

Implementation Date: 01 September 2023

Template for Requesting Speaking Rights at the Planning Committee

The Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee provides for interested person(s) to register to speak on a planning application that is scheduled to be determined at the next meeting of the Planning Committee. This request must be received by the Planning Department no later than 10am on the Monday before the Planning Committee meeting via email account planning@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk.

Planning Reference	LA01/2023/0287/F
Name	RICHARD HUNTER
Contact Details	Tel:028 27662127 Email: [REDACTED]
Support or Objection – please tick relevant box	Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objection <input type="checkbox"/>
Written representation summarising key points to be addressed and supplementary information in support of your case (minimum font size 10 and maximum length two sides of A4 page). SEE ATTACHED SHEETS.	

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PROPOSAL

Construction of a Psychological Services and outpatient consultation building at 11-13, Newal Road Ballymoney adjacent to two existing complimentary mental health buildings operated by the NHSCT.

BUILDING NEED AND JUSTIFICATION

This is a facility which is very much needed in the Ballymoney area, as confirmed by Dr Petra Corr, Divisional, Director of Mental Health, Learning Disability and Community Wellbeing at the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT). Dr Corr wrote in support of the application, and stated;

“The Northern Health and Social Care Trust have been struggling to identify appropriate future accommodation for our Psychological Therapies and Adult Autism service within the Ballymoney area. These services support people in the area whom have experienced mental health difficulties and or autism, and it is therefore important to have modern, fit for purpose facilities to improve the quality of care and experience of service users within in this locality attending for psychological assessment and intervention. This development would be very much in keeping with the Mental Health Resource Centre, which is in close proximity to this site.

APPLICANT / OPERATOR

Whilst the end user of the project would be the NHSCT, the applicant is the owner of the site, the Robinson Memorial Hospital Ballymoney (Incorporated, which is a charity, and which has provided medical services on this site for the Ballymoney Community for many years.

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

In terms of Planning Policy, the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS), states

- 1) At Paragraph 4.1, that as a **Core Planning Principle in decision making**, “*planning authorities must balance and integrate a variety of complex, social, economic, environmental and other matters that are in the long-term public interest*” and
- 2) At Paragraph 4.2 “*To assist with this approach, the **Core Planning Principles** of the two-tier planning system include **Improving Health and Well-being**”*. Furthermore, the SPPS states
- 3) At Paragraph 4.3; “*The planning system has an active role to play in helping to better the lives of people and communities in Northern Ireland and in supporting the Executive’s, key priority of “**Improving health and well-being**”. For the purpose of the SPPS, the Department supports the World Health Organisation’s definition of health as a state of complete physical, **mental** and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity*”.

The Case Officer’s report on this application makes no mention of this “**Core Planning Principle in decision taking**”, as noted above and defined in the SPPS. – A brief acknowledgment of the existence of this SPPS requirement is mentioned in section 8.5 and 8.6 of the case officer’s report prepared for the planning committee but was not taken into account at the time of decision taking – Substantive merit should have been given to this section of policy

REASONS FOR REFUSAL

The Case Officer's report recommends refusal of the application for two reasons; (Incidentally, no issues/objections were raised by any of the statutory Consultee organisations).

- 1) *The proposal is contrary to paragraph 4.12 of the strategic planning policy statement from Northern Ireland in that the development, if permitted, **would not be sensitive to the character of the area surrounding the site in terms of design, scale and use of materials.***

In response to that, this building was *designed specifically to respect the character of the surrounding area in terms of design, articulation of scale, and use of materials.* This is *addressed clearly in the Design and Access Statement that accompanied the application, and a contextual drawing which was included with the application.* We note that this key drawing has been omitted from the information provided to the planning committee in the officer's report, together with the design and access statement which provides the majority of the supporting design information and justification of the scheme which is being called into question.

We would kindly request that the planning committee familiarise themselves with this essential information (Design and Access statement and Contextual drawings) prior to making their decision on the suitability and justification of the scheme design

- 2) *The proposal is contrary to paragraph 4.12 of the strategic planning policy statement for Northern Ireland in that the development, if permitted, would result in **unacceptable overlooking and dominance to neighbouring properties.***

In response to that, in terms of *overlooking*, it is noted that the Department has *received no objections on the basis of overlooking or dominance from adjacent property owners.* In terms of *dominance*, this is addressed in the previous point, and again in reference to the contextual drawing. Furthermore all the adjacent 3 properties currently in use as mental health resources buildings extend to 2 stories in keeping with the proposal and generate no objections.

POLITICAL SUPPORT

The application was also supported by the local Member of Parliament.