later.



Reason: To ensure the provision of a high standard of landscape and to integrate the proposal into the landscape.

9. Noise levels from the permitted development shall not exceed those as stipulated within Table 1:

Table 1: External Noise Levels LAeq,15min dB

Location	Co-Ordinates	LAeq,15min dB
46 Ballyhampton Road	337974 402034	35
22 Porter Green Avenue	337951 401873	37
19 Porter Green Avenue	337923 401858	37
16 Porter Green Avenue	337899 401839	37
12 Porter Green Avenue	337880 401821	36
Ballyhampton Road	337539 401953	33
Ballyhampton Road	337598 402079	34

10. Within four weeks of a written request by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, following a noise complaint from the occupant of a dwelling which lawfully exists or has planning permission at the date of this consent, the battery store operator shall, at his/her expense, employ a suitably-qualified and competent person, approved by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, to assess the level of noise emissions from the battery store at the complainants property, following the procedures described in British Standard BS4142:2014+A1 'Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound'. Details of the Noise Monitoring Survey/Methodology and commencement date shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council prior to any monitoring commencing. All monitoring shall be carried out as per agreed.

Reason: in the interest of residential amenity.

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

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



12. If the proposed BESS facility hereby permitted ceases to operate for a continuous period of 6 months, then a scheme for the decommissioning and removal of the BESS facility and any other ancillary equipment and structures shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Council within 6 months of the end of the cessation period. The scheme shall include details for the restoration of the site and shall be implemented within 6 months of the agreement by the Council.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

**Case Officer Signature:**

**Date:** 5<sup>th</sup> May 2026

**Appointed Officer Signature:**

**Date:** 5<sup>th</sup> May 2026



**Development Management Consideration**

**Details of Discussion:**

The proposed development accords with the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Local Development Plan, Plan Strategy. The views of neighbouring residents have been fully considered.

**Letter(s) of objection/support considered:** Yes

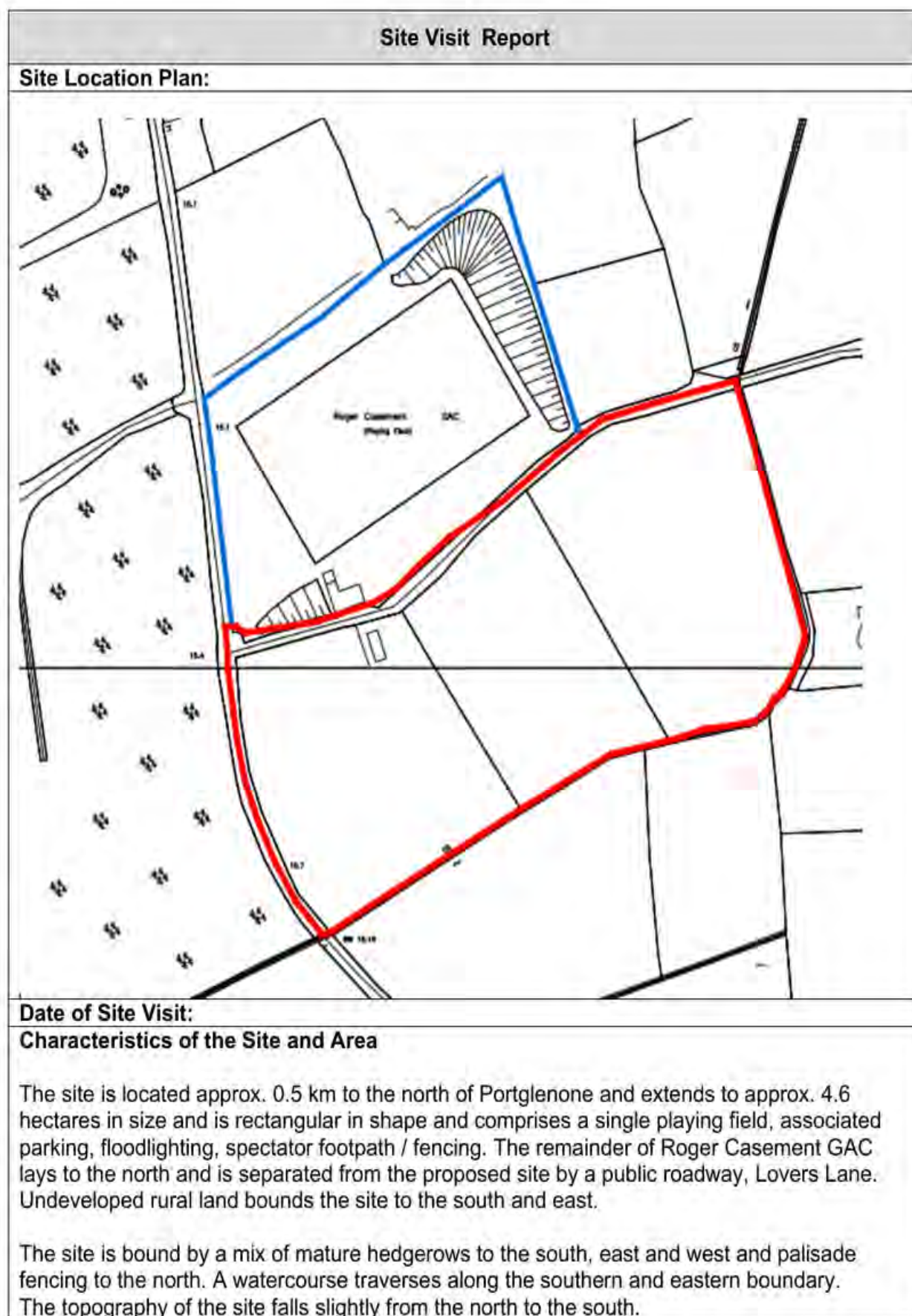
**Group Recommendation:** Full permission

**D.M. Group Signatures**

**Date** **5<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

## Committee Application

<b>Development Management Officer Report</b>	
<b>Case Officer:</b> Sean O'Kane	
<b>Application ID:</b> LA02/2025/0183/F	<b>Target Date:</b>
<b>Proposal:</b> Proposed sports and community hub comprising multipurpose pavilion, 4G playing field, play park, 2no. spectator terraces, car parking, landscaping, floodlighting, new access onto and upgrading of Lovers Lane, fencing and ancillary site works	<b>Location:</b> Lands at Lovers Lane, adjacent and south of 49 Gortgole Road, Portglenone
<b>Applicant Name and Address:</b> Roger Casement GAC 49 Gortgole Road Portglenone BT44 8AN	<b>Agent Name and Address:</b> Hayley Wilson 181 Templepatrick Road Ballyclare BT39 0RA
<b>Date of last Neighbour Notification:</b>	
<b>Date of Press Advertisement:</b>	27 March 2025
<b>EIA Determination:</b>	
<b>Consultations:</b>	
<p><b>Environ Health Mid And East Antrim</b> – No objection  <b>NIEA – WMU</b> – No objection  <b>NIEA – NED</b> – No objection  <b>NI Water – Strategic</b> – No objection  <b>DFI Roads</b> – No objection  <b>Dfi Rivers</b> – No objection  <b>Shared Environmental Services</b>– No objection</p>	
<b>Representations:</b>	
The application was advertised in the local press and relevant neighbours notified No representations have been received to date.	
Letters of Support	0
Letters of Objection	0
Petitions	0
Signatures	0
Number of Petitions of Objection and signatures	
<b>Summary of Issues:</b> N/A	



The wider context comprises a single large playing field, two storey pavilion, storage building, car parking and floodlighting to the north. Bracknamuckley Forest, is situated west of the site and separated from the site by the Gortgole Road with the River Bann approx. 250m to the west.

The site is in the open countryside outside of any development limit.

### Description of Proposal

Proposed sports and community hub comprising multipurpose pavillion, 4G playing field, play park, 2no. spectator terraces, car parking, landscaping, floodlighting, new access onto and upgrading of Lovers Lane, fencing and ancillary site works.

- Multipurpose pavilion; - 2 story building with a footprint of c. 2,800 sqm, comprising training space, welfare facilities and social / meeting rooms, multipurpose hall, changing rooms, WCs, health and fitness suite, kitchen and dining space, stores, office, and balcony. -A ball wall is proposed on the south elevation
- 4G / grass playing field measuring 92m x 60m with a 3m run-off
- A children's play park enclosed by a 2.4m mesh fence.
- Two covered spectator terraces will be located at the north and south boundaries. The northern terrace measures 64m x 6.2m and ridge height of 7.7m. The southern terrace measures 49m x 6.2m and ridge height of 7.7m.
- Additional car parking is proposed with the existing parking area will be reconfigured to accommodate the spectator terrace
- A 12m ball net is proposed to the ends of 4G
- Floodlighting columns (15m in height) are proposed on the boundaries of the 4G. Lighting columns (6m in height) are also proposed within the car park
- Upgrading of Lovers Lanes by way of the re-alignment of the existing road

### Planning Assessment of Policy and Other Material Considerations

#### Relevant Planning History

G/1987/0557 Permission Granted 07 November 1987 Proposal: EXTENSION TO GAELIC FOOTBALL CLUB

G/2002/0088/F Permission Granted 20 April 2002 Proposal: Extension & Alterations to Existing Changing Rooms

G/2013/0337/F Permission Granted 08 September 2014 Proposal: Construction of a full size natural grass Gaelic pitch complete with flood lighting, ball stop netting, boundary and spectator fencing, gates maintenance access and pedestrian access

LA02/2017/0001/F Permission Granted 03 February 2017 Proposal: Proposed boundary fence, entrance and skills wall

LA02/2018/0250/F Permission Granted 23 April 2018 Proposal: Proposed Store

LA02/2024/0215/PAN Proposal of Application Notice is Acceptable Decision 19 March 2024 Proposal: Proposed sports and community hub comprising multipurpose pavilion, 4G playing field, play park, memorial garden, spectator terraces, car parking, landscaping, floodlighting, access onto Lovers Lane and ancillary site works

#### Planning Policy Context

Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS)

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) Edition 2  
 Ballymena Area Plan 1986-2001  
 MEABC Local Development Plan 2030 - Plan Strategy policies relevant to this proposal include:

CS1 Sustainable Development in the Countryside  
 SGS9 – Open Space Strategy  
 OSL5 – Sport and Outdoor Recreation Facilities  
 COM1 - Education, Health, Community and Cultural Facilities  
 WWI1 - Development Relying on Non-Mains Wastewater Infrastructure  
 TR1 – Access to Public Roads  
 TR6 – Parking and Servicing  
 FRD1 Development within Floodplains  
 FRD3 – Management of Development in regard to Surface Water Flood Risk  
 FRD4 – Sustainable Drainage (SuDS).  
 NAT1 – European and Ramsar Sites – International  
 NAT2 Species Protected by Law  
 NAT5 Habitats, Species or Features of Natural Heritage Importance  
 GP1 – General Policy for all Development

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

The Planning Act (NI) 2011 establishes a plan-led planning system which gives primacy to the plan in the determination of planning applications unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. Mid and East Antrim Borough Council adopted the Local Development Plan 2030 Plan Strategy on 16th October 2023. The Plan Strategy became effective from the date of adoption and is relevant to the consideration of this application.

The Council has yet to adopt its LPP, so in the interim, decisions fall to be made in light of current circumstances. The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 (as amended) (Regulations) makes provision for the preparation of a LDP by a Council. Part 9 and the Schedule contain the arrangements for the transition from departmental development plans made under the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 or the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 to the new council local development plans. It also defines what constitutes an LDP during the transition period until the council has fully adopted its own LDP.

In line with the transitional arrangements set out in the Schedule to the Regulations, the LDP is currently a combination of the departmental development plan (DDP) and the Plan Strategy read together. Any conflict between a policy contained in the DDP and those of the Plan Strategy must be resolved in favour of the Plan Strategy.

The Ballymena Area Plan comprises the DDP for this proposal, The maps land use designations and zonings of the DDP remain relevant.

## **Consideration and Assessment**

### **Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council in its role as the competent Authority under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended), and in accordance with its duty under Regulation 43, has adopted the HRA report, and conclusions therein, prepared by Shared Environmental Service, dated 06/05/2025. This found that the project would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site.

### **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**

This application has been screened by Council under The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 Schedule 2 Part 10 (b) Urban development projects, including the construction of shopping centres and car parks; (unless included in Schedule 1); where the area of the site exceeds 0.5 ha.

As outlined within the EIA screening report, an Environmental Statement is not required. It is considered any impacts can be considered through the normal development management procedure.

### **Ballymena Area Plan 1986-2001(BAP)**

The development is within the open countryside outside any designated urban area. Part 5 of the BAP sets out the Rural Policies. Sympathetic consideration will be given to proposals designed to cater for outdoor recreational activities. Detailed consideration will be against the extant policies.

### **Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) Edition 2**

Paragraph 6.213 states that planning authorities should carefully consider development proposals for all sport and outdoor recreational activities. Relevant planning considerations will include: location, design, hours of operation, noise, impact upon visual and residential amenity, access and links to public transport; floodlighting; landscaping, public safety (including road safety); nature conservation, biodiversity, archaeology or built heritage.

**The proposal will be considered in detail below under the relevant policies of the MEABC Local Development Plan 2030 - Plan Strategy,**

### **CS1 Sustainable Development in the Countryside**

There are a range of non-residential development that may be acceptable in principle in the countryside. Sport and outdoor recreational proposals are assessed in accordance with Policy OSL5. All proposals must satisfy the requirements of the relevant policy (or policies). In addition, proposals must meet the General Policy and accord with other provisions of the LDP.

### **SGS9 Open Space Strategy**

One of the elements of the Open Space Strategy is for the provision for and facilitating of sport and outdoor recreation facilities. It states the LDP will support firm proposals for the delivery of new or reconfigured public playing pitches in accessible locations where the Council or other public bodies identify such a need.

Paragraph 5.8.16 of the J&A also advises that the Council will bring forward a Playing Pitch Strategy that will aim to increase the number of synthetic pitches available within the borough, particularly through the upgrade of existing grass pitches. Paragraph 5.8.17 goes on to clarify it is important that any new sport or outdoor recreation facilities are well designed and located appropriately to ensure they are accessible, and respect residential amenity.

The operational policy for this strategic element is set out in Policy OSL5 'Sport and Outdoor Recreation Facilities'.

### **Policy OSL5 – Sport and Outdoor Recreation Facilities**

Policy OSL5 advises that the development of appropriate sport and outdoor recreational facilities in the countryside will be permitted where they meet the General Policy and accord with other provisions of the LDP, including Policy NAT1 and the policy text relating to noise, floodlighting and water sports. In addition, such proposals must have no unacceptable impact on nearby agricultural activities or other established rural enterprises.

This policy seeks to support sport and recreation facilities that are of high-quality sustainable design and respect the visual and residential amenity of the local area, local character and distinctiveness, and respect the historic environment and natural heritage. Proposals should also provide satisfactory arrangements for access for all, car parking, drainage and waste disposal.

The development relates to the upgrading of the existing pitch facilities, proposed sports and community hub comprising multipurpose pavilion, 4G playing field, play park, 2no. spectator terraces, car parking, landscaping, floodlighting, with a new access onto and upgrading of Lovers Lane, fencing and ancillary site works to a long-established sports ground. The supporting statement provided by the applicant highlights that the improvement to the existing facilities will result in a more attractive and safer place for sport and recreation facilities.

There is no proposed increase in users and therefore no increase in existing noise levels associated with the external workout / sports area and associated activities. The multipurpose pavilion is situated approx. 280m south from the nearest sensitive receptor at No. 71 Gortgole Road. The pavilion is to provide suitable indoor training and gym facilities for the Club and to provide post match hospitality and meeting space.

It is not anticipated that there would be any adverse impact on residential amenity by way of noise or odour given separation distance and existing use of site. The proposed package treatment plant is approx. 330m south from the nearest receptor. There is no anticipated unacceptable adverse impact on residential amenity by way of noise or odour.

It is also considered that the 2no proposed spectator stands, serving the existing pitch will not result in an unacceptable noise or visual impact. The proposed fencing and ball stops are considered acceptable given their functional nature and location within an established sports facility.

In addition to the existing floodlighting, the proposed development includes a range of floodlighting to facilitate safe access to the proposed car parking as well as extending the

hours of operation of the 4G pitch. The floodlighting serving the 4G pitch will be mounted on 15 m high poles and orientated to minimise light spill.

Environmental Health have been consulted and subject to a conditions relating to lighting, noise and odour, it is not anticipated that the proposal will result in a significant adverse impact on residential amenity in the vicinity of the proposal.

It is considered the proposal complies with Policy OSL5.

### **Policy COM1 - Education, Health, Community and Cultural Facilities**

A proposal for development of new or enhanced education, health, community or cultural facilities will be permitted where it meets the General Policy and accords with other provisions of the LDP.

The proposal is seeking the extension and improvement of an established sports ground within the Countryside. The proposal will result in an improvement to the existing pitch facilities, provide a more attractive and safer place for sport and recreation facilities, and encourage greater use by the local team and community. The site is within a highly accessible location served by the surrounding road network. Designs are currently being taken forward for a shared footway and cycle track scheme on Gortgole Road, Portglenone as part of Active Travel Routes.

The proposal complies with Policy COM1.

### **WW11 - Development Relying on Non-Mains Wastewater Infrastructure**

A proposal for new development relying on non-mains wastewater infrastructure will only be permitted where the applicant has demonstrated, through the submission of sufficient information on the means of wastewater treatment and disposal that it will not create or add to a pollution problem.

The applicant is proposing the use of a package treatment plant for foul sewage generated by the development. NI Water Strategic team were consulted and offered no objection with the following advice, the use of an onsite wastewater treatment works or a septic tank is subject to the written consent being obtained from Northern Ireland Environment Agency in the form of a consent to discharge.

Policy WW11 is complied with

### **Policy TR1 – Access to Public Roads.**

A development proposal involving direct access, or the intensification of the use of an existing access, onto a public road will only be permitted where it will not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of road users and does not conflict with protected routes.

The site is currently used for sporting activities and benefits from an existing vehicular access and on-site parking. The proposed development involves alterations along with a new access onto Loves Lane that traverses the site to the North.

DfI Roads have been consulted on several occasions and have not raised any objections.

The proposal complies with Policy TR1.

### **Policy TR6 – Parking and Servicing**

Policy advises that the precise amount of car parking will be determined according to the specific characteristics of the proposed development and its location, having regard to DfI published standards. Proposals should not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of people or goods.

A Traffic Impact Assessment has been submitted as part of the proposal. Currently there are 108 car parking spaces available on the site to accommodate both pitches, with coach parking being provided on the existing site to the north. As part of this proposal an additional 102 spaces will be constructed. Total provision on site equates to 210 spaces. Accessible parking is also provided, with areas of parking broken down by soft landscaping.

In consultation with DfI Roads, it is considered that the level of parking provision is acceptable and in general accordance with the published standards.

The proposal complies with Policy TR6.

### **Policy FRD1 Development within Floodplains**

A proposal for development within a floodplain of a river or the sea will not be permitted unless the applicant can demonstrate that the proposal constitutes an exception to the policy.

Where the principle of development is accepted by the Council through being an exception to policy, applicants are required to submit a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).

The Q100cc constrain layer indicates out of river flooding along the south eastern boundary. The 4G pitch is very marginally within this area. As the use of land for sport and outdoor recreation, the proposal is deemed an exception under part (b) section (f) of FRD1. As such a Flood risk assessment was submitted.

As the statutory consultee pertaining to flood risk, Rivers Agency were consulted and offered no objection subject to the proposal being developed in accordance with the information submitted and particularly relating to level illustrated on Drawing 08 namely 15.50mOD at the northern boundary and 14.70m OD at the southern boundary.

Drawing 08 will form part of the determination information. It is not felt to be appropriate to specifically include a condition as part of any determination.

The proposal complies with Policy FRD1

### **Policy FRD3 – Management of Development in regard to Surface Water Flood Risk**

A Drainage Assessment (DA) was required in this application as the proposed development involves hard surfacing in excess of 1000m<sup>2</sup>. The DA advises that the existing surface water drainage system is to be utilised with storm water attenuation being incorporated into the design in the form of hydro brake to account for the increase in hardstanding.

Dfl Rivers have reviewed the DA and have advised that it provides a detailed drainage design that demonstrates that the issue of out of sewer flooding will be managed by attenuating the 1 in 100 year event including allowances for climate change within the proposed drainage network and safely disposed of at limited rate. Dfl Rivers are satisfied that if this was achieved, it would provide adequate measures to mitigate the flood risk from the development to elsewhere in accordance with Policy FRD3.

NIEA WMU has also considered the impacts of the proposal on the surface water environment and, on the basis of the information provided, is content with the proposal.

It is therefore considered the proposal complies with Policy FRD3.

#### **Policy FRD4 – Sustainable Drainage (SuDS).**

Policy FRD4 states that a sustainable drainage solution for the management of surface water run-off will be required for any development that trigger the requirement for a drainage Assessment under Policy FRD3.

A sustainable drainage solution has been proposed in the form of 'hard SuDS' which involves the use of attenuation hydro brake to ensure that the site remains discharging at greenfield run-off rate. The measures proposed therefore mean that the proposed development is compliant with Policy FRD4 and will manage surface water runoff and ensure that flooding is not increased elsewhere.

The proposal complies with Policy FRD4.

#### **Policy NAT1 – European and Ramsar sites – International**

Planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal that, either individually or in combination with existing and/or proposed plans or projects, is not likely to have a significant effect on:

- a. a European Site (Special Protection Area, proposed Special Protection Area, Special Areas of Conservation, candidate Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Community Importance); or
- b. a listed or proposed Ramsar Site.

A watercourse along the eastern and southern site boundaries is a tributary of the Lower Bann, with the confluence approximately 250m downstream of the application site. There is a distant/tenuous hydrological connection to Bann Estuary SAC, approximately 39km downstream.

Construction related effluent will be controlled by measures set out within the CEMP

Discharge from a package treatment plant will be authorised and regulated by NIEA WMU under the Water (NI) Order 1999.

4G pitches do not incorporate rubber infill material associated with 3G pitches

The HRA demonstrates that the proposal is not likely to have a significant effect on any European designated sites. NIEA Water Management Unit were consulted and have no objection to the proposals

NAT1 has been complied with.

#### **Policy NAT2 - Species Protected by Law**

This policy seeks to ensure that a development proposal is not likely to harm a European or National protected species.

NIEA Natural Environment Division were consulted as the proposed floodlighting may impact protected species in close proximity to the site, namely Bracknamuckley forest to the west and the watercourse to the south.

Within the statutory consultees response, no objection has been raised subject to conditions to be attached to any determination.

NAT2 is complied with.

#### **Policy NAT5 Habitats, Species or Features of Natural Heritage Importance**

This policy seeks to ensure that a development proposal is not likely to result in the unacceptable adverse impact on, or damage to known habitats and species. As already stated, NIEA were consulted and offered no objection subject to conditions.

It is therefore considered this proposal complies with NAT5.

#### **Policy GP 1 – General Policy for all Development**

##### **a) Design Quality and Respecting Local Character and Distinctiveness**

The site is located within the confines of an established sports ground. The proposed Club House and other elements are read within the wider context of a large, open playing field and proposed landscaping are likely to appear incidental rather than dominant when viewed in the round.

There is no envisaged impact on natural or heritage features.

##### **b) Safeguarding Residential Amenity**

While the intensification of sporting use and introduction of floodlighting may result in increased activity in the evenings, the recreational context of the site is already established and no significant conflict with residential amenity is anticipated.

##### **c) Access/Movement/Carparking**

Access, movement and car parking have been considered previously and conform to the TR suite of policies.

<p>d) Safety and Safeguarding Human Health and Wellbeing.</p> <p>There is no reason to suggest that the proposed development will prejudice safety or cause demonstrable harm to human health.</p> <p>DfI Rivers have been consulted and are content with the information pertaining to flood risk subject to condition.</p> <p>The site is not within an area of known land instability or subsidence or an area of known land contamination.</p>	
<p>e) Sustainable Development</p> <p>The proposal generally aligns with the LDP Spatial Growth Strategy. Essential infrastructure is available in close proximity to serve the site. SuDs are proposed in the form of a hydro brake water attenuation. Unacceptable adverse impact on the quality and integrity of the environment and particularly upon local biodiversity have been identified and mitigated to the satisfaction of NIEA. Micro-generation and passive solar design, may form part of any further statutory consents to mitigate against the adverse impacts of climate change. Adequate provision for the storage and management of waste has been provided</p>	
<p>f) Criteria relating to Development in the Countryside</p> <p>The proposal satisfactorily integrates into the surrounding landscape and does not result in a prominent and obtrusive feature in the area. The development will not extend further along the Gortgole Road and will not lead to a ribbon or mar the distinction between the settlement of Portglenone and the surrounding countryside.</p> <p>It is therefore considered the proposal complies with all the relevant criteria of Policy GP1.</p>	
<p><b>Neighbour Notification Checked</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Summary of Recommendation</b></p> <p>Approve. For the reasons considered above, and having had regard to the policy context of the Local Development Plan 2030 – Plan Strategy, and all other material considerations, including the existing use of the application site, the Planning Department recommends that planning permission be approved.</p>	
<p><b>Conditions/Reasons for Refusal:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The development hereby permitted must be begun within five years from the date of this permission.  Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.</li> <li>2. The Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980 as amended by the Private Streets (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1992. The Department hereby determines that</li> </ol>	

the width, position and arrangement of the streets, and the land to be regarded as being comprised in the streets, shall be as indicated on Drawing No 09 Rev 2.

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

3. The Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980 as amended by the Private Streets (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1992. No other development hereby permitted shall be occupied until the works necessary for the improvement of a public road have been completed in accordance with the details outlined blue on Drawing Number 09 Rev 2. The Department hereby attaches to the determination a requirement under Article 3(4A) of the above Order that such works shall be carried out in accordance with an agreement under Article 3 (4C).

Reason: To ensure that the road works considered necessary to provide a proper, safe and convenient means of access to the development are carried out.

4. The visibility splays of 4.5 metres by 120 metres at the junction of Lovers Lane and Gortgole Road, shall be provided in accordance with Drawing No. 09 Rev 2, prior to the commencement of any other works or other development.

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

5. No operations in or from any building hereby permitted shall be occupied until hard surfaced areas have been constructed and permanently marked in accordance with the approved drawing No 09 Rev 2 to provide adequate facilities for parking, servicing and circulating within the site. No part of these hard surfaced areas shall be used for any purpose at any time other than for the parking and movement of vehicles.

Reason: To ensure that adequate provision has been made for parking, servicing and traffic circulation within the site.

6. No development activity shall take place until a Final Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted by the approved contractor and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The Final CEMP shall reflect all the proposed mitigation measures as noted within Document 06 – Construction Environmental Management Plan & Drainage Management Plan and Drawing number 11 – Site Drainage Plan and all works on site shall conform to the approved CEMP, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

The Final CEMP shall include details of:

- Construction methodology and timing of works
- Site Drainage Management Plan, including details of silt management measures and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
- Details of the construction of the outfall to the adjacent watercourse and proposed mitigation measures to prevent contaminants entering the adjacent watercourse
- Details of measures to be undertaken to prevent wildlife becoming trapped or coming to harm

Reason: To ensure implementation of mitigation measures to protect protected/priority species and habitats.

7. Lighting on the site shall result in a light spill of no more than 1 Lux at the vegetated site boundaries, and the pitch shall only be externally lit during the times as stated on Drawing number 12 Rev 1, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To minimise the impact of the proposal on bats and other wildlife.

8. No removal of vegetation shall take place between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a detailed check for active bird's nests immediately before demolition and provided written confirmation that no nests are present/birds will be harmed and/or there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting birds. Any such written confirmation shall be submitted to the Planning Authority within 6 weeks of works commencing.

Reason: To protect breeding birds.

9. Within 4 weeks of a written request by the Department, following a light complaint from the occupant of a dwelling which lawfully exists, the operator shall, at his/her expense employ a suitably qualified and competent person, to assess the light (lux) levels from the development and provide a suitable report.

Reason: To ensure that nearby residents suffer no loss of amenity.

10. Within 4 weeks of a written request by the Department, following an odour complaint from the occupant of a dwelling which lawfully exists, the operator shall, at his/her expense employ a suitably qualified and competent person, to assess the odour levels from the development and provide a suitable report.

Reason: To ensure that nearby residents suffer no loss of amenity.

11. Within 4 weeks of a written request by the Department, following a noise complaint from the occupant of a dwelling which lawfully exists, the operator shall, at his / her expense employ a suitably qualified and competent person to assess the noise levels from the development and provide a suitable report.

Reason: To ensure that nearby residents suffer no loss of amenity.

12. The development hereby approved shall be developed and operated in accordance with the plans and documents referenced at the beginning of this decision notice.

Reason: To ensure that the development is developed/operated in accordance with the approved plans and documents.

**Case Officer Signature:**





# Statement of Community Involvement

## May 2026

[www.midandeantrim.gov.uk](http://www.midandeantrim.gov.uk)



**Mid & East  
Antrim**  
Borough Council

## Getting in touch

Should you have a Planning query, you can contact the Council's Planning Section in any of the following ways:

**By email to:**

planning@midandeantrim.gov.uk

**Or:**

Planning Department  
Ardeevin  
80 Galgorm Road  
Ballymena  
BT42 1AB

**By telephone:**

02825 633500

The document can be downloaded from the Council website at [www.midandeantrim.gov.uk](http://www.midandeantrim.gov.uk)

Should you require a copy of this Statement of Community Involvement in an alternative format, it can be made available on request in large print, audio format, or Braille. It may also be made available in other languages to meet the needs of those for who English is not their first language.

## Keeping the community involved

The Council hopes to secure the ongoing involvement of the public in the planning process, in particular with the formulation of the new Local Development Plan. Any individual or organisation wishing to be so included is invited to complete the Community Involvement Form which is available on the Council website or from the Planning Department. The completed form should be sent to the Planning Department at the above address. A register will be maintained of those who have expressed interest in participation in the planning process through returning the completed form.

Further information about all the Council's Planning responsibilities can be found on our website:

[www.midandeantrim.gov.uk](http://www.midandeantrim.gov.uk)

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# 1 What is a Statement of Community Involvement?

## Introduction

### 1.1

This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how Mid and East Antrim (MEA) Borough Council intends to engage with the community in the delivery of planning functions. The SCI describes who, how and when the community will be involved in the different stages of the preparation of the Local Development Plan, in the determination of planning applications, in planning enforcement, and in other planning matters which are the responsibility of the Council.

## Legislative context

### 1.2

Councils are required under Section 4 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement.

### 1.3

The Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 sets out the minimum requirements for the SCI including its form, content and availability.

### 1.4

The preparation of the Statement of Community Involvement is a legal requirement and the Council has a duty to comply with these requirements for community engagement on planning matters.

### 1.5

This revised SCI, as with the original document and further revisions, has been approved by resolution of the Council and has been agreed with the Department for Infrastructure (DFI) in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

## Council's vision of participation

### 1.6

The Council's Corporate Plan sets out a range of strategic objectives grouped under five main themes, several of which are relevant to planning and which the planning system will help to deliver. Council acknowledges that achievement of these objectives will depend on partnership, collaboration and effective local working. Accordingly, the Council is committed to ensuring that engagement with the public is genuine, meaningful and fit for purpose. Through community involvement in Planning, the Council will strive for development that is sustainable and that benefits everyone.

### 1.7

That is a shared vision of participation in decision making which aims to ensure that:

- everyone has an early and informed opportunity to express their views on the development of the Borough and have this considered before decisions are made; and
- all groups in the community, regardless of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, sex, marital status, physical ability, sexual orientation, and those with and without dependents are enabled and empowered to participate.

### 1.8

It is intended to adopt principles of community involvement which promote a culture of engagement, recognising that everyone has a right to be involved in decisions that affect them. This will mean providing clear information and encouraging continuous participation, but particularly at an early stage, during the preparation of the Local Development Plan and in the assessment and determination of planning applications. The community involvement process must therefore be timely, informative, user friendly, as inclusive as possible, and conducted in an open and transparent way. Every effort will be made to engage the community, record views and provide feedback.

## Benefits of community involvement

### 1.9

Effective and widespread involvement of communities in the planning process is a key objective of the planning system. Involvement of communities helps to ensure that as many people as possible are aware of the process, that they understand it, that they are able to contribute to it and that they can influence its content.

### 1.10

There are many benefits of community consultation for the Council, organisations, individuals, developers and landowners:-

Benefits for us are:

- more informed and involved communities
- less delays likely in the determination of planning applications
- a likely reduction in the number of objections to policies and plans
- the strengthening of the delivery of plans and proposals
- greater sense of public ownership and support for the Council's activities.

Benefits for organisations and individuals are:

- the ability to influence the decision-making process
- greater public ownership and sense of democracy
- local services that meet local needs and priorities
- a better understanding of the planning system
- the ability for organisations and individuals to influence the concept and design of development schemes.

Benefits for developers and landowners are:

- the opportunity for the developers to explain their proposal
- less delays in determining applications
- more certainty about the outcome
- the creation of sustainable and acceptable developments
- a reduction in the number of objections for proposed developments.



## 2 Community involvement in the preparation of Mid and East Antrim Local Development Plan

### Purposes of the Local Development Plan

#### 2.1

The fundamental purpose of the Local Development Plan (LDP) is to inform the general public, statutory undertakers, developers and other interested parties of the local planning policy framework and land use proposals that will guide development decisions in Mid and East Antrim Borough over the Plan period (2015 to 2030). Through providing such certainty, the Plan will aim to facilitate the delivery of sustainable development for the benefit of the local economy, society and the environment. In so doing, the LDP must take account of the regional planning policy context provided by the Regional Development Strategy 2035 and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland Edition 2, 2025 (SPPS 2) as well as relevant central government strategies and guidance. It will also have regard to the Mid and East Antrim Corporate Plan 2019 – 2023 and the Community Plan<sup>1</sup>.

### Purposes of community involvement in the Local Development Plan

#### 2.2

Providing for community and stakeholder involvement in planning is a long established tenet of the land use planning system in Northern Ireland. However, in delivering the new reformed planning system, the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 has set out new provisions that are intended to significantly enhance the level of public engagement with the planning system in general, and with LDPs in particular.

#### 2.3

There are important benefits to be derived from involving communities and stakeholders in the preparation of the LDP. Ultimately, the LDP is more likely to be accepted by the public if it achieves a sense of local ownership and community buy-in through the meaningful engagement of communities and stakeholders early in the Plan process ('frontloading') is especially beneficial, in that this is likely to encourage sustained public participation

throughout the duration of the process. Front-loading also offers an opportunity for communities and stakeholders to share their views and knowledge with planners at an early stage. This will help to ensure that the subsequent Plan policies and proposals are properly targeted to address relevant local issues, and appropriate in shaping the places in which communities and stakeholders have an interest. Taken together, realisation of all of these benefits stemming from meaningful community involvement in the Plan will serve to underpin its ultimate effectiveness and soundness.

### Proposals for community involvement in the preparation of the Mid and East Antrim development plan

#### 2.4

The proposals for community involvement in the preparation of the Mid & East Antrim LDP are set out in the remainder of section 2 of this Statement. These proposals set out the actions that the Council intends to implement at various stages in the Plan process, in order to facilitate a high standard of community involvement in the emerging LDP. The SCI informs everyone of how, when and where they can participate in the Plan process, as well as the standards that the Council will endeavour to meet in terms of community involvement.

### Who can get involved?

#### 2.5

MEA Borough Council will seek to involve the whole community in the Plan process and anyone who wishes to participate is encouraged to do so at the opportunities provided. In particular, and in addition to Elected Members of the Council, the view of the following groups of people will be sought:

- People living or working within the Borough;
- Community Groups/Umbrella Organisations;
- Environmental Groups;
- Residents Groups;

- Voluntary Groups;
- Academic interests;
- Businesses;
- Developers / Landowners / Investors;
- MPs / MLAs.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive, and is not intended to restrict any individual, group, or organisation from participating in the plan making process.

#### 2.6

Elected Representatives, community groups and residents groups provide a voice for the local community. Business interests and developers are key to facilitating the delivery of economic development through the Plan. Other voluntary, environmental and interest groups also bring specialist knowledge and can help to ensure that important local planning related concerns are addressed. It is recognised that the active participation of a wide spectrum of interest groups will help to ensure that policies and proposals brought forward in the LDP are balanced, appropriate and sustainable.

### Empowering disadvantaged and under-represented groups

#### 2.7

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires us, in carrying out our functions, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependents and persons without.

#### 2.8

In addition, without prejudice to the above obligations, the Council is also required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political

opinion or race. The above "Section 75 groups" are important participants within the planning process and include people who traditionally have been under represented or disadvantaged. MEA Borough Council will seek, as far as possible, to target these groups through the consultation process on the LDP in order to obtain their views and contribute to the consideration of equality issues under Section 75. Their views on any equality screening documents or draft Equality Impact Assessments will also be sought as well as any views they may have on the evolving development plan documents.

#### 2.9

To ensure that all documents associated with the preparation of the LDP are accessible to everyone, they will be made available in different formats upon request, including large print, audio format, or Braille. If for any reason, a request for a document in a particular alternative format cannot be met, other possible solutions will be explored.

### How and when will the community be involved?

#### 2.10

The formulation of a Local Development Plan involves a number of key stages<sup>2</sup>, each presenting opportunities for community involvement. Each stage is identified below along with the actions that are to be taken to involve the community. These actions will fulfil and in some cases exceed the statutory requirements on public consultation, as specified in the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011.

<sup>1</sup> The Mid and East Antrim Community Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Part 10 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix 1 refers to the statutory LDP process.

## STAGE 1

### Developing the evidence base to commencement of plan

#### 2.11

The Council Planning Department has already undertaken a wide range of preparatory studies and will continue to build up the evidence base until the formal commencement of the Plan. The evidence base will continue to be updated as necessary throughout the LDP process. This involves the collection and analysis of information relating to a number of topics that the Plan will address, such as housing, economic development and environmental assets of the Borough. In developing this evidence base, planners will also engage with Elected Members and key consultees. The evidence base will provide a robust foundation for the development of Plan policies and proposals and will inform the next stage of the process, i.e. the preparation of a Preferred Options Paper (POP).

#### 2.12

Where relevant, these studies will also inform the Sustainability Appraisal, an assessment which runs in tandem with the Plan process<sup>3</sup>. During this stage, the Scoping Report of the Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), will be sent to DfI, in its role as the statutory consultation body.

#### 2.13

When the evidence base is substantially complete, the formal commencement of the LDP will be marked by the publication of a Timetable. The Timetable will set out the key stages of the Plan making process so that everyone is informed about the preparation of the Plan and the broad timing of each stage. The Timetable will be subject to annual review to ensure that it remains relevant to actual progress made on the LDP. Council will agree the Timetable and all further amendments with the Department for Infrastructure and will also notify the Planning Appeals Commission.

## What we will do

### 2.14 Actions (governance)

a) We will set up a steering group/working group comprising the Planning Committee, the Chief Executive, Directors, and the Head of Planning. This is the high level co-ordinating body that will ensure oversight and strategic input on behalf of the whole community, as well as from planning professionals.

### 2.15 Actions (community involvement)

b) We will issue a public notice to indicate that formal commencement of work on the LDP has begun through publication of the following documents:

- Publication of Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI);
- Publication of the Plan Timetable and any subsequent amendments;
- How to view or obtain copies of the Plan Timetable and SCI.

The public notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Larne Times, and Carrick Times<sup>4</sup>.

c) We will create and maintain a community involvement register of all individuals and groups who have expressed an interest in being informed about the key stages of the LDP. The aim is to ensure that those who have expressed an interest in planning in the Borough are kept informed about the plan making process. This register will be kept under review and written requests for inclusion from additional bodies will be considered by the Council. Those included on the register when the timetable is published will be informed of the commencement of work on the LDP;

d) Key consultees will receive written invitation requesting them to participate in the Plan making process and to provide information on the key strategic issues that the LDP should address;

e) Under represented (Section 75) groups will be contacted and invited to identify whether there are any types of planning policies likely to have significant impact on the groups they represent. They will also be provided opportunity to identify any particular issues or needs which they consider the Plan should address. Where requested, this can be done through a meeting with a planning official. Any comments received will

be taken into account when screening and scoping the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA);

f) We will publish all completed papers informing the evidence base for the LDP and Sustainability Appraisal on the Council website;

#### 1.16

The SCI and Plan timetable (and any subsequent amendments to either) will also be made available for inspection at the Council's planning office and other Council offices at:

- The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena;
- Smiley Buildings, Victoria Road, Larne;
- Town Hall, 11 Antrim Street, Carrickfergus

## STAGE 2

### Preferred Options Paper

#### 2.17

The first formal stage in the preparation of the LDP will be marked by the publication of a Preferred Options Paper (POP). This will set out the key planning issues in the Borough, identify a range of options available to address them and define the Council's preferred options. It will promote debate on issues of strategic significance which are likely to influence the shape of future development within MEA. The POP will be subject to a period of public consultation and stakeholder engagement which will seek to stimulate a wide ranging, yet focused, debate and encourage feedback from a wide variety of interests. Any representations or views received as a consequence of its publication will be considered whilst formulating the draft Plan Strategy.

#### 2.18

A Sustainability Appraisal Interim Report, consisting of a Scoping Report and Assessment of Alternatives, will be published along with the POP.

## What we will do

### 2.19 Actions (governance)

a) A series of Councilor Workshops will be held to seek the views of all Elected Members on the issues and alternative options to be addressed by the POP;

b) At the end of this stage, a Public Consultation

Report on the POP will be presented to Elected Members following the end of the consultation period. This will contain a summary of representations and Planning Officers comment. A written record will be taken of where Elected Members take differing views to that recommended in the report, along with the rationale for that view. This will be taken into account in formulating the draft Plan Strategy.

c) Subsequent to approval by Council, the POP Consultation Report will be published on the Council's website.

### 2.20 Actions (community involvement)

a) We will hold a launch event for invited persons to announce the publication of the Preferred Options Paper and its period for public consultation;

b) We will issue a press release to generate publicity about the publication of the POP, highlighting the Council's preferred options, and encouraging public response;

c) We will issue a Public Notice to confirm:

- Publication of the Preferred Options Paper and invite comment within the specified consultation period<sup>5</sup>;
- Details of public engagement events, exhibitions and drop-in information sessions during the consultation period; and
- Publication of the Sustainability Appraisal Interim Report and screening report for Equality Impact Assessment.

This public notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Carrick Times, and Larne Times.

d) We will hold public engagement events and exhibitions with drop-in sessions at locations throughout the Borough where Planning officials will be available to assist with queries in regard to the LDP in general and this stage in particular;

e) We will write to all key consultees and Elected Members providing them with a copy of the POP; invite them to attend the launch, request that they provide comments within the specified consultation period; and inform them of the public engagement events, exhibitions and drop-in sessions;

f) We will contact local community groups and under-

<sup>3</sup> Appendix 1 refers to the Sustainability Appraisal process.

<sup>4</sup> The Larne Times and Carrick Times have shared pages meaning that the Larne Times is used in all editions across this group of newspapers

<sup>5</sup> Regulation 11 (3) of The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations states that in relation to a Preferred Options Paper, this "must be a period of not less than 8 weeks or more than 12 weeks".

represented (Section 75) groups advising them how to obtain a copy of the POP; inviting them to comment within the specified consultation period; inviting them to attend the public engagement events, exhibitions, and drop-in sessions; and offering the opportunity of a meeting with a planning official to record their views;

g) We will notify all those included on the community involvement register of the publication of the POP and carry out the actions as detailed under (f) above;

h) We will continue to make the evidence base supporting the POP available on the Council website and update this as necessary.

## STAGE 3 Plan Strategy

### 2.21

The LDP Plan Strategy, once adopted, will be the first part of the LDP. It will define the strategic objectives for the future development of the Borough. It will also include a range of strategic policies to facilitate and manage development and a spatial strategy that indicates in broad strategic terms the locations where different types of development will be promoted or restricted. There are 7 distinguishable phases of work contained within this stage, noted below under headings A to G.

## A) Draft Plan Strategy – preparation

### What we will do

#### 2.22 Actions (governance)

In preparing the draft Plan Strategy, Council's planning department will:

a) Hold a series of workshops for all Elected Members to help inform, shape and agree the strategic policies and proposals that will make up the draft Plan Strategy;

b) Send a report of each Councillor Workshop to Full Council, inviting any comments on the emerging strategic policies and proposals;

c) Set up a Project Management Team (PMT) comprising of senior Council officers and representatives from key statutory consultees

including government departments and agencies. The purpose of the PMT will be to ensure that key consultees engage in the Plan making process and particularly in the development of the emerging policies and proposals. To this end, meetings chaired by the LDP Principal Planning Officer will be convened at regular intervals leading up to the publication of the draft Plan Strategy.

## B) Draft Plan Strategy – publication for public consultation

### 2.23

The draft Plan Strategy will provide an indication of the Council's intentions regarding the future development of the Borough. It will be issued for public consultation as a key part of the community involvement and public participation process.

### What we will do

#### 2.24 Actions (Governance)

a) At the end of this stage we will report representations to the Elected Members to inform any amendment that may be considered necessary to the draft Plan Strategy, before the formal submission of the Plan to the Department.

#### 2.25 Actions (Community Involvement)

a) We will hold a launch event for invited persons to announce the publication of the draft Plan Strategy and indicate the period for public consultation.

b) We will issue a press release highlighting the key elements of the draft Plan Strategy;

c) We will issue a public notice to confirm:

- Advance Publication of the Draft Plan Strategy four weeks in advance of the statutory eight week period of public consultation and how to view or obtain copies;
- The arrangements for public engagement events during the four week period in advance of the statutory consultation period;
- The consultation period for the formal eight week period for receipt of representations to the draft Plan Strategy and accompanying draft
- Environmental Report and other Assessments; and
- That representations received after the end of the eight week period of public consultation cannot be

accepted.

This public notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Carrick Times, Larne Times and Belfast Gazette.

d) Between the launch event and the commencement of the public consultation, we will hold public engagement events as referred to in the public notice at locations throughout the Borough where Planning officials will be available to assist with queries in regard to the LDP in general and this stage in particular;

e) We will contact Statutory Consultees and Elected Members informing them of the publication of the draft Plan Strategy and providing them with a copy; the dates of the public exhibitions; confirmation of the eight week period for public consultation; and the closing date for receipt of representations;

f) We will contact those who submitted representations in regard to the Preferred Options Paper to inform them of the publication of the draft Plan Strategy and accompanying documents including the POP Public Consultation Report; details of how to view the documents or obtain copies; the arrangements for public exhibitions; and confirmation of the eight week period for public consultation, and the closing date for receipt of representations;

g) We will notify all those included in the Community Involvement register of the publication of the draft Plan Strategy and accompanying documents and carry out the actions as detailed under (f) above;

h) We will issue a second public notice to confirm:

- Publication of the draft Plan Strategy and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating the draft Environmental Report, Non-Technical Summary and Scoping Report), the draft Habitats Regulations Assessment, the draft Equality (Section 75) Screening Report and the Rural Needs Impact Assessment and other supporting documents, and how to view or obtain copies;
- The arrangements for drop-in information sessions during the formal consultation period; the date
- of commencement of the eight week statutory consultation period and the closing date for receipt of representations to the draft Plan Strategy, draft Sustainability Appraisal Report and other

Assessments;

- That representations received after the end of the eight week period of public consultation cannot be accepted.

This public notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Carrick Times, Larne Times and Belfast Gazette.

i) We will make the draft Plan Strategy, the draft Sustainability Appraisal, the draft Habitat Regulations Assessment, the draft Equality (Section 75) Screening Report, the Rural Needs Impact Assessment and other supporting documents available on the Council website and in the Council Planning Office.

## C) Draft Plan Strategy – public inspection of representations

### 2.26

Whilst the focus of this stage of the LDP is on strategic issues across the Borough, all representations made to the draft Plan Strategy will be made available for public inspection as part of the public consultation process. A representation that seeks to add, alter or delete a site identified for a particular use is known as a site specific policy representation. It will be a matter for the Independent Examiner as to whether site specific representations and counter-representations are addressed at the Independent Examination of the draft Plan Strategy. It should be noted that all representations and counter representations are public documents that will be made available to DfI and the Independent Examiner. All representations will therefore be held in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

## What we will do

### 2.27 Actions (governance)

a) We will report representations to the Elected Members before forwarding to the Department for Infrastructure.

b) We will fully consider representations before submitting the draft Plan Strategy to the Department for Infrastructure for Independent Examination (IE).

### 2.28 Actions (Community Involvement)

a) We will make copies of all representations available for inspection on the Council website and in the Council Planning Office;

b) We will write to key consultees, Elected Members and all those included in the Community Involvement Register informing them that representations are available for inspection and of the arrangements put in place for this purpose; and

c) We will issue a public notice to confirm:

- The availability of all representations for inspection; and
- The eight week period for public consultation, and the closing date for receipt of representations.

This public notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Carrick Times, Larne Times and Belfast Gazette.

## D) Draft Plan Strategy – public inspection of counter representations

### What we will do

#### 2.29 Actions (governance)

a) We will report counter representations to the Elected Members before forwarding to the Department for Infrastructure.

b) We will fully consider counter representations before submitting the draft Plan Strategy to the Department for Infrastructure for Independent Examination (IE).

#### 2.30 Actions (community involvement)

a) We will make copies of all counter representations available for inspection on our website and in the Council Planning Office.

b) We will write to key consultees, Elected Members and all those included in the Community Involvement Register informing them that counter representations are available for inspection and of the arrangements put in place for this purpose.

c) We will issue a public notice to confirm the availability of all counter representations for inspection.

This public notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Carrick Times, Larne Times and Belfast Gazette.

## E) Draft Plan Strategy - Public Inspection of Proposed Modifications to the draft Plan Strategy (if applicable)

### What we will do

#### 2.31 Actions (governance)

a) We will notify Elected Members of all representations on Proposed Modifications to the draft Plan Strategy.

#### 2.32 Actions (Community Involvement)

Where necessary and prior to submission of the draft Plan Strategy to the Department, we will propose modifications to the draft Plan Strategy. If we consider the proposed modifications go beyond minor changes we will:

a) Write to key consultees and all those included in the Community Involvement Register informing them that the proposed modifications to the draft Plan Strategy are available for inspection and of the arrangements put in place for this purpose.

b) Issue a public notice to confirm:

- The availability of the proposed modifications for inspection; and
- The eight week period for public consultation, and the closing date for receipt of representations.

This public notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Carrick Times, Larne Times and Belfast Gazette.

## F) Draft Plan Strategy – Independent Examination

### 2.33

Upon receipt of the Plan documents, the Department must cause an Independent Examination to be held to determine the soundness of the draft Plan Strategy. As part of this process the Independent Examiner will take into account those representations and counter representations as may be considered appropriate. Council Planning officials will be available to answer any questions put forward by the Independent Examiner and to provide comments on the representations and counter-representations, as required.

### What we will do

#### 2.34 Actions (governance)

a) We will request key consultees to provide comment on relevant representations for consideration at the Independent Examination.

#### 2.35 Actions (community involvement)

a) We will continue to ensure that the draft Plan Strategy and all accompanying documents are available on the Council website;

b) We will advertise dates, times and venues for the Independent Examination at least 4 weeks before the Examination is to be held, and provide details of where representations are available for inspection; and

c) We will notify all persons who submitted representations of the arrangements for the Independent Examination indicating that representations and counter representations are available for inspection.

## G) Plan Strategy - Adoption

### 2.36

Following the Independent Examination, the Department for Infrastructure will issue a Direction to the Council, requiring it to adopt the draft Plan Strategy as originally prepared or with modifications. The Council may also be directed to withdraw the draft Plan Strategy. The Department will be expected to give reasons for any decision requiring amendment or withdrawal.

## What we will do

### 2.37 Actions (community involvement)

a) We will issue a public notice to confirm:

- The adoption of the Plan Strategy;
- How to get copies of the Plan Strategy, the Department for Infrastructure's Direction and the accompanying Independent Examiner's Report.

This public notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Carrick Times, Larne Times and Belfast Gazette.

b) We will make the Plan Strategy, the Department for Infrastructure's Direction, and accompanying Independent Examiner's Report available on the Council website, with hard copies available on request at a specified price;

c) We will write to key consultees and those who submitted representations and counter representations advising of the adoption of the Plan Strategy, and where to obtain copies together with the Department for Infrastructure's Direction and the Independent Examiner's Report; and

d) We will notify all those included on the Community Involvement register about the adoption of the Plan Strategy.

## STAGE 4 Draft Local Policies Plan

### 2.38

The second part of the Local Development Plan will be the Local Policies Plan (LPP). The draft LPP must follow on from and be consistent with the adopted Plan Strategy and will contain the local policies, including site specific proposals, designations and land use zonings required to deliver the Council's LDP vision, objectives and strategic policies. This draft document is a key part of the public participation process. There are 7 distinguishable phases of work contained within this stage, noted below under headings A to G.

## A) Draft Local Policies Plan – preparation

### What we will do

#### 2.39 Actions (governance)

In preparing the draft Local Policies Plan (LPP), Council's Planning Department will:

- a) Hold a series of workshops for all Elected Members to help inform, shape and agree the local policies and proposals that will make up the draft LPP;
- b) Send a report of each Councillor Workshop to Full Council, inviting any comments on the emerging local policies and proposals; and
- c) Engage key statutory consultees, including through regular meetings of the PMT, as previously constituted.

## B) Draft Local Policies Plan – publication for public consultation

### 2.40

The draft LPP will propose detailed zonings for various land uses such as housing, economic development and open space. It will also propose designations for certain areas, such as development limits for settlements and town centre boundaries. As with the draft Plan Strategy, it will be issued for public consultation as a key part of the community involvement and public consultation process.

### What we will do

#### 2.41 Actions (community involvement)

- a) We will hold a launch event for invited persons to announce the publication of the draft LPP;
- b) We will issue a press release highlighting the key elements of the draft LPP;
- c) We will issue a public notice to confirm;
  - Publication of the Draft Local Policies Plan and other supporting documents and how to view or obtain copies;
  - The arrangements for public engagement events, exhibitions and drop-in information sessions;
  - The eight week period for public consultation and closing date for receipt of representations to the

draft LPP; and

That representations received after the end of the period of public consultation cannot be accepted.

This public notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Carrick Times, Larne Times and Belfast Gazette.

- d) We will hold public engagement events and exhibitions with drop-in sessions at locations throughout the Borough where Planning officials will be available to assist with queries relating to the LPP in general and this stage in particular;
- e) We will contact Statutory Consultees and Elected Members informing them of the publication of the draft LPP and the arrangements for the public exhibitions confirmation of the eight week period for public consultation, and the closing date for receipt of representations;

f) We will contact those who submitted representations in regard to the Preferred Options Paper (POP) and the draft Plan Strategy to inform them of the publication of the draft LPP and associated documents; details of; how to view the documents or obtain copies; the arrangements for the public exhibitions; and confirmation of the eight week period for public consultation, and the closing date for receipt of representations;

g) We will notify all those included on the Community Involvement register about the publication of the draft LPP and other details as noted at (f) above; and

### 2.42

At the end of this stage we will report representations to the Elected Members to inform any amendments that may be considered necessary to the draft Local Policies Plan before the formal submission of the Plan documents to the Department.

## C) Draft Local Policies Plan - public inspection of representations

### 2.43

All representations made to the draft Local Policies Plan will be made available for public inspection as part of the public consultation process. A representation that seeks to add, alter or delete a site identified for a particular use is known as a site

specific representation. Any person may make a counter representation about a site specific policy representation. Both representations and counter representations will be considered at the Independent Examination. All representations and counter representations will therefore be held in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

### What we will do

#### 2.44 Actions (governance)

- a) We will report representations to the Elected Members before forwarding to the Department for Infrastructure; and
- b) We will fully consider representations before submitting the draft Local Policies Plan to the Department for Infrastructure for Independent Examination (IE).

#### 2.45 (community involvement)

- a) We will make copies of all representations available for inspection on the Council website, and in the Council planning office;
- b) We will write to key consultees, Elected Members and all those included on the Community Involvement Register informing them that representations are available for inspection and the arrangements put in place for this purpose;
- c) We will issue a public notice to confirm;

- The availability of representations for inspection; and
- The eight week period for public consultation, and the closing date for receipt of counter representations.

This public notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Carrick Times, Larne Times and Belfast Gazette.

d) We will notify all those included in the Community Involvement Register of the availability of representations for inspection.

## D) Draft Local Policies Plan – public inspection of counter representations

### What we will do

#### 2.46 Actions (governance)

- a) We will report counter representations to the Elected Members before forwarding to the Department for Infrastructure.
- b) We will fully consider counter representations before submitting the draft Local Policies Plan to the Department for Infrastructure for Independent Examination (IE).
- c) We will make copies of all counter representations available for inspection on the Council website, and in the Council planning office;
- d) We will write to Key Consultees, Elected Members and all those included in the Community Involvement Register informing them that counter-representations are available for inspection and the arrangements put in place for this purpose; and

e) We will issue a public notice to confirm the availability of counter representations for inspection. This public notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Carrick Times, Larne Times and Belfast Gazette.

## E) Draft Local Policies Plan - Public Inspection of Proposed Modifications to the draft Local Policies Plan (if applicable)

### What we will do

#### 2.48 Actions (governance)

a) We will notify Elected Members of all representations on Proposed Modifications to the draft Local Policies Plan.

#### 2.49 Actions (community involvement)

Where necessary and prior to submission of the draft Local Policies Plan to the Department, we will propose modifications to the draft Local Policies Plan. If we consider the proposed modifications go beyond minor changes we will:

- a) Write to key consultees and all those included in the Community Involvement Register informing them that the proposed modifications to the draft Local Policies Plan are available for inspection and of the

arrangements put in place for this purpose.

b) Issue a public notice to confirm:

- The availability of the proposed modifications for inspection; and
- The eight week period for public consultation, and the closing date for receipt of representations.

This public notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Carrick Times, Larne Times and Belfast Gazette.

## F) Draft Local Policies Plan – Independent Examination

### 2.50

Upon receipt of the Plan documents, the Department must cause an Independent Examination to be held to determine the soundness of the draft Local Policies Plan. As part of this process, the Independent Examiner will take into account all representations and counter representations as may be considered appropriate. Council planning officials will be available to answer any questions put forward by the Independent Examiner and to provide comment on the representations and counter representations, as required.

### What we will do

#### 2.51 Actions (community involvement)

a) We will continue to ensure the draft LPP, and all accompanying documentation is available on the Council website;

b) We will advertise dates, times and venues for the Independent Examination at least four weeks before the Examination is to be held, and provide details of where representations and counter representations are available for inspection;

c) We will notify all persons who submitted representations, of the arrangements for the Independent Examination, indicating that representations and counter representations are available for inspection.

#### 2.52 Actions (governance)

a) We will request key consultees to provide comment on relevant representations for consideration at the Independent Examination.

## G) Local Policies Plan – Adoption

### 2.53

Following the Independent Examination, the Department for Infrastructure will issue a Direction to the Council, requiring the Council to adopt the draft LPP, as originally prepared, or with modifications. The Council may also be directed to withdraw the draft LPP. The Department will be expected to give reasons for any decision requiring amendment or withdrawal.

### What we will do

#### 2.54 Actions (community involvement)

a) We will issue a Public Notice to confirm:

- Adoption of the Local Policies Plan; and
- How to get copies of the LPP, the Department for Infrastructure's Direction, and the accompanying Independent Examiner's Report.

This public notice will be placed on the Council website and appear in the Ballymena Guardian, Carrick Times, Larne Times and Belfast Gazette.

b) We will make the LPP, the Department for Infrastructure's Direction and accompanying Independent Examiner's Report available on the Council website;

c) We will contact key consultees and those who submitted representations advising them of the adoption of the LPP, and where to obtain copies, together with the Department for Infrastructure's Direction and the independent Examiner's Report;

d) We will notify all those included in the Community Involvement register about the adoption of the LPP.

## Next steps

### 2.55

Following the adoption of the Local Development Plan (comprising the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan), the Council will identify its work priorities for the next five years in a new Timetable. It may also issue a new Statement of Community Involvement if considered appropriate. In addition, the Council will engage in monitoring and review which is essential in establishing how the objectives in the LDP are being achieved and whether any changes are required.



## 3 Community Involvement in other Forward Planning Matters

### Supplementary Planning Guidance

#### 3.1

The Council will, where considered appropriate, prepare non-statutory planning guidance, particularly to support its LDP. Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) includes, for example, design guides and advice notes. Consultation on SPG will be carried out in a proportionate manner where it is considered by the Council to be beneficial to give additional regard to the opinions of stakeholders and the local community. The Council's Planning Committee will be consulted on development of the guidance, including any comments received. It is not a statutory requirement for SPG to be considered through the public examination process.

### Conservation Area Designation

#### 3.2

A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to enhance or preserve. The Council considers that consultation with, and the involvement of local people, is important when undertaking work associated with Conservation Areas, or in bringing forward proposals for new Conservation Area designations. This will encourage greater public commitment and cooperation in securing the conservation aims.

#### 3.3

We will therefore involve the community in the designation, variation or cancellation of a Conservation Area. This will entail formal consultation with the Historic Buildings Council, Department for Communities (Historic Environment Division), Department for Infrastructure (Roads and Rivers), and NI Water (as the current water and sewerage undertaker). In addition, any proposals, including new designations, will be advertised in the local press. Where appropriate, we will also hold a public launch or public meetings to present and discuss proposals. We will also seek to engage with the community in regard to any significant works proposed by Council affecting a Conservation Area, such as public realm schemes.

### Designation of Simplified Planning Zones

#### 3.4

Simplified Planning Zones (SPZs) relate to areas of land where planning control is relaxed in favour of prescribed types of development, often with the aim of encouraging regeneration and investment.

#### 3.5

Where the Council proposed to designate a SPZ, we will undertake consultations with neighbouring Councils, the landowner(s) and occupier(s), the Department for Communities. DfI will also be notified.

#### 3.6

Once details of a scheme have been prepared, we will make copies available for inspection at the Council Planning office and other Council offices as may be prescribed. We will also give notice by way of advertisement in the local press and on the Council's website, and will serve a notice on consultees.

#### 3.7

Following advertisement, there will be an 8 week period when representations can be made to the Council. If the Council subsequently decides not to proceed with the SPZ, a further advertisement will be published to that effect and all persons who made representations will be notified.

#### 3.8

The Council may cause an Independent Examination to be held to consider the representations received. In these circumstances, we will publish details, including the time and place of the Examination, in the local press. Where it is decided not to hold an Examination, we will notify all those who have made representations.

#### 3.9

Following any Independent Examination, we will produce a report and statement detailing the Council's decision and the reasons for it. Notice of publication of these documents will be advertised in the local press and the report and statement will be available for public inspection at the Council Planning office and other Council offices, as may be prescribed.

## 4 Community Involvement in Development Management

### Purpose

#### 4.1

Development management is the process by which Mid and East Antrim Borough Council shapes, considers, determines and delivers proposals for development, so that the right development happens in the right places. As the local planning authority, it processes a variety of planning applications. Although there are a number of minor exceptions these include:

- Planning Applications
- Listed Building Consent.
- Demolition in a Conservation Area
- Advertisement Consent
- Lawful Development Certificate
- Removal/Variation of Conditions

#### 4.2

It is a positive and proactive process in which the Council works closely with those proposing developments and other stakeholders, in order to achieve high quality, sustainable development.

#### 4.3

To help achieve this goal, planners will work with the applicant, Elected Members, the community and statutory consultees throughout the process. Such an approach should also provide greater transparency.

#### 4.4

This section of the Statement of Community Involvement looks at:

- How the public can become involved at the various stages of the application process; and
- How the level of community involvement will depend on the scale of the application.

### Pre-application planning advice Introduction

#### 4.5

Open and constructive pre-applications discussions are an opportunity for Mid and East Antrim Council and developers to work together to achieve high quality, sustainable development. These discussions

can give both the applicant and the local planning department clarity and reassurance about the application. These discussions can take a variety of formats:

### Informal discussions

#### 4.6

Mid and East Antrim Planning Department will endeavour to discuss/meet with any member of the public who has a point of clarification which they need resolving prior to an application being submitted. It is envisaged that the majority of these cases will be dealt with by telephone.

### Formal discussions (PAD)

#### 4.7

Mid and East Antrim Planning Department will facilitate a meeting with potential applicants who wish to submit major developments. Officers will provide formal written responses and will when necessary, involve other relevant consultees, e.g. Transport NI, NIEA etc. This will ensure that any issues that have the potential to arise are brought to the fore at an early stage.

### Need for an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA)

#### 4.8

Article 8 of the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 allows for a developer to contact the relevant Council asking it to give a determination as to whether a proposed development would or would not be an EIA development. Furthermore if an EIA is deemed positive, Mid and East Antrim Council can give an opinion as to what information is to be provided within the Environmental Statement.

## Pre-application community consultation

### 4.9

In line with legislation, Council will require developers proposing major applications to engage in meaningful pre-application consultations with local communities. If pre-application consultation is required, applicants must submit a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) at least 12 weeks prior to the submission of the planning application. The notice must detail the consultation process the applicant will undertake, including when, how and with whom.

### 4.10

The prospective applicant is required to indicate in the Notice what consultation will be undertaken. The statutory minimum requirements are:

- The consultation must include at least one public event where members of the public may make comments to the prospective applicant on the development;
- Details of the proposal and consultation must be published in a local newspaper at least seven days prior to the event being held.

### 4.11

The consultation should be meaningful engagement with local communities and those who can represent the community's view, and should offer the opportunity to dispel any misunderstanding around the projects and address local objection early in the process. The applicant must submit a pre-application consultation report with the planning application, detailing the consultation undertaken and any changes made to the proposal as a result.

## Application Stage Introduction

### 4.12

Applications are assessed against planning policies by planning officers. An officer will write a report outlining the main issues and consider them against the relevant planning policies before reaching a recommendation to approve or refuse permission for the proposal. Before recommending a decision, the planning officer will make a full site inspection (in most cases) and take account of any comments

received from neighbours, interested bodies, and statutory consultees. The results of any consultation will be reported and taken into account in decisions made by, and on behalf of, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.

### 4.13

In general, planning applications will be determined in accordance with adopted policies, unless material considerations outweigh these policies. A material consideration is a matter that should be taken into account in deciding a planning application. Examples of material considerations include: case law, loss of sunlight/privacy, overlooking etc.

## Advertising applications

### 4.14

There is a statutory requirement for Mid and East Antrim Council to advertise all applications for outline or full planning permission (including householder applications). Reserved matters applications and applications for Listed Building Consent and Conservation Area Consent will also be advertised.

### 4.15

Planning applications will be advertised in the local press and on the Council website. Local press in this case includes:

- Ballymena Guardian
- Carrick times
- Larne Times

### 4.16

This is carried out in order to bring it to the attention of the general public should they wish to view the details of the particular application further or make written representation in support of or stating objection(s) to the proposal.

### 4.17

To allow sufficient time for the public to explore an application further, planning applications will not be determined before the expiration of 14 days from the date on which notice was first published.

### 4.18

During the processing of an application, it may be necessary to re-advertise, to advise members of the public that amendments have been made to the proposal.

## Neighbour notification

### 4.19

Neighbours should be informed about new planning applications to allow them the opportunity to make representations if they so wish. The period for responding following receipt of a neighbour notification letter is 14 days. However, Mid and East Antrim Council will still consider any late representations.

### 4.20

Where an application for planning permission is made to Mid and East Antrim Council, it is required to serve notice of the application to any identified occupier on neighbouring land in accordance with Article 8(20) of The Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

### 4.21

In accordance with guidance, notification letters should be sent to the occupiers of neighbouring premises which fulfil both of the following criteria:

- The property in question is within 90 metres and directly adjoins the boundary of the site, or would adjoin but for an entry or a road less than 20 metres wide.

Where such a property is in multiple occupation, then notification should be sent to all the occupants of that property.

### 4.22

To help the Council to notify the relevant neighbour's applicants must complete the neighbour notification section of the relevant application form. However, when carrying out a site inspection the planning officer will check the accuracy of notification carried out to date and identify occupiers that fall within the terms of the scheme that may have been overlooked. This can be the case, for example, where recently completed dwellings are not shown on the current Ordnance Survey map base or, in the case of new developments, certain properties are completed and occupied during the processing of the application. It is not always possible to know that a new dwelling has become occupied, however, if this information becomes available during the processing of an application further neighbour notification should be carried out where required.

### 4.23

Comments received in relation to the application which are planning matters will be 'material considerations' and will therefore be considered along with all other relevant matters in forming the opinions on the application.

### 4.24

At the end of the process when the decision has been reached or if an application has been withdrawn then neighbours will be notified accordingly.

## Submitting comments

### 4.25

Anyone can comment on planning applications. Representations can be made in three ways:

By email: [planning@midandeastsantrim.gov.uk](mailto:planning@midandeastsantrim.gov.uk), or

By post: **Mid and East Antrim Planning Department**  
Ardeevin, 80 Galgorm Road, Ballymena, BT42 1AB

On the Planning Portal: [www.planning.gov.uk](http://www.planning.gov.uk) and follow links to Public Access.

### 4.26

Representations can only be taken into account that deal with planning matters, all representations received will be open to public view and cannot remain confidential. Representations made during the consultation will be summarised in the officer's report which will state how the issues raised have been addressed in reaching the final recommendation.

### 4.27

In circumstances where a development proposal is subject to significant changes during its determination Mid and East Antrim Borough Council will undertake further consultation on these with neighbours and via the Council planning web site. Where a change is only minor or addresses concerns raised no such consultation will be undertaken.

## Public Participation in the Planning Committee Stage

### 4.28

The main role of the Planning Committee is to consider certain planning applications made to the Council as the local planning authority and decide whether or not they should be approved. The scheme of delegation for the determination of planning

applications has been agreed by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and approved by the Department for Infrastructure for Northern Ireland. The scheme of delegation is in accordance with Section 31 of The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and takes effect from 1 April 2015. The full scheme of delegation is available on the Council's web site.

#### 4.29

Part A – Mandatory applications for determination by the Planning Committee: Statutory requirements require that certain types of application must be determined by the planning committee and these cannot therefore be delegated to officers:

- Applications which fall within the Major category of development;
- An application for planning permission where the application is made by the Council or an elected member of the Council, and
- The application relates to land in which the Council has an interest.

#### 4.30

Part B – Delegated Applications: The appointed person is the Head of Planning within the Council and those nominated by this officer. To determine all local development applications whether for approval or refusal with the exception of:

- Applications attracting a local objection raising significant material planning considerations.
- Applications which are significant departures from the Development Plan and which are recommended for approval.
- Applications submitted by members of Council staff at Planning Officer grade, and senior Council staff at Head of Service grade and above.
- Applications attracting significant objections from statutory consultees, where the officer's recommendation is to approve.
- Applications where the Head of Planning considers that the proposal merits consideration by the Committee.
- A legal agreement is required.

#### 4.31

When an application goes before the planning committee, anyone can register for speaking rights to address the committee. The procedures for doing so are outlined in the Council's "Protocol for Operation of Planning Committee".

#### 4.32

Anyone wishing to address the Committee must register their wish to do so with the Council's Democratic Services Team by 12 noon two working days before the meeting. Committee Members will have an opportunity to question each person making a representation, following their presentation. The total time allowed for applicant, agent or objector/ supporter to address the Committee will not be more than 4 minutes unless the Committee decide on the day of the meeting to extend the time allowed due to unusual or exceptional circumstances.

#### 4.33

The Planning Committee generally meet every six weeks as per the schedule of Council meetings published on the Council website. The meeting takes place at 10.00am, The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena, BT43 5EJ.

#### 4.34

If for any reason the Planning Committee is forced to stand down, such as during the Covid-19 "lockdown", alternative emergency arrangements will be published on the Council's website.

### Post application stage

#### 4.35

Following a decision on an application, a decision notice (either approval or refusal) is sent to the applicant's agent. A notification of the decision is sent to all those who have responded to the consultation on the planning application. The Council's web site ([www.midandeastantirm.gov.uk](http://www.midandeastantirm.gov.uk)) has a "View Applications Online" tab which allows members of the public to view the details of all planning applications including those that have been decided. If the decision is made by the Planning Committee, then the decision is also published in the minutes on the Council's website.

### Planning appeals

#### 4.36

Applicants have the right to appeal to the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) against a number of planning decisions made by the Council, including:

- Refusal of planning permission;
- Imposition of conditions;
- Failure to determine an application within the time allowed;
- The serving of an enforcement notice.

#### 4.36

There is a four month limit from the date of the decision notice within which to appeal. A PAC Commissioner will make a decision to dismiss or allow the appeal. A copy of the decision will be sent to the appellant, the Council or any other interested party who has requested a copy. It will also be available off the PAC website at [www.pacni.gov.uk](http://www.pacni.gov.uk).

## 5 Community involvement in Planning Enforcement

### 5.1

Under the provisions of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 The Council has a general discretion to take enforcement action when it regards it as expedient to do so, having regard to the provisions of the Local Development Plan and any other material considerations.

### 5.2

A breach of planning control occurs when building works or a material change of use of land or a building takes place without planning consent. In most cases, it is not an offence to undertake development without consent, but the Council has powers to require these breaches to be put right. Council can do this by requiring changes to be made to the development, by requiring removal of the development, or by giving the development approval if considered acceptable.

### 5.3

The Council would encourage members of the public to report cases where they believe there has been a breach of planning control. If concerned with this prospect, individuals may contact an Elected Member who will bring the matter to the attention of the relevant planning staff. The public may contact the Council in a variety of ways. These include:

**By telephone:** 02825 633500

**By email:** [planning@midandeantrim.gov.uk](mailto:planning@midandeantrim.gov.uk)

**By post:** Mid and East Antrim Planning Department  
Ardeevin  
80 Galgorm Road  
Ballymena  
BT42 1AB

### 5.4

All queries are treated as confidential. There is no obligation for members of the public to leave their names and addresses. However, if they choose to do so, complainants will be initially acknowledge and when the case is closed, informed of the reason as to why.

## 6 Review of the Statement of Community Involvement

### 6.1

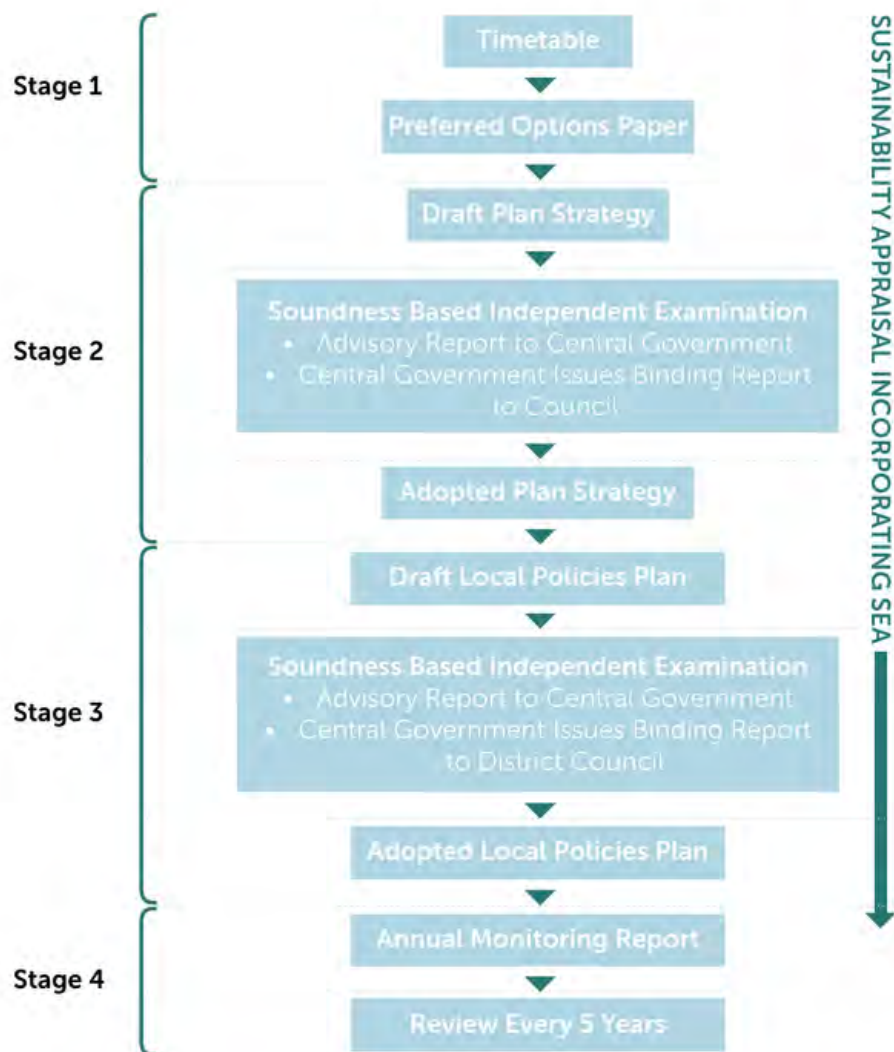
The Council will keep the Statement of Community Involvement under regular review especially if there are any significant changes to relevant legislation. A report will be presented to the Planning Committee recommending any changes deemed to be required.



## Appendix 1

### Local Development Plan process and sustainability appraisal process

Local Development Plan Timetable



## Appendix 2

### Local Development Plan consultation

#### Statutory consultation bodies

1. Northern Ireland Government Departments:
  - The Executive Office
  - Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
  - Department for the Economy (DfE)
  - Department of Education (DE)
  - Department of Finance (DoF)
  - Department of Health (DoH)
  - Department for Infrastructure (DfI)
  - Department for Communities (DFC)
  - Department of Justice (DOJ)
2. Local Councils adjoining Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
  - Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
  - Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
  - Mid Ulster District Council
3. Water & Sewerage Undertakers
  - Northern Ireland Water
4. Northern Ireland Housing Executive
5. Civil Aviation Authority
6. Any person to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under Section 106(3) of the Communications Act 2003
7. Any person to whom a licence has been granted under Article 10(10) of the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992
8. Any person to whom a licence has been granted under Article 8 of the Gas (Northern Ireland) Order 1996

## Appendix 3

### Development Management Consultation

Planning officials frequently need to obtain specialist advice to facilitate proper assessment of the potential impacts of a development proposal before determining a planning application. This is referred to as the consultation process. Consultation with statutory and non-statutory bodies should be carried out only when necessary to inform a planning decision.

#### Statutory consultation

Statutory consultees are those government bodies or other organisations with whom the Council must liaise dependent upon the nature of the application. Schedule 3 of the Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 defines the statutory consultees and outlines the various circumstances where consultation must be carried out.

Statutory consultees are defined as:

1. The Department for Infrastructure;
2. The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland;
3. The Department for Communities;
4. The Department for Infrastructure or water undertaker as defined under Article 13 of the Water and Sewerage Services (NI) Order 2006;
5. Licensed Aerodromes;
6. The Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs;
7. The Department for the Economy;
8. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Where the Council undertakes consultation on a planning application, the statutory consultee will be required to respond within 21 calendar days, or any other date as agreed in writing, after which the Council may determine the application irrespective of whether or not a response has been received. In the case of applications which are subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), the Council will not make a determination until 28 days have passed.

#### Non-statutory consultation

There will be circumstances when non-statutory consultees may need to be consulted on a case by case basis. For example, this could include other sections within the Council with responsibility for matters relating to environmental health or leisure facilities. Such consultees may also include other external organisations and bodies.

Non-statutory consultees are not bound by a prescribed period in which to respond. However, they will be encouraged to respond to consultations in a similar timeframe and manner as with statutory consultees so as to allow decisions to be made in a timely fashion.

Due to the wide range in the nature and scale of development proposals likely to be submitted to the Council, each application will be carefully considered on its individual merits. Appropriate consultations will be undertaken in line with statutory requirements.





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**Mid & East  
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118

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Date: 27/03/2025

## **GUIDANCE ON THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND SITE ALLOCATIONS IN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

The Department for Communities, Historic Environment Division (HED), has published the attached new guidance document '***Guidance on the Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Development Plans***' to support councils in taking forward their Local Development Plans, most specifically the second part of the two-stage local development plan process, the Local Policies Plan. The identification of potential sites for development within a Local Policies Plan is an important step in establishing where change and growth will happen across a council's district area and provides guidance on the types of development which are appropriate for specific locations within the district.

This document is intended to offer advice to councils and those involved in the process of creating plan strategies and local policies plans in plan making, to help ensure that the historic environment plays a positive role in place shaping and in allocating sites for development. It offers advice on evidence gathering and site allocation considerations, as well as setting out in detail a number of steps to make sure that heritage considerations are fully integrated in any site selection methodology.

This document offers overarching advice for each of the key stages in the site allocation process consisting of:

- 1) Evidence gathering
- 2) Site selection
- 3) Site allocation policies

All of these stages relate to the normal course of plan preparation, and do not entail any additional tasks, maximizing the effectiveness of the work being undertaken, and the likelihood of the Local Policies Plan being found sound.

The document '*Guidance on the Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Development Plans*' is available to view and download from the webpage below, adding to our suite of Local Development Plan guidance, to support councils through the LDP process.

[Guidance and information sources to assist councils in preparation of Local Development Plans | Department for Communities](#)

Should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact this division using the details above.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Manus Deery', written in a cursive style.

**MANUS DEERY**

Director, Historic Environment Division