

March 27th, 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, 2nd April 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. LA02/2025/0748/F – Lands at 170 North Road, Carrickfergus - Circulated

Proposed New Dwelling and Detached Garage.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve

**Lead Officer:** Henry McAlister

[LA0220250748F North Road, Carrickfergus.pdf](#)

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### 4.2 Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0779/F – Adjacent to and west of 1 Carnlough Road, Broughshane, Ballymena. BT43 7HF - Circulated

Proposed Redevelopment of site for car (3-bay) workshop (previous car sales / commercial yard), comprising a new building, reuse of existing access and ancillary siteworks.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve

**Lead Officer:** Sean O’Kane

[LA0220250779F Carnlough Road, Broughshane.pdf](#)

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### 4.3 Planning Application No. LA02/2025/0543/F – Montrose Garden Supplies, Unit A7, 2 Wakehurst Road, Ballymena. BT42 3AZ - Circulated

Retrospective Change of Use to Garden Centre (A1 Use) to include proposed extension of use into

adjoining units to include ancillary Workshop / Service Area / Staff Facilities.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve

**Lead Officer:** Gary McGuinness

📄 *LA0220250543F Montrose Garden Supplies.pdf*

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## **5 PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE**

### **5.1 New Appeals**

**LA02/2025/0541/O** - Anne Hughes, 20m East of 80 Skerry East Road, Skerry East, Ballymena, BT43 6RR. Proposed site for a dwelling and garage within an existing cluster.

**LA02/2025/0228/F** - Beshouse Residential properties Limited, 55 North Road, Carrickfergus, BT38 8NA. Erection of 1 no detached dwelling and amendments to parking arrangements to Site 3 constructed under planning approval LA02/2023/1093/F and landscaping.

### **5.2 Appeal Decisions**

**(a) LA02/2023/1971/F** – Peter McKillop, 57-65 Moorfields Business Park, Moorfields Road, Ballymena, BT42 3BT. Retention of change of use. Conversion of industrial unit to gymnastics academy at Units 1 & 2.

**Appeal Allowed.**

**(b) LA02/2024/0315/F** - Finlay Robinson, 50m south of 207 Cullybackey Road, Ballymena. Retrospective single level carpark, with access/egress onto Cullybackey Road, alterations to existing ghost island to provide pedestrian linkage and reconfiguration of existing access/egress arrangement serving Robinsons Supermarket & Petrol Filling Station, including all associated site works.

**Appeal Dismissed.**

## Committee Application

<b>Development Management Officer Report</b>	
<b>Case Officer:</b>	
<b>Application ID:</b> LA02/2025/0748/F	<b>Target Date:</b>
<b>Proposal:</b> New dwelling and detached garage	<b>Location:</b> 170 North Road, Carrickfergus
<b>Applicant Name and Address:</b> DJ Holmes 15A Woodburn Road, Carrickfergus BT38 9AB	<b>Agent Name and Address:</b> RJ Studio 5A Lisnalinchy Road Ballyclare BT39 9PA
<b>Date of last Neighbour Notification:</b>	05 February 2026
<b>Date of Press Advertisement:</b>	16 October 2025
<b>EIA Determination:</b>	
<b>Consultations:</b>  DfI Roads – No objection NI Water – No objection – There is available capacity at the Wastewater Treatment Works to serve this proposal.	
<b>Representations:</b> To date 26 no. objections have been received. Two of these were submitted by elected representatives on behalf of local residents. A number of the objections are from the same individuals and relate to the submission of amended plans.	
Letters of Support	0.0
Letters of Objection	26
Petitions	1
Signatures	10
Number of Petitions of Objection and signatures	
<b>Summary of Issues:</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loss of privacy/overlooking,</li> <li>- Overshadowing from proposed garage.</li> <li>- Noise and disturbance from games room.</li> </ul>	

- Difference in levels have not been indicated.
- Would set an unacceptable precedent.
- Land ownership disputes.
- Difference from previously approved development on the site under application reference LA02/2016/0491/F – housing development to north of site.

Some of the points raised relate to the initial scheme which included a first-floor patio and two storey garage incorporating a games rooms and an external staircase. Through discussions with the applicant, the plans have since been amended twice to reduce the overall scale of the proposal and to attempt to address the concerns of neighbours. Planning officers have also visited neighbouring properties to assess the proposal from the neighbours point of view.

**Site Visit Report**

**Site Location Plan:**



**Date of Site Visit: 29<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

**Characteristics of the Site and Area**

The application site is No. 170 North Road, Carrickfergus. It comprises a narrow, elongated roadside plot currently occupied by a vacant detached chalet bungalow. This dwelling is located towards the front of the site, with a number of smaller sheds/outbuildings situated to the rear, extending along the northern boundary. The existing dwelling is currently vacant and in a state of disrepair while the sheds and outbuildings have become dilapidated and the rear amenity area is overgrown.

The surrounding landform rises from south to north. The site itself is generally level, rising in a northerly direction towards Marlborough Manor.

The site is located within the settlement limits of Carrickfergus, as defined in the Local Development Plan 2030 – Plan Strategy and the Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001.

The surrounding area is predominantly residential, characterised by a mix of detached and semi-detached dwellings of varying scales and designs. Properties along North Road are typically of modest height, generally single storey or one and a half storey, and set within relatively spacious plots. The newer and higher density developments are located off the main road. Marlborough Manor to the north of the site primarily consists of 2 storey semi-detached dwellings, with detached dwellings positioned along the road frontage, while Milebush Crescent primarily consists of detached bungalows.

### **Description of Proposal**

New dwelling and detached garage to replace the existing dilapidated dwelling and outbuildings.

The proposed dwelling is storey and half with a single storey rear return.

The proposed garage, which is located to the rear, measures 11.3m x 10.8m with a ridge height of 5.5m.

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

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

None

#### **Constraints:**

None

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

Regional Development Strategy (RDS)

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) Edition 2.

Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001

Draft BMAP

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council 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 Local Policies Plan, 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 (CAP) 2001 comprises the DDP for this proposal. The land use designations and zonings of the DDP remain relevant.

SPG1 – Spatial Growth Strategy

SGS2 – Settlement Hierarchy

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

Policy HOU 7 – Adaptable and Accessible Homes.

Policy TR5 – Active Travel

Policy TR 6 – Parking and Servicing

Policy GP1 – General Policy for All Development

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

b) Criteria relating to Safeguarding Residential Amenity

c) Criteria relating to Access/Movement/Car Parking

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

e) Criteria relating to Sustainable Development

Creating Places - Achieving Quality in Residential Environments

Development Control Advice Note 15 – Vehicle Access Standards

Parking Standards (2005).

### **Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001**

The Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001 operates as the DDP for the area, with draft BMAP (2004) being a material consideration.

There is no perceived conflict arising between the DDP and the Plan Strategy.

### **Strategic Planning Policy Statement Edition 2**

Under the SPPS, the guiding principle for planning authorities 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.

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

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

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.

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 will be taken into account when assessing proposals.

#### Site Context:

Development along North Road comprises a mix of house types which are generally single storey or storey and a half, although there are two storey dwellings to the north of the site at Marlborough Manor. The proposed dwelling is approximately 1m higher than the existing dwelling and it is considered that the scale of the proposed dwelling is in keeping with the established built form along North Road. While the proposed dwelling has a slightly larger footprint than the dwelling it replaces, the ratio of built form to garden area is generally reflective of the area. The removal of several existing outbuildings help offset the increase in built form.

The proposed garage has been reduced in height from 7m to 5.5m since the initial submission. The scale of the proposed garage is appropriate for this location.

#### Density:

The proposal involves the replacement of the existing dwelling with another and therefore does not result in an increase in density. The proposal development aligns with the established character and density of the surrounding area.

#### Site Characteristics:

The proposed dwelling remains within the confines of the established site and on a similar footprint and site levels are generally as existing.

#### Layout:

The proposed dwelling will be located on a similar footprint to the existing built form albeit set back approximately 4m from the frontage of the existing dwelling. This set back is considered acceptable and in keeping with the built frontage along North Road. The proposed dwelling will also be positioned further from the southern site boundary, increasing the separation from around 1.7m to 3.6m. This enhanced separation allows for vehicular access to the rear and improved spacing to neighbouring dwellings. The proposed dwelling has a reduced overall depth compared to the existing built form.

#### Privacy:

The proposed dwelling has been designed to ensure no direct overlooking into the properties in Marlborough Manor to the north of the site. The previously proposed first floor patio has been removed, therefore eliminating the potential for direct overlooking

of neighbouring properties. The two storey element is positioned broadly inline with the adjacent two storey dwelling to the north (No. 172 North Road) and is therefore unlikely to result in significant overshadowing. The rear element is single storey and when considered in combination with the lower ground level of the site, is unlikely to result in any significant adverse overshadowing to neighbouring properties in Marlborough Manor.

There is a first floor bedroom window on the southern elevation which may lead to an element of overlooking towards the side garden of 168 North Road. There is strong vegetation in place along the boundary and the separation distances are such that any overlooking would not be significant. Private amenity space to the rear of 168 North road would be unaffected by overlooking. This is a suburban context with changes in levels and it is unlikely that any residential dwelling would benefit from total privacy.

The application site abuts the rear gardens of Nos. 18 & 20 Milebush Crescent and due to the irregular boundary arrangement, No. 20 Milebush is located around 6m from the boundary of the site at the closest point. No. 168 North Road abuts the site to the south. These properties all sit on a slightly lower level than the site. However, due to the position of the dwelling in relation to the path of the sun, is unlikely to result in significant overshadowing of these properties.

There would be no concerns with overlooking from the proposed garage or games room following the submission of amended plans to reduce their scale.

#### Overshadowing/Loss of Light

Due to the orientation of the site and the separation distances involved between proposed structures and existing neighbouring properties, there are no significant anticipated issues with over shadowing.

#### Security from Crime:

The redevelopment of this vacant site will provide natural surveillance and site activity which will help deter crime and promote personal safety.

#### Movement/Parking:

The proposed layout indicates adequate space for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles within the site.

#### Form, Material and Detailing:

The main form of the dwelling is one and a half storey with a pitched roof and box dormer. The rear return is single storey with a flat roof. The main element has a simple

form with proportioned windows. Larger areas of glazing are proposed on the southern elevation of the single storey rear return.

The design incorporates a contemporary approach while maintaining a simple form and scale appropriate to the area. The dwelling will be finished in facing brick, with render and grey cladding on the rear return. The box dormers will also be finished in grey cladding.

The garage will feature a facing brick exterior and black slate roof tiles. These materials align with the dwellings in Marlborough Manor and are considered appropriate within the range of dwelling styles exhibited in the surrounding area.

#### Sustainable Design:

The proposal incorporates a degree of sustainable design through the placement of windows on the southern elevation to maximise passive solar gain.

#### Landscape Design:

The site layout plan indicates the retention of the existing hedging either side of the frontage and the removal of the remaining site boundaries and replacement with a 2m high fence or wall. The proposed boundary treatments are considered acceptable in the surrounding context.

#### Private Open Space:

It is considered that there is adequate amenity space to the rear of the dwelling which is generally reflective of the existing development in the area.

The proposal complies with Policy HOU1.

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

The criteria as set out in Policy HOU 7 to assist with the delivery of adaptable and accessible homes had been met in this case.

The submitted plans show a sufficient sized open plan kitchen/dining area and separate living room that would allow space for turning a wheelchair. Bathrooms are on the same floor as bedrooms and are an adequate size to allow space to turn a wheelchair. The living accommodation is located on the entrance level and the windows in the living area would allow a clear outlook when seated. There is sufficient space within the site for car parking and potential for parking spaces to be extended to 3300mm.

The proposal is in general compliance with Policy HOU7.

**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 involves a replacement dwelling. The residential end use is compatible with the surrounding suburban area.

The design incorporates a contemporary approach while maintaining a simple form and scale appropriate to the local character.

No constraints relating to the historic environment/setting, and natural heritage have been identified.

The proposal complies with the relevant criteria of Part a).

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

The impact of the proposal on the privacy and amenity of neighbouring residents has been considered under HOU1 with no significant concerns over overlooking or over shadowing of neighbouring properties.

Neighbouring residents have raised concerns in relation to noise and general disturbance from the games room. The use of the games room would be incidental to the residential use of the site and the level of activity associated with the games room is not considered to give rise to unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity.

Unacceptable levels of noise arising from a private residential dwelling fall outside the remit of planning legislation.

The proposal complies with part b).

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

This proposal is for the replacement of an existing dwelling within the settlement limits for Carrickfergus and the access arrangements are already in place. Movement and carparking is considered in more detail under the Transport Policies.

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

The proposal is for residential use compatible with existing residential properties in the area.

The redevelopment of this vacant site will provide surveillance and site activity which will help deter crime and promote personal safety.

The discharge of sewage arising from the development will be regulated by NI Water and they have indicated through a consultation response that there is sufficient capacity within the WWTW to serve the proposal.

The site is not located within a floodplain or area of surface water flooding.

The site is not within an area of known instability or contamination.

The proposal complies with the relevant criteria of part d)

**e) Criteria relating to Sustainable Development**

As this proposal relates to the replacement of an existing dwelling on a developed site, the essential infrastructure and services are already in place.

NI Water have advised that there is sufficient capacity at the receiving WWTW.

Given that this is a developed site within the urban footprint, the proposed development is not expected to have any unacceptable impact on the quality or integrity of the surrounding environment or local biodiversity.

The proposal incorporates an element of passive solar design through the inclusion of south facing windows to optimise daylight and solar gain.

There is sufficient space within the site to accommodate refuse and recycling storage. The proposal complies with Part e).

Policy GP1 has been complied with.

**Policy TR1 – Access to Public Roads**

The proposal involves the replacement of an existing dwelling with a single house utilising an existing, unaltered vehicular access.

DFI Roads have been consulted and have no objection to the proposed access arrangements. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed access will not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of road users.

The proposal 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 site is in close proximity and within easy walking distance to services and amenities and in a location well served by public transport.

Footpaths are in place to encourage active travel and the site is in close proximity to the Carrickfergus Town Centre. The location will help promote active travel and the proposal is in general compliance 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.

There is sufficient space within the site to provide at least 3 in-curtilage parking spaces. This is in general compliance with the parking standards in Table 8 of Creating Places 'Achieving Quality in Residential Developments', and Annex A of the Parking Standards. In addition, the proposal will provide more on-site parking, which represents an improvement over the current arrangement, where parking is limited to a small area at the front of the dwelling.

DfI Roads have been consulted and have not raised any objections in relation to the parking provision.

The proposal complies with Policy TR6.

**Consideration of Issues:**

The issues raised in relation to residential amenity have been considered under the policy assessment set out above.

There are no significant adverse impacts anticipated as a result of over-looking or overshadowing as a result of the proposal.

The proposal involves the redevelopment of a previously developed site within a built-up urban setting. This will result in some change to the relationship with neighbouring properties and degree of overlooking and reduced privacy is not uncharacteristic of urban settings.

In this case, the Planning Department consider that the proposal would not result in a significant adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties in terms of overlooking and overshadowing.

Concern has been raised regarding the absence of levels, cross-sections and shadow assessment. However, the Planning Authority consider that the application includes sufficient detail to enable a full assessment of the proposal. It is not considered that additional detail is required to understand the relationship between the proposed development and adjacent dwellings.

In terms of precedent, each planning application is determined on its own merits, having regard to the specific characteristics of the site and the relevant planning policies. Approval of this application would not set a precedent that would justify similar schemes elsewhere.

Concern has been raised in relation to the contradiction of planning conditions in connection with LA03/2016/0491/F – namely the removal of an existing fence. The Planning Department do not get involved in land ownership disputes. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that he owns all the land required and any damage or dispute relating to boundaries would be a civil matter.

The views of neighbouring residents have been carefully considered.

**Neighbour Notification Checked**

Yes

### **Summary of Recommendation**

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, the Planning Department recommends that planning permission be approved.

### **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. The existing boundary hedging, as indicated on Drawing No. 02 Rev 2 shall be retained at a minimum height of 2m.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to protect the amenity of nearby residents.

3. The development hereby approved shall be developed in accordance with the plans referenced at the beginning of this decision notice.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory form of development.

**Case Officer Signature:**

**Date:** 23 March 2026

**Appointed Officer Signature:**

**Date:** 23 March 2026

**Development Management Consideration****Details of Discussion:**

Representations made by neighbours have been carefully considered. The proposal has been amended and reduced in scale since the initial submission and is considered to be an appropriate form of development for this location within Carrickfergus. The proposed replacement dwelling accords with the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Local Development Plan and an approval is recommended.

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

**Group decision:** Recommend that Full permission be granted.

**D.M. Group Signatures**

**Date**

**23 March 2026**



### Committee Application

<b>Development Management Officer Report</b>	
<b>Case Officer:</b> Mid and East Antrim Planning Department	
<b>Application ID:</b> LA02/2025/0779/F	<b>Target Date:</b>
<b>Proposal:</b> Proposed redevelopment of site for car (3-bay) workshop (previous car sales / commercial yard), comprising a new building, reuse of existing access, and ancillary siteworks.	<b>Location:</b> Adjacent and West of 1 Carnlough Road, Broughshane, Ballymena, BT43 7HF
<b>Applicant Name and Address:</b> K Patterson 12 Aghacully Road Broughshane Ballymena BT43 7JS	<b>Agent Name and Address:</b> Ryan Dougan 31 Rainey Street Magherafelt BT45 5DA
<b>Date of last Neighbour Notification:</b>	31 October 2025
<b>Date of Press Advertisement:</b>	6 November 2025
<b>EIA Determination:</b>	
<b>Consultations:</b>	
<b>DfI Roads</b> - No objection	
<b>DfI Rivers</b> – land identified within fluvial floodplain.	
<b>Environmental Health</b> - No objection subject to suggested conditions.	
<b>NI Water</b> – Refusal wastewater capacity issues	
<b>Historic Environment Division</b> – No objection - HED have suggested conditions to secure specific materials and finishes. The requested materials have been clearly indicated on the submitted drawings and it consider unnecessary to include such conditions on any determination.	
<b>Shared Environmental Services</b> – Requested that NIEA WMU should be consulted due to no capacity in mains foul sewer.	
<b>Representations:</b>	
Following advertisement in the local press and neighbour notification, 1 letter of representation has been received. This will be discussed in the report to follow.	
Letters of Support	0.0
Letters of Objection	0.0
Petitions	0.0
Signatures	0.0
Number of Petitions of Objection and signatures	0
<b>Summary of Issues:</b>	



**Site Visit Report**

**Site Location Plan:**



**Date of Site Visit: 16/10/2025**

**Characteristics of the Site and Area**

The site area extends to 0.04ha and is located to the west of no. 1 Carnlough Road, within the development limits of Broughshane. The River Braid traverses the site to the south with Houston’s Mill further to the south on the other side of the river bank.

The site is situated between the listed buildings at Tullymore School and Gate Screen (HB07/04/010A) an historic bridge (unlisted but held as a Record Only by HED (HB07/04/030).

An existing access is provided directly from the Carnlough Road. The area within the red line boundary is laid out in concrete that has been in situ for a number of years. The extended site is finished in compacted hardcore overlaid by fine grade stones. A low rendered block wall runs partially along the eastern and northern boundaries.



Sparse mature trees and low shrubs are positioned along the boundary with the Braid River.

The wider site is liable to fluvial flooding, however the area to be developed is outside of the identified flood plain.

The area is characterised predominantly by residential use with Mill Brae fold to the east across the bridge.

### **Description of Proposal**

Proposed redevelopment of site for car (3-bay) workshop (previous car sales / commercial yard), comprising a new building, reuse of existing access, and ancillary siteworks.

The proposed single storey workshop is rectangular in shape and measures approx. 18.5 x 12m and a ridge height of 5.6m. External finishes include standing seam zinc cladding to roof and wall with hidden rainwater goods and anthracite aluminium windows and doors.

Proposed gross floor space totals 222 sqm and comprises of a vehicle workshop accessed via 2 number roller doors, facing away from the public road, with ancillary office, wc, store and staff kitchen.

The applicant is seeking to use an unaltered existing access onto the public road and has declared the availability of a total of 30 car parking spaces to remain on site.

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

#### **Relevant Planning History**

Application Number: G/1977/0550      Decision: Permission Granted      Decision  
Date: 16 January 1979

Proposal: CAR SHOWROOM

Application Number: G/2006/1155/LB      Decision: Consent Granted      Decision  
Date: 09 March 2007

Proposal: Conversion of existing dwelling to 1No. dwelling and 2No. one bed apartments together with alterations to roadside wall (Listed Building Consent)

Application Number: G/2004/0195/O      Decision: Permission Granted      Decision  
Date: 13 March 2007

Proposal: Housing development comprising 6 apartments, change of use of existing dwelling to 2 apartments and 1 dwelling, together with associated landscaping and roadways (Amended description)

Application Number: G/2007/1096/LB      Decision: Consent Granted      Decision



Date: 20 April 2012

Proposal: Conversion of existing dwelling to 3 no. living units including alterations and additions with alterations to roadside wall. (amended description)

Application Number: G/2007/1097/F Decision: Permission Granted Decision Date: 20 April 2012

Proposal: Housing development comprising 8No. apartments, and C. O. U from ex dwelling to 3no living units including alterations and additions together with associated landscaping & roadway (additional information received)

Application Number: LA02/2017/0533/LBC Decision: Consent Refused Decision Date: 04 April 2018

Proposal: conversion of listed building to 3no units and erection of 8no new dwellings

Application Number: LA02/2017/0547/F Decision: Permission Refused Decision Date: 04 April 2018

Proposal: Housing development comprising of conversion of listed building to 3 no. units and 8 new dwellings with associated garages.

Application Number: LA02/2018/0370/F Decision: Permission Refused Decision Date: 28 June 2018

Proposal: Conversion of Listed Building to include 3 No. Apartments including alterations/additions

Application Number: LA02/2018/0372/LBC Decision: Consent Refused Decision Date: 02 July 2018

Proposal: Conversion of a Grade B1 Listed Building Old School House (g/2007/1096/LB) for the inclusion of 3 no apartments that include alterations and additions with assoc. landscaping and roadway within the site.

### **Policy Consideration**

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. Sections 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. Ballymena Area Plan 1986-2001 is the relevant DDP for this proposal.

### **Ballymena Area Plan 1986-2001**

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

#### **Mid and East Antrim Local Development Plan 2030 – Plan Strategy**

- SGS1 Spatial Growth Strategy
- SGS2 Settlement Hierarchy
- ECD1 Economic Development in Settlements
  
- TR1 Access to Public Roads
- TR5 Active Travel
- TR6 Parking and Servicing
- FRD1 Development within Floodplain
- GP1 General Policy for all Development (a -e)

### **Ballymena Area Plan 1986-2001**

The Ballymena Area Plan (BAP) comprises the DDP for this proposal. The site is within the development limits of Broughshane which is located 5 km north east of Ballymena and functions as a small service centre a commuter settlement. The BAP identifies areas suitable for housing and a commercial centre and goes on to state that commercial development will be acceptable within this centre, elsewhere proposals will be determined on their own merits. The site is located outside this central area on the periphery of the village.

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

Strategic Policies pertaining to Economic development, Transport, Natural Environment, and Flood Risk are all detailed within the SPPS Ed2. The proposal will be considered in detail below under related LDP Policies under the MEABC Local Development Plan 2030 - Plan Strategy.

### **MEABC Local Development Plan 2030 Plan Strategy**

Sets out the policy framework that guide decisions on planning applications for development in Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. Applicable policies will be considered in detail to follow.

### **SGS1 Spatial Growth Strategy**

Strategic aim is 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. Small towns will support the main towns and provide opportunities for economic development, retail and services and accommodate

residential development in keeping with the location, scale, function and character of the settlement.

The proposal accords with the spatial growth strategy in that it promotes development within the existing limits of Broughshane and is considered a scale that compliments the surrounding context and will act as a local service.

### **SGS2 Settlement Hierarchy**

Broughshane is designated as a small town. As highlighted in the Spatial Growth Strategy, the main role of small towns are to support the main town of Ballymena, in this instance, in providing a range of development opportunities. The proposal accords with the strategic aim of SGS2.

### **ECD1 Economic Development in Settlements**

The proposal of a vehicle workshop is considered as Class B3 General industry under the Use Class Order 2015 as the operations may lead to impact on amenity of third party receptors in close proximity.

ECD 1 breaks down policy consideration into Towns and Small Towns as well as Villages and Small settlements. Broughshane is classified as a small town under the settlement hierarchy, as such the following criteria must be considered.

It also sets out criteria specifically for the use class B3. A development proposal for a Class B2 or B3 Industrial use or B4 Storage or Distribution use will be permitted on land zoned for such purposes in the LDP, or in an existing industrial area, provided it is of a scale, nature and form appropriate to the location. Elsewhere within towns, such proposals will be determined on their individual merits.

Within the extant BAP, Broughshane does not contain any lands zoned for industrial use, nor does it contain an area that could be classed as an existing industrial area, therefore the application site will be determined on its own merits.

Paragraph 7.1.12 clarifies that the reuse of land and buildings within existing or former industrial areas for appropriate economic development uses will be favourably



considered, subject to meeting the General Policy. Paragraph 7.1.13 seeks consideration of the proposal's scale, nature and design appropriate to the character of the settlement.

A review of the site-specific planning history confirms the previous use on site of a car showroom. This is further strengthened by aerial and street view images dating back to June 2009 depicting a larger structure on site acting as a car sales business. This structure is present on site until at least August 2011.

The proposed structure is of a modest scale and utilises the existing hard standing area on site. The use of a vehicle workshop is considered a use that is compatible with the surrounding context and commercial service suitable for a settlement of the scale of Broughshane.

Any impacts on the amenity of 3<sup>rd</sup> parties will be assessed under GP1 in line with ECD1.

The proposal meets the requirements of Policy ECD1

### **TR1 Access to Public Roads**

The description and application form seeks the reuse of an existing unaltered access onto the public road. DFI Roads were consulted and sought amendments which included the removal of a section of low wall and the provision of a section of footpath with pedestrian crossing point. The applicant, although not specifically required under policy, has adhered to DFI Roads requests to improve the existing visibility splays. The access point, geometry and width have not been altered.

DFI Roads have been consulted and offer no objection to the proposal, based on the statutory consultees response the application meets the requirements of TR1.

### **TR5 Active Travel**

A new development proposal within an urban area should ensure the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are taken into account. The development is served by pedestrian and cycle paths which link directly to the small town centre and wider Broughshane area promoting active travel.



This proposal is in compliance with Policy TR5.

### **TR6 Parking and Servicing**

A development proposal will be required to provide adequate provision for parking and appropriate servicing arrangements.

Class B3: General Industrial provision based on floor space Parking Standards 2005, requires 1 space per 25 sqm of floor area and 1 commercial vehicle space for units <250 m<sup>2</sup> GFA. The application form stated there is 30 car parking spaces existing within the lands edged in blue within the control of the applicant and no intensification proposed. Upon visiting the site, it would appear the extended car park would provide parking for up to 30 cars, which is well in excess of the required provision. Ample space is available on site to accommodate parking 1 no. commercial vehicle. However based on the proposed unit dimensions and access door heights the servicing of commercial vehicles does not seem practical.

Given the nature of the operations on site, deliveries and servicing vehicles are likely to be limited. No details have been given on the application form, however from visiting the site, it is evident there is ample space for deliveries and servicing vehicles on the site.

Policy TR6 is complied with.

### **FRD1 Development within Floodplain**

The DfI Flood Maps (NI) indicate that a portion of the site to the north, which includes the access, lies within the 1 in 100-year fluvial flood plain including the most up to date allowance for climate change. The lands edged in blue on the site location map are also within this constraint.

Development will not be permitted within the flood plain unless the Council deem the application an exception as set out under the "Exceptions" section of policy. A development proposal that does not constitute an exception to the policy may be permitted where it is deemed, by the Council, to be of Overriding Regional or Sub-Regional Economic Importance and meets both criteria A and B of policy.

To allow proper consideration of flood risk to the site the applicant would be required to undertake a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) appropriate to the scale of development.

Upon visiting the site, the construction of the workshop is outside of the indicated floodplain on existing hardstanding. The existing access is within lands subject to flooding as per NI Flood Maps.



Policy FRD1 applies only to development within flood plains. It is considered that the access arrangements are existing and do not constitute development as defined within section 23 (1) of the 2011 Act.

The proposal is therefore in compliance with the requirements of Policy FRD1, as no development is proposed within the existing flood plain.

### **GP1 General Policy for all Development (a -e)**

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.

#### **GP1a Criteria relating to Design Quality and Respecting Local Character and Distinctiveness**

- i. The development is compatible with surrounding land uses and neither the use or the built form and associated infrastructure (including hard/soft landscaping) will detract from the visual amenity, landscape quality, local distinctiveness and inherent character of the locality;
- ii. The development, including associated infrastructure and landscaping is of high quality and, where appropriate, complements or enhances local built form;
- iii. Appropriate landscaping and means of enclosure are provided or retained to facilitate satisfactory integration of the development into the local context; and
- iv. The development does not adversely affect features associated with the historic environment/setting, natural heritage or areas recognised for their exceptional landscape quality and should seek to retain or integrate such features wherever possible.

The site is situated between listed buildings, Tullymore School and Gate Screen (HB07/04/010A) an historic bridge (unlisted but held as a Record Only by HED (HB07/04/030). As part of the determination process, the Historic Environment and Heritage Division we consulted, and following the receipt of further information to include landscaping and detailed material finishes were content that the development will not negatively impact the listed structure.

#### **GP1b Criteria relating to Safeguarding Residential Amenity**

- i. Neither the use or the built form shall have an unacceptable adverse impact upon the amenity of existing residents living within, adjacent to or in reasonable proximity to the development site;



- ii. Appropriate boundary treatment and means of enclosure are provided so as to effectively mitigate against significant adverse impacts on visual amenity and, where relevant, other amenity impacts; and
- iii. New residential development shall be sited so as to maintain sufficient separation distance from existing or approved infrastructure likely to prejudice residential amenity or safety.

The closest dwelling is located across the Carnlough Road, a Noise Impact assessment has been submitted and reviewed by the Council's Environmental Health Department - suggested conditions to limit the hours of operation were suggested to protect third party amenity and seem reasonable to include on any determination.

Given the established and proposed boundaries, orientation and separation distances from existing properties, it is considered the proposal will not result in any negative impacts on the amenity of existing residents in terms of noise, light spill, air pollution, dust, loss of light., over shadowing, loss of privacy or any other disturbance.

#### **GP1c Criteria Relating to Access/Movement/Car Parking**

- i. Access arrangements shall be in accordance with the latest guidance published by the Department for Infrastructure
- ii. A movement pattern is provided that, insofar as possible, supports active travel (walking and cycling), meets the needs of people with disabilities or whose mobility is impaired, respects public rights of way and provides adequate and convenient access to public transport and local community facilities;
- iii. The existing road network has sufficient capacity or can be adequately upgraded to safely manage any extra vehicular traffic that the proposed development will generate; and
- iv. Adequate and appropriate provision is made for car parking in accordance with the latest supplementary planning guidance.

As the statutory consultee DfI Roads have been consulted to provide comment on issues regarding access and road safety. No objections have been forthcoming, and the proposal complies with this aspect of policy.

#### **GP1d Criteria relating to Safety and the Safeguarding of Human Health/Wellbeing**

- i. The development will not prejudice safety nor cause demonstrable harm to human health and wellbeing;
- ii. Where appropriate, the development should be designed so as to facilitate opportunities for active and passive recreation for everyone, both within and wherever possible, beyond the site;
- iii. The development is designed to deter crime and promote personal safety;
- iv. Any emission or discharge of effluent (including sewage) arising from the development is in accordance with legislative requirements pertaining to air and water quality;



- v. The development site is not at risk from flooding and the development will not cause or exacerbate flooding elsewhere, taking account of present day flood risk and the potential future risk associated with climate change;
- vi. The development site is not located in an area known to be at significant risk from coastal erosion or land instability, or will not exacerbate such risks elsewhere; and
- vii. Where a site is known or suspected to be contaminated developers will be required to carry out a detailed site investigation. Suitable mitigation must be identified to remediate any contaminated land and prevent potential adverse impacts

The MEABC Environmental Health Department, HED, Rivers Agency and NI Water have all been consulted and have commented on information relating to land contamination, wastewater and other emissions. This information has been provided to the satisfaction of the consultees with suggested conditions to be attached to any planning approval.

No development is proposed within a flood plain, existing access to be utilised.

The nature of the use class will give rise to waste material pertaining to the service of vehicles including waste oil, coolant etc. This are all substances that are controlled through established waste streams managed by NIEA as the statutory consultee.

The design of the development also allows passive surveillance to deter crime and promotes personal safety.

NI water have been consulted as the proposal will give rise to the introduction of staff toilets and the production of foul waste leading to a potential pollution problem. This is a known constraint for Broughshane as well as other urban areas. It is not felt to be reasonable to withhold planning permission pending the development of waste water infrastructure. As established procedure, any determination will be subject to a condition preventing any commencement of development on site prior to a waste water solution being agreed in tandem with NI Water.

Shared Environmental Services were consulted as the application may have a hydrological link to a European designated site. Within their consultation response dated 22/12/25 they commented as follows:

*SES note NI Water response dated 04/11/2025 which recommended refusal due to insufficient capacity within the receiving foul sewer network. Existing Unsatisfactory Intermittent Discharges (UIDs) to watercourses hydrologically linked to downstream European sites within Lough Neagh and Lough Beg are likely to be exacerbated in the absence of a viable solution. SES require sight of NIEA WMU response to inform a comprehensive HRA for LA02/2025/0779/F.*

The above response has been discussed, the group consensus was that based on established practice, provided that a condition restricting any development on site prior to a waste water solution being agreed in tandem with the planning department and NI Water no pollution can occur. As a result designated sites cannot be impacted.

#### **GP1e Criteria relating to Sustainable Development**

- i. Development proposals, particularly major applications, will be expected to generally align with the LDP Spatial Growth Strategy;
- ii. Essential infrastructure to facilitate the development must be available or, if lacking, there must be a firm commitment in regard to its timely provision;
- iii. The development shall utilise sustainable drainage systems, as the preferred drainage solution, where feasible and practicable to ensure that surface water run-off is managed in a sustainable way;
- iv. The development does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the quality and integrity of the environment and particularly upon local biodiversity and the delivery of ecosystem services beneficial to the community;
- v. The development takes account of the efficient use of energy, water and other resources, where feasible and practicable, integrates micro-generation and passive solar design, in order to mitigate against the adverse impacts of climate change; and
- vi. All development will be required to have adequate provision for the storage and management.

Essential infrastructure to facilitate the development is available in close proximity to the site in terms of roads and utilities. Following a site inspection, no unacceptable adverse impact on the quality and integrity of the environment are envisaged. If permitted, the facility has the potential to integrate micro generation provided under permitted development rights to promote the efficient use of energy at a later date. No additional hardstanding is proposed, SuDs are currently achieved within the lands edged in blue through percolation through gravel surface finish.

It is considered that Policy GP1 has been complied with.

#### **Representation**

The application was advertised in the local press and notifiable neighbours received correspondence advising of the proposal.

One letter of representation was received making a comment on the submission relating the generation of additional traffic and the position of the access.

The proposal is utilising the existing access arrangements and have proposed to remove a section of unlisted walls either side to improve this arrangement to the satisfaction of DFI Roads the statutory consultee pertaining to access, egress and road safety.



<b>Neighbour Notification Checked</b>	Yes
<b>Summary of Recommendation</b>	
<p>On the basis of this assessment the proposed development accords with the Local Development Plan, therefore the Planning Department is of the opinion that the planning application should be approved.</p>	
<b>Conditions/Reasons for Refusal:</b>	
<p>1. 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>	
<p>2. Detail of the eaves and verge junction to garage shall be submitted to council for approval prior to commencement.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure the quality of finishes and materials is sympathetic to the listed building.</p>	
<p>3. No development shall take place on-site until the method 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.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure protection to the aquatic environment.</p>	
<p>4. The vehicular access, including visibility splays, footway, and any forward sight distance, shall be provided in accordance with Drawing No. 02 Rev. 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> <p>Reason: To ensure there is a satisfactory means of access in the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users.</p>	
<p>5. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015, or any Order revoking and/or re-enacting that Order, no extension or enlargement of any building, and no new buildings shall be erected within the extended curtilage of the application site without the grant of a separate planning permission from the Council.</p>	

Reason: To safeguard against increased retail provision on site and flood risk.

6. The proposed hedgerow and vegetation along the boundaries of the site as indicated on Drawing No. 02 Rev 2, shall be implemented in the first available planting season. All existing vegetation shall be retained at their existing height. 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.

7. The development hereby approved shall be developed and operated in accordance with the plans referenced at the beginning of this decision notice.

Reason: To ensure that the development is developed/operated in accordance with the approved plans.

8. No noise emitting external plant/equipment servicing the permitted development shall be installed without prior submission of a written report of the assessment of the noise impact on surrounding sensitive receptors for approval of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity.

9. The building structure shall provide a sound reduction index of 28 dB Rw, except for the two roller door openings on the southern façade.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity.

10. The permitted development shall not be open for business outside the following hours:

- . Monday to Friday 07:00 to 19:00 Hours
- . Saturday 07:00 to 13:00 Hours

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity.

11. Within 4 weeks of a written request by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, following a reasonable noise complaint regarding the operation of the permitted development, from an occupant of a dwelling which lawfully exists or has planning permission at the date of this consent, the permitted development operator shall, at his/her expense employ a suitably qualified and competent



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Antrim**  
Borough Council

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person, to assess the level of noise from the development. Details of the noise assessment methodology shall be submitted to the Council for written approval prior to any monitoring commencing. Results of the noise survey and a scheme for mitigation measures shall be provided within a suitable report and submitted to Mid and East Antrim Borough Council within 3 months of the date of written request.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity.

**Case Officer Signature:**

**Date:** 16 March 2026

**Appointed Officer Signature:**

**Date:**

**Development Management Consideration**

**Details of Discussion:**

**Approve as per this report.**

**Letter(s) of objection/support considered: Yes/No**

**Group decision:**

**D.M. Group Signatures**

**Date**

**18.03.2026**



## Committee Application

<b>Development Management Officer Report</b>	
<b>Case Officer:</b> Emma Graham	
<b>Application ID:</b> LA02/2025/0543/F	<b>Target Date:</b>
<b>Proposal:</b> Retrospective change of use to garden centre (a1 use), to include proposed extension of use into adjoining units to include ancillary workshop/service area/staff facilities.	<b>Location:</b> Montrose garden supplies unit a7, 2 Wakehurst road, Ballymena, BT42 3AZ.
<b>Applicant Name and Address:</b> 2-8 St Patrick's Street Draperstown BT45 7AL	<b>Agent Name and Address:</b> Martin Kelly 1 Pavilions Office Park Kinnegar Drive Holywood BT18 9JQ
<b>Date of last Neighbour Notification:</b>	12 August 2025
<b>Date of Press Advertisement:</b>	14 August 2025
<b>EIA Determination:</b> Yes	
<b>Consultations:</b>  DfI Roads- No Objection NI Water- Approve subject to standard planning conditions. Environmental Heath- No objections DfI Rivers- Flood Maps (NI), indicate that the site lies within the 1 in 100-year fluvial flood plain including the most up to date allowance for climate change.	
<b>Representations:</b>  Following advertisement in the local press no representations have been received	
Letters of Support	0.0
Letters of Objection	0.0
Petitions	0.0
Signatures	0.0
Number of Petitions of Objection and signatures	
<b>Summary of Issues:</b> The applicant is seeking retrospective planning permission for a retail use outside of the town centre.	

The existing development lies within the 1 in 100-year fluvial flood plain including the most up to date allowance for climate change.

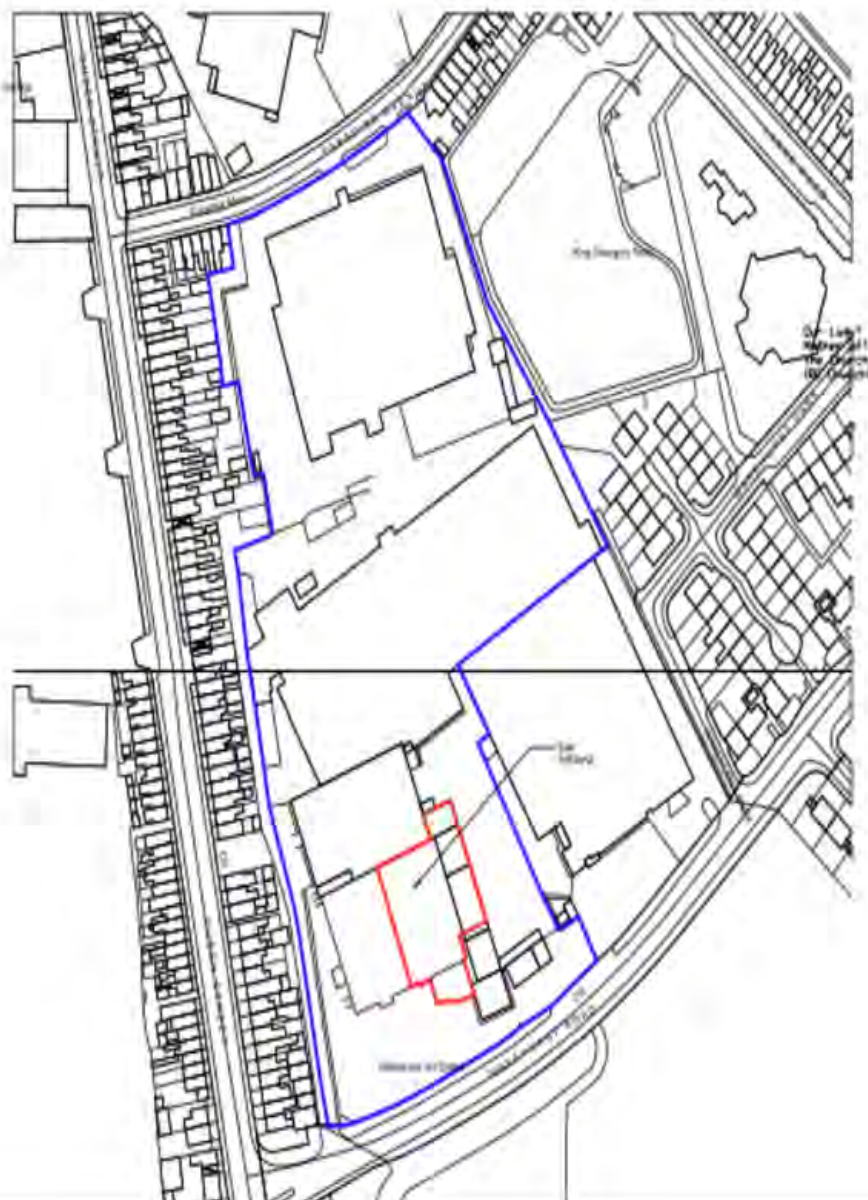
Major Developments Threshold for Retailing, Community, Recreation and Culture. (According to Parts A and D of the Schedule to the Planning (Use Classes) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015(a)). Including shops, financial, professional and other services, community and cultural uses, and assembly and leisure.

This is a major application as the proposal includes an area exceeding 1000sqm outside the Town centre. Under the current Planning Scheme of Delegation the application falls to be considered by the Planning Committee.



## Site Visit Report

### Site Location Plan:



### Characteristics of the Site and Area

The application site is located at Montrose Garden Supplies, unit a7, 2 Wakehurst road Ballymena, which is located approximately 250m to the south of Ballymena Town Centre. The subject premises are located between Lynas food store and a charity shop. The subject unit is single storey with a small outdoor display area at the front. The site has on-site car parking and is accessed directly from Wakehurst Road which runs parallel to the site to the south. There are further commercial uses in the wider

site to the north and east, housing to the west and playing fields to the south, beyond Wakehurst Road.

### **Description of Proposal**

This planning application seeks approval for the retention of change of use from a B4 Storage and Distribution use to a Class A1 Retail use along with an extension into an adjoining unit providing a repair workshop

The proposal comprises the following elements:

Retention of retrospective change of use to garden centre (a1 use), 817 sqm gross floor space

Proposed extension of use into adjoining units to include ancillary workshop/service area/staff facilities- 498.3sqm gross floor space

External sale area 148.2sqm gross floor space

The garden centre measures a total floorspace of 1,464 sqm and sells a range of garden supplies comprising of bulky garden goods and equipment. They also carry out repairs of garden equipment as an ancillary element.

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

#### **Planning History**

G/1989/04 Change of use from light industrial to bowling alley and ancillary services

G/1990/0694 Replacement of fire damaged building

G/1991/0273 Change of use of 1st floor industrial premises to leisure activities

G/1993/0248 change of use of vacant factory to furniture warehouse including retail sales

G/1993/0566 Alts to appearance of front elevation

G/1997/0050 Change of use from warehouse to bingo hall (relocation of existing hall)

LA02/2016/0944/F Partial demolition and refurbishment of existing vacant building and change of use from bowling alley to form two class B4 storage or distribution units with associated trade counter/cash and carry sales and associated site works with car parking

LA02/2017/0174/F Removal of condition no. 04 of Planning Approval

LA02/2016/0944/F which relates to the hours of opening, servicing, plant and equipment

LA02/2025/0201/PAN Retrospective Change of Use to Garden Centre (A1 use), to include proposed extension of use into adjoining units to include ancillary workshop/service area/staff facilities.

### Supporting Documents

Doc 1 rev 1- Planning, Design & Access Statement  
 Doc 2- Pre-Application Community Consultation Report (PACC Report)  
 Doc 3- Transport Assessment

### Policy Consideration

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. Sections 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. Ballymena Area Plan 1986-2001 is the relevant DDP for this proposal.

#### Ballymena Area Plan 1986-2001

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) Edition 2.  
 Mid and East Antrim Local Development Plan 2030 – Plan Strategy  
 SGS1 Spatial Growth Strategy  
 SGS2 Settlement Hierarchy  
 SGS7 Retail Hierarchy  
 RET1 Retail in Town Centres  
 RET2 Retail Impact Assessment  
 TR1 Access to Public Roads  
 TR5 Active Travel  
 TR6 Parking and Servicing  
 FRD1 Development within Floodplains  
 GP 1 General Policy for all Development (a-e)

#### Ballymena Area Plan 1986-2001

The Ballymena Area Plan (BAP) comprises the DDP for this proposal. The site is in an area designated as unzoned white land within the town of Ballymena.

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

Strategic Policies pertaining to Retail and Flood Risk are all detailed within the SPPS Ed2. The proposal will be considered in detail below under related LDP Policies contained within the MEABC Local Development Plan 2030 - Plan Strategy.

**MEABC Local Development Plan 2030 Plan Strategy**

Sets out the policy framework that guide decisions on planning applications for development in Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. Applicable policies will be considered in detail to follow.

**SGS1 Spatial Growth Strategy**

The strategic aim is 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. The proposal accords with the spatial growth strategy in that it limits development within the existing limits of Ballymena.

**SGS2 Settlement Hierarchy**

This designates Ballymena as a main town. As highlighted within the Spatial Growth Strategy it will be the focus for major population growth and economic development. The proposal addresses this focus.

**SGS7 Retail Hierarchy**

Ballymena has a role in meeting the retail and associated needs of communities in Mid and East Antrim. In line with strategic policy set out within the SPPS 2, a town centre first approach for the location of future retailing and other main town centre uses has been brought forward in operational policies as considered below. The application is outside of town centre and contrary to the Retail Hierarchy.

**Policy RET1 Retail in Town Centres**

Proposals for retail development will be permitted within town centre and small town centre boundaries where defined. For other locations, a sequential approach to site selection will be applied in the following order of preference: -

- a) Edge of Town Centre boundary (i.e., adjoining it or normally within 300 metres);  
and
- b) Out of centre locations (i.e., outside the town centre boundary but within settlement limits) where sites are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.

This site is 250m outside the edge of the town centre boundary, but within the development limits and considered under part a) of this policy as edge of town development. Montrose was trading from an adjacent unit, that abuts the site in Paradise Avenue since the early 2000's. The proposal is seeking to retain the retail use on its current site in Ballymena. The agent believes that there would be no rationale to relocate to another town. For the sake of completeness however, other town centres in the catchment area have been considered as part of the sequential assessment for the proposal.

The sequential assessment requires the consideration of the proposal's whole catchment area. The first step in carrying out a sequential assessment is the establishment of a catchment area for the proposed development.

The following centres were identified by the sequential assessment to fall within the catchment area:

**Large Town centres**

Antrim

**Town Centres**

Ballymena

Randalstown.

**Small Town centres**

Ahoghill

Broughshane

Cullybackey

**Village Centres**

Clough

Kells/Connor

Martinstown

**Local Centres**

Galgorm

Greystone

Parkhall.

The SPPS2 Policy for Town Centres and Retailing paragraph 6.288 requires applications for main town centre uses to be considered in the following order of preference (and consider all of the proposal's catchment).

- primary retail core;

- town centres;
- edge of centre; and
- out of centre locations, only where sites are accessible by a choice of good public transport modes.

The nearest large town centre is located 10 miles away in Antrim, which is part of the Antrim Newtownabbey Council Area.

Mid and East Antrim Local Development Plan 2030, Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance 2024 (SPG) advises that drive time will vary depending on the specific development proposed and requires that the applicant suggests an appropriate drive time from the proposal site, taking into account the size and type of development, the market in which the development will operate, any relevant characteristics of the business/operator model and where competitor developments are located.

Planning, Design & Access Statement (Doc 1 rev 1) considers that it is likely that people will travel from up to 20 minutes away to access the particular goods available at this site, which are not readily available in other garden retailers. The agent believes people will travel from a wider catchment area to access the ancillary garden equipment repairs this business offers without attracting or diverting trade within those catchment areas. The document advised that this depends on the nature, scale and location of existing retail developments in the catchment area.

The sequential test (in appendix 2 of Doc 1 rev 1- Planning, Design & Access Statement) found that there are no sequentially preferable sites in the proposal's whole catchment area which are available as suitable and viable sites for the proposed use. Site (c) within Antrim Castle Grounds and Site (f) East of Castle Way outside Antrim Core were identified as Development Opportunity Sites recognised in the extant Antrim Area Plan but the agent has noted them as not being suitable for development.

The site under consideration is located outside Ballymena Town Centre but within settlement limits and it is accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.

Policy RET1 requires that applications for retail proposals located outside the town centre must demonstrate the following:

- a) alternative sites within these locations are either not suitable, not viable or not available (or any combination thereof); and
- b) there is a qualitative and/or quantitative need for the proposal; and
- c) there will be no significant adverse impact on any centre within the whole catchment

Following analysis of the sequential test above it is accepted that there are no other available or suitable sites within the town centre. There is an existing suitable building



on site, it is capable of immediate occupation, with existing access, parking and servicing arrangements. It is accessed from main traffic routes and is easily accessible. It is considered that it would be unreasonable to close this site and relocate in the town centre, as it currently meets a need, and it has been demonstrated in the supporting statements (Doc 1 rev 1) that it would not significantly impact on any town centre within the catchment. The council would agree with findings in Doc 1 rev 1 Planning, Design & Access Statement that this site operates in quite a niche market, offering garden goods, whilst also providing a complementary garden equipment repairs service.

Qualitative and quantitative need.

The proposal has historically included an element of retail established under planning LA02/2016/0944/F for the partial demolition and refurbishment of existing vacant building and change of use from bowling alley to form two class B4 storage or distribution units with associated trade counter/cash and carry sales and associated site works with car parking

Qualitatively, the agent argues that this proposal offers a different and complementary range of garden goods than is currently offered in the area. Arbuckle and Calderwood is located about half a kilometre to the north along Queen Street. It sells mainly DIY goods with a limited range of garden goods. B&Q have closed at Braidwater Retail Park to the south of Ballymena Town Centre which has resulted in the loss of a garden goods sales. The Range now occupies the former B&Q unit and its garden range tends to be lifestyle orientated towards garden furniture, BBQs, ornamental/decoration along with a range of tools, plants etc. The Lawnmower Centre located off the Carniny Road approximately 2.5 kms north-west of the application site and specialises in lawnmowers. The outdoor Garden World in the recently opened Home Bargains unit on Queen Street sells mainly pots, planters, bagged goods, outdoor seating. In-store its garden range comprises weeding products, a small selection of garden tools, ornamental lighting and barbeques. It does not sell any large gardening equipment such as lawnmowers. In addition, none of these other retail units include a workshop offering in-store repair services to garden equipment.

Quantifiably the Mid & East Antrim Retail & Commercial Leisure Need & Capacity Study 2019 prepared by Nexus Planning on behalf of Mid & East Antrim Borough Council to inform the preparation of a new local development plan, found that there is a need by 2026 of between 2,600 sqm net and 4,200 sqm net of comparison goods floorspace. This table can be found in Doc 1 rev 1 (Nexus, Table 4.6 excerpt).

The agent has concluded that there is 1,365 sqm of floorspace in the borough when measured against the minimum floorspace capacity and when measured against the maximum floorspace capacity, leaves 2,965 sqm. Both scenarios result in

sufficient capacity for the subject garden supplies proposal.

The data and figures above provide qualitative and quantitative information on this application. The agent has provided data to support the capacity of the shops retail element and they have also advised how this will contribute to the needs of the borough's unemployment figures as the business currently employs 16 people.

The agent has demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impact on any centre within the whole catchment. The council would be content that there is a justified qualitative and or quantitative need.

The applicant has relocated from previously trading in a unit outside of the town centre in Paradise Avenue. After detailed consideration of the applicant's submission, we have no reason to disagree with its finding. It is therefore considered the proposal generally complies with Policy RET1.

### **Policy RET2 Retail Impact Assessment**

All applications, including extensions for retail development and town centre uses, above the thresholds identified below, must be accompanied by a Retail Impact Assessment (RIA) where the proposal is located outside town centre or small-town centre boundaries

A Retail Impact Assessment studies the location of the proposed development within its physical and planning policy context. As above we have identified the catchment area, the RIA looks at population, expenditure available and assesses the performance of retail centres within the catchment. It will also analyse the proposed location and demonstrate whether it complies with the requirements of the sequential test.

The average unit size in Ballymena and Larne town centres in 2018 was 263sq. m and 202sq. m respectively, the proposed RIA threshold of 750sq. m gross external area is deemed to be appropriate and in keeping with the existing scale of retail development in these towns.

As the retail element of the proposal is over 750sq.m a RIA was necessary. The following factors must be addressed in a retail impact assessment.

- a) The impact of the proposal on trade and turnover for both convenience and comparison goods traders, and the impact on town centre turnover overall for all centres within the catchment of the proposal.
- b) The impact of the proposal on existing committed and planned public and private sector investment and investor confidence in the town centre(s);
- c) The impact of the proposal on the delivery of the planned/allocated sites and the LDP strategy;

- d) The impact on the vitality and viability of existing centres including consideration of the local context. This should take into account existing retail mix and the diversity of other facilities and activities;
- e) Cumulative impact taking account of committed and planned development, including plan commitments within the town centre and wider area; and
- f) A review of local economic impacts. Where town centre is referred to this means town centres, small town centres or any centre defined by footnote 28.

The catchment area has been defined in RET 1. Appendix 3 of Doc 1 rev 1 provides details on catchment population in table 3. The spend per head in table 4, the total available spend in table 5. The turnover of the proposal is outlined in table 6 and table 7 outlines the estimated market share of the proposal.

Table 8 outlines the estimated retail floorspace and turnover of the existing bulky comparison retailers in the catchment area both now and at the design year. The assessment of retail impact is outlined in Table 9.

The findings of the Retail Impact Assessment conclude here is no adverse impact on the bulky comparison retail offer of any of the centres in the catchment area. The agent has advised that they are not aware of any existing committed and planned public and private sector investment in the town centre that would be adversely affected by the proposal. The proposal represents investment in Ballymena and provides much needed employment. This takes into account the location, extent and nature of the bulky comparison retail offer and the local context of each of the centres in the catchment area. It also looks at retail commitments in the catchment area and the likely resulting impact of commitments. The agent has identified that the commitments are located in Ballymena Town Centre and if implemented, would further strengthen the retail offer in the town centre and help support its vitality and viability. The agent has advised that the proposal represents an investment of £200,000 in Ballymena as well as supporting 16 employees.

The information above has assessed the population, expenditure available and the performance of retail centres within the catchment. It has also provided analysis of the proposed location and demonstrates whether it complies with the requirements of the sequential test.

After detailed consideration of the applicant's submission, we have no reason to disagree with its finding it is therefore considered the proposal general complies with Policy RET 2.

#### **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 application pertains to the use of an existing access with no alterations proposed. With approximately 53 spaces available.

The proposed development does not involve any alterations to the existing access or parking arrangements. It is not expected that the development will lead to any significant increase in traffic numbers.

It was determined that the proposed development will not result in significant adverse transport or traffic impacts. As the statutory authority DfI Roads have been consulted and offered no objection. The proposal 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 development is served by pedestrian and cycle paths which link directly to the town centre and wider Ballymena area promoting active travel.

This proposal is in compliance with Policy TR5.

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

A development proposal will be required to provide adequate provision for parking and appropriate servicing arrangements. Retail provision based on floor space Parking Standards 2005, requires 1 space per 14sqm of floor area.

This requires 58.2 spaces, there are currently 53.

The Transport Assessment (Doc 3) that accompanied the application provided findings that were undertaken during peak trading periods and confirm that there is sufficient parking within the site and surrounding area. Reference should be made to the TAF for the full assessment and findings which found that 36 spaces max were observed.

Given the nature of the operations on site, it is evident there is ample spaces for customers, deliveries and servicing vehicles. The delivery and servicing vehicles access the site to the side elevation (east) and keep the main car parking for the public.

It is considered Policy TR6 is complied with.

**Policy FRD1 – Development within Flood Plains** – Flood Maps (NI), indicate that the site lies within the 1 in 100-year fluvial flood plain including the most up to date allowance for climate change.

This proposal has been assessed under the requirements of Policy FRD1. As this is a change of use with no additional hardstanding, it has been considered to have a negligible impact from the previous approved use on site and would have no significant impact on the area. There is no additional development on site and therefore no

additional load to the area. A flood risk assessment was not requested as the footprint of the site is as existing, with the proposal seeking a retrospective change of use. The only addition is for a small area of retail to the front of the building that measures 148.2sqm. This area is accessed via automated sliding doors from within Montrose and is surrounded with a 2.4m high mesh security fence and is located on existing hardstand.

As this proposal seeks a retrospective change of use that will have a negligible impact from the previous approved use on site with no perceived addition to hardstanding it has been considered that there will be no density change on site and the change of use is considered to be compatible with FRD1.

### **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 premises and there are no external changes proposed to the subject building. The nature of the proposal is in keeping with the character of its location and surroundings. The proposal is contained wholly within an existing building apart from the small external sales display area at the front of the building. These elements are read within the wider context of the area and are likely to appear incidental rather than dominant when viewed. No such constraints relating to the historic environment or natural heritage have been identified. It is considered the proposal accords with the surrounding context.

b) Safeguarding Residential Amenity

The context of the site is already established and no significant conflict with residential amenity is anticipated. Environmental Health were consulted and had no objection to this proposal.

c) Access/Movement/Carparking

Access, movement and car parking have been considered under the TR policies above.

d) Safety and Safeguarding Human Health and Wellbeing.

There is no reason to suggest that the proposed development will prejudice safety and no specific impacts on human health or well-being have been identified. The subject building has already been assessed and granted planning approval. The current application mainly seeks to retain an existing use (with a minor, ancillary extension within the existing building) and is therefore not expected to have any impact on human health/wellbeing. The site is not within an area of known land instability or subsidence or an area of known land contamination.



**Development Management Consideration****Details of Discussion:**

Agree with CO recommendations

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

**Group decision:**

Approve as per CO recommendations

**D.M. Group Signatures**

**Date** 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2026