Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Civic Headquarters
Lagan Valley Island
Lisburn BT27 4RL

Tel: 028 9244 7300
www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk

October 30th, 2026

Chairperson: Alderman J Baird

Vice Chairperson: Alderman A Ewart MBE

Councillors: K Dickson, J Gallen, A Gowan, J Harpur, C Kemp, J Laverty BEM, S Lowry, D Lynch, U Mackin, A Martin, C McCready, T Mitchell and G Thompson

Ex-Officio: The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor B Higginson
Deputy Mayor, Alderman A McIntyre

Notice Of Meeting

A meeting of the Regeneration and Growth Committee will take place on **Thursday, 5th November 2026** at **6:00 pm** in the **Council Chamber** for the transaction of business on the undernoted agenda.

A hot buffet will be available in Lighters Restaurant from 5.15 pm for those Members who have confirmed in advance.

DAVID BURNS
Chief Executive
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Agenda

1.0 APOLOGIES

2.0 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

(i) Conflict of Interest on any matter before the Meeting (Member to confirm the specific item).

(ii) Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest (Member to complete the Disclosure of Interest form).

Attachment: Disclosure of Interests form Sept 24.pdf ***Page 1***

3.0 REPORT FROM HEAD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for the Economy Regional Balance Bill - Council Response to Consultation

For Decision

Attachment: 1. Regional Balance Bill Consulation Response - Nov26.pdf ***Page 3***

Attachment: Appendix 1 - FINAL Regional Balance Bill Response - 22Sept2026.pdf ***Page 5***

4.0 REPORT FROM HEAD OF PLANNING & CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Targeted Public Consultation Review of the Classes and Thresholds in the Schedule to the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

For Decision

Attachment: 2. Review of the Classes and Thresholds in the Schedule to the Planning (DM) Regs NI.pdf ***Page 19***

Attachment: Appendix 2 - consultation-review-of-the-classes-and-thresholds-to-the-planning-development-management-regulations-ni-2015.pdf ***Page 21***

4.2 Change to Adult: Child Ratios - Childminding

For Noting

Attachment: 3. Changes to Childminding Ratio (for noting).pdf ***Page 54***

Attachment: Appendix 3 - Extract from Local Development Plan 2032 Supplementary Planning Guidance.pdf ***Page 58***

5.0 REPORT FROM DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION & GROWTH

5.1 Notice of Motion re Further Education Colleges

For Decision

Attachment: 4. Notice of Motion re Further Education Colleges FINAL.pdf ***Page 59***

Attachment: Appendix 4 NOTICE OF MOTION FE Colleges.pdf ***Page 61***

5.2 Change of date and time of Committees

Attachment: 5. Change of date and time of Committee.pdf ***Page 63***

6.0 CONFIDENTIAL REPORT FROM HEAD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Local Economic Partnership (LEP) Programme Update

For Decision

Confidential due to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information)

7.0 CONFIDENTIAL REPORT FROM DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION & GROWTH

7.1 Renewal of Lease for Surface Car Park

For Decision

Confidential due to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information)

8.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

MEMBERS DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

1. **Pecuniary Interests**

The Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors under Section 6 requires you to declare at the relevant meeting any pecuniary interest that you may have in any matter coming before any meeting of your Council.

Pecuniary (or financial) interests are those where the decision to be taken could financially benefit or financially disadvantage either you or a member of your close family. A member of your close family is defined as at least your spouse, live-in partner, parent, child, brother, sister and the spouses of any of these. Members may wish to be more prudent by extending that list to include grandparents, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces or even close friends.

This information will be recorded in a Statutory Register. On such matters **you must not speak or vote**. Subject to the provisions of Sections 6.5 to 6.11 of the Code, if such a matter is to be discussed by your Council, **you must withdraw from the meeting whilst that matter is being discussed.**

2. **Private or Personal Non-Pecuniary Interests**

In addition you must also declare any significant private or personal non-pecuniary interest in a matter arising at a Council meeting (please see also Sections 5.2 and 5.6 and 5.8 of the Code).

Significant private or personal non-pecuniary (membership) interests are those which do not financially benefit or financially disadvantage you or a member of your close family directly, but nonetheless, so significant that could be considered as being likely to influence your decision.

Subject to the provisions of Sections 6.5 to 6.11 of the Code, you must declare this interest as soon as it becomes apparent and **you must withdraw from any Council meeting (including committee or sub-committee meetings) when this matter is being discussed**.

In respect of each of these, please complete the form below as necessary.

Pecuniary Interests

Meeting (Council or Committee - please specify and name):

_____

Date of Meeting: _____

Item(s) in which you must declare an interest (please specify item number from report):

_____

Nature of Pecuniary Interest:

Private or Personal Non-Pecuniary Interests

Meeting (Council or Committee - please specify and name):

_____

Date of Meeting: _____

Item(s) in which you must declare an interest (please specify item number from report):

_____

Nature of Private or Personal Non-Pecuniary Interest:

Name: Address:

Signed:	Date:

If you have any queries please contact David Burns, Chief Executive, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Committee:	Regeneration and Growth
Date:	5 November 2026
Report from:	Head of Economic Development

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for the Economy Regional Balance Bill - Council response to Consultation

1.0 **Background**

1. The Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for the Economy launched a Call for Evidence on the Regional Balance Bill, with a closing date of 22 September 2026.

2. The Regional Balance Bill seeks to improve the NI Executive's response to regional imbalances in economic performance and living standards by creating a statutory duty on the Executive to develop, implement and review a Strategic Regional Balance Framework.

3. The proposed Framework would establish outcomes, departmental responsibilities and measurable targets for addressing regional disparities, supported by appropriate monitoring, reporting and economic and social indicators.

4. Given the relevance of the proposed legislation to the Council's economic development and place-based delivery role, officers prepared and submitted a response to the Committee for the Economy's Call for Evidence by the consultation deadline of 22 September 2026.

5. As the consultation deadline preceded consideration of the matter by Committee, the Council's submission is presented retrospectively to Members for approval.

Key Issues

1. The Council's response broadly supports the objectives of the Regional Balance Bill and the principle of taking a more strategic and coordinated approach to addressing regional economic disparities across Northern Ireland.

2. The response highlights the importance of good jobs, improved productivity, appropriate infrastructure and evidence-based investment in supporting more balanced regional economic growth and improving living standards.

3. The submission emphasises the important role of local government in place-based economic development, including its direct engagement with local businesses, communities and other stakeholders. It highlights the value of ensuring that local government experience and local evidence, business insight and delivery experience inform the development and implementation of the proposed Strategic Regional Balance Framework.

4. While supporting effective monitoring and evaluation of regional economic performance, the Council's response seeks to avoid additional or duplicative monitoring and reporting requirements for local government which could divert resources from frontline economic development and delivery activity.

5. The response also makes clear that, should the Bill result in additional responsibilities or reporting requirements for Councils, these should be accompanied by appropriate and sustainable funding and resources to ensure that any expansion of local government's role does not create unfunded burdens.

6. The Council considers that responsibility for strategic economic monitoring, analysis and reporting should remain primarily with the Department for the Economy and central government, while recognising the important role of local government in providing local evidence and insight to inform this work.

7. The Council's response was submitted to the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for the Economy by the consultation deadline of 22 September 2026. The full consultation response is appended to this report.

2.0 **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Committee retrospectively approves the Council's appended response to the NI Assembly Committee for the Economy's Call for Evidence on the Regional Balance Bill.

3.0 **Finance and Resource Implications**

There are no direct financial or resource implications arising from the retrospective approval of the Council's consultation response.

4.0 **Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments**

4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions **or** rationale why the screening was not carried out Not required	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions **or** rationale why the screening was not carried out. Not required	

Appendices:	Appendix 1 – LCCC Regional Balance Bill Consultation Response

Northern Ireland Assembly

Committee for the Economy

Regional Balance Bill – Call for Evidence

CLOSES: Tuesday 22nd September 2026

SURVEY LINK: Regional Balance Bill - Northern Ireland Assembly - Citizen Space

REGIONAL BALANCE BILL

SURVEY – Q&A

1. What is your name? Paul McCormick

2. What is your email address?
paul.mccormick@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk

3. Are you providing a submission on behalf of an organisation or business? Yes

If yes, please provide the name of the organisation or business below:
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

4. Please confirm that you have read the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee's Privacy Notice by clicking the button below. Yes

5. How would you like your submission to be published?
Yes. Publish in full.
Yes. Publish but with my personal information and any content that could be used to identify me redacted.

Regional Balance Bill

The Bill seeks to improve the Northern Ireland's Executive's response to regional imbalances in economic performance and living standards, by creating a statutory duty on the executive to deliver and renew a strategic framework to address these imbalances.

Clause 1 - Strategic Regional Balance Framework

Clause 1 places a duty on the Executive to develop, adopt, maintain and implement a Strategic Framework for regional balance in Northern Ireland.

The Framework must set outcomes, the lifetime of the Framework, Departmental roles, identify mechanisms and methodology, include provisions requiring Departments to recognise and consider cross-border economic data, and enable measurable, time-bound targets.

The Framework must be consulted upon, laid before the Assembly and published within 12 months of Clause 1 coming into operation.

6. Do regional economic and related disparities need legislation in order for them to be addressed appropriately? Yes

7. Should the obligation on the development of a Strategic Regional Balance Framework sit with the Executive? Yes

8. Does the Bill correctly set out what should be in the Strategic Regional Balance Framework including: the roles of Departments; the mechanisms to address disparity; the criteria and methodology for assessing regional disparities; the setting of targets and milestones; the use of cross-border data; the identification of a baseline year etc. Yes

9. Does the Bill correctly set out the consultation process for the development of the Strategic Regional Balance Framework, its publication and revision? Yes

10. Do you have any other comments on Clause 1 or suggested amendments for this clause?
Clause 1

There is a limit of 2500 characters

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) supports the intention of Clause 1 and the establishment of a Strategic Regional Balance Framework. A statutory framework has the potential to provide greater long-term focus, consistency and accountability in addressing regional disparities across Northern Ireland.

The Framework should, however, place greater emphasis on delivering sustainable and inclusive economic growth through the creation of good jobs. Success should not be measured solely by employment rates or economic output but should also consider job quality, productivity, skills development, earnings, career progression and the resilience of local labour markets.

The Framework should also clearly recognise the role of local government as a strategic delivery partner. Councils have strong relationships with businesses, communities, education providers and local stakeholders and are well placed to deliver place-based interventions. However, councils should not become the primary vehicle for additional monitoring, reporting and evaluation requirements arising from the Framework.

Responsibility for developing regional indicators, establishing baselines, monitoring outcomes and evaluating overall progress should remain with the Executive and the Department for the Economy. This will ensure consistency across Northern Ireland while allowing councils to concentrate their limited resources on delivering economic development programmes and supporting businesses on the ground.

Finally, the Framework should align with existing strategies, funding and delivery mechanisms, including the Local Growth Fund, Local Development Plans, Sub-Regional Economic Plans, Community Planning, City and Growth Deals, Labour Market Partnerships and other

place-based investment programmes to avoid duplication and maximise impact.

Clause 2 - Reporting, Review and Support Functions

Clause 2 requires Departments, when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, to have due regard to the need to reduce disparity of regional balance and to exercise their functions in a manner calculated to contribute to the outcomes and any targets set in the Framework.

11. Is it reasonable and sufficient to require all Departments in developing, adopting, implementing or revising any policy, strategy or plan, to have due regard to the need to reduce regional disparity and to the Strategic Regional Balance Framework? Yes

12. Is it reasonable and sufficient to require all Departments to exercise their functions, so far as is reasonably practicable, in a manner calculated to contribute to the outcomes and targets set in the Strategic Regional Balance Framework? Yes

13. Do you have any other comments on Clause 2 or suggested amendments for this clause?
clause 2

There is a limit of 2,500 characters

The Council supports the principle that all Departments should have due regard to reducing regional disparities and contributing to the Strategic Regional Balance Framework. Regional balance cannot be achieved by the Department for the Economy alone and requires coordinated action across government.

The Council considers that the Framework should be underpinned by evidence-based decision-making, recognising both regional need and economic opportunity. Regional balance should not be interpreted as redistributing investment away from areas that are already driving economic growth. Rather, it should seek to reduce disparities while continuing to support areas with strong economic potential, recognising

that sustainable growth across all parts of Northern Ireland delivers wider regional benefits.

Implementation should remain proportionate. The introduction of additional statutory duties should not create unnecessary administrative burdens for local government or other delivery partners. Councils already provide significant evidence, monitoring information and programme reporting through initiatives including Local Economic Partnerships, Labour Market Partnerships and a wide range of economic development and regeneration programmes.

The Framework should promote effective cross-departmental and cross-agency collaboration to ensure investment decisions and project delivery are aligned. It should also recognise that achieving regional balance depends on the timely provision of enabling infrastructure, including transport, wastewater, utilities and digital connectivity, alongside economic interventions.

Where possible, Departments should utilise existing reporting mechanisms and datasets rather than introducing new reporting requirements. The emphasis should remain on improving outcomes rather than increasing administrative activity.

The Bill should make clear that responsibility for strategic monitoring, economic analysis, performance management and evaluation rests primarily with central government, with local government contributing through existing partnership arrangements where appropriate.

Should the Bill result in additional responsibilities or reporting requirements for councils, these must be accompanied by appropriate and sustainable funding and resources. Any expansion of local government's role should be fully resourced to avoid creating unfunded burdens on councils.

Clause 3 - Annual Reporting

Clause 3 requires Departments to compile, retain and provide information to the Department for the Economy, to support annual reporting, including actions taken and evaluations of impact.

It also provides the Department for the Economy with a power to issue guidance on format and timing.

Furthermore, each Northern Ireland Department is required to evaluate progress made in contributing to the criteria set out in the Framework, so far as these relate to each Department's areas of responsibility.

14. Do you agree that all Departments should be required to report annually as to how they have reduced regional disparities in the preceding 12 month period? Yes

15. Do you have any other comments on Clause 3 or suggested amendments for this clause?

If no, please explain below

There is a limit of 2500 characters

The Council supports annual reporting as an important mechanism for transparency, accountability and demonstrating progress towards reducing regional disparities.

However, reporting requirements should be proportionate and should not create unnecessary administrative burdens for delivery organisations. Local government is already delivering a significant range of economic development, employability and business support programmes, often in partnership with the Department for the Economy, Invest NI and other public sector organisations, within increasingly constrained financial and staffing resources.

Councils should be enabled to focus on delivering place-based interventions that support businesses, attract investment, create good jobs and improve local economic outcomes, rather than being required to produce extensive evaluations, bespoke datasets and multiple evidence returns. Additional monitoring and reporting requirements can divert valuable resources away from frontline delivery and direct engagement with businesses and communities.

DfE should retain overall responsibility for strategic economic monitoring, analysis and reporting, drawing upon existing administrative datasets, official statistics and evidence already held across government

and its agencies, including Invest NI where appropriate. This would reduce duplication, improve consistency and ensure that reporting is based on a single, robust evidence base.

Reporting arrangements should build upon existing reporting mechanisms wherever possible and avoid creating parallel processes for councils and other delivery partners. Local government should continue to contribute evidence through established partnership arrangements, while strategic evaluation and performance reporting remain functions led by central government.

CLAUSE 4 - Review and Reporting

16. Do you agree that the Department for the Economy should be required to report annually and the Minister make a related statement as to how all Departments have reduced regional disparities in the preceding 12 month period? Yes

17. Do you have any other comments on Clause 4 or suggested amendments for this clause?

There is a limit of 2500 characters

LCCC supports the requirement for an annual report by DfE and welcomes the Minister making an accompanying statement to the Assembly.

Annual reporting should provide a clear assessment of progress against agreed outcomes, identify where interventions are proving successful and highlight areas requiring additional policy attention or investment.

To maximise effectiveness, the report should draw upon existing official statistics and departmental information rather than requiring significant additional reporting from councils or delivery organisations. Consistent, centrally coordinated reporting will improve comparability across Northern Ireland while allowing local government to focus on programme delivery and supporting businesses, employers and communities.

Clause 5 - Reviewing the Framework

Clause 5 requires the Executive to review the Framework's operation and effectiveness within five years of the first Framework being laid before the Assembly, and then at least once every five years thereafter.

This enables (and, where appropriate, requires) the Department for the Economy to make and publish recommendations to the Executive, which must be laid before the Assembly.

18. Do you agree that the operation and effectiveness of the Framework should be revised by the Executive every 5 years? Yes

19. Do you have any other comments on Clause 5 or suggested amendments for this clause?
clause 5

There is a limit of 2500 characters

The Council agrees that the Framework should be reviewed periodically but suggests that five years may be too long for a comprehensive assessment without any formal interim review.

Consideration should be given to introducing a light-touch mid-term review to assess whether the Framework remains aligned with changing economic conditions, labour market trends and emerging regional challenges. This would allow adjustments to priorities where necessary while maintaining longer-term strategic stability.

Reviews should include meaningful engagement with local government, businesses, educational institutions and other delivery partners to ensure the Framework reflects practical experience and changing local economic circumstances.

The Council also considers it important that implementation and review of the Framework recognises the role of local government as a key delivery partner. Councils are already delivering a wide range of economic development, employability and regeneration initiatives through Local Economic Partnerships, Labour Market Partnerships and other place-based programmes.

Implementation should be supported by clear governance arrangements, effective cross-departmental coordination and a consistent approach

across departments and statutory agencies to minimise duplication, delays and unnecessary administrative burdens for delivery partners.

Should the Framework result in additional responsibilities, expectations or reporting requirements for local government, these should be accompanied by appropriate and sustainable funding and resources. Any expansion of councils' role should be fully resourced to avoid creating additional unfunded pressures on local government.

Clause 6 - Guidance and Research

Clause 6 confers ancillary functions on the Department for the Economy to provide guidance and information, and to undertake, commission or support research on regional disparities. Publication of guidance is required.

20. Do you agree that the Department for the Economy should provide guidance and information and undertake, commission or support research on regional disparities? Yes

21. Do you have any other comments on Clause 6 or suggested amendments for this clause?
clause 6

There is a limit of 2500 characters

LCCC supports DfE undertaking and commissioning research and publishing guidance.

Developing robust evidence, monitoring regional performance and evaluating policy effectiveness are core strategic functions that are most appropriately undertaken at departmental level. This approach promotes consistency of methodology, reduces duplication and ensures that decisions are informed by comparable data across Northern Ireland.

Guidance should be practical, proportionate and developed collaboratively with local government and delivery partners. Existing datasets should be utilised wherever possible to minimise additional reporting burdens.

The Department should also ensure that research findings are translated into practical policy recommendations and shared with delivery partners to support continuous improvement.

Clause 7 - Defining regional disparity and regions

Clause 7 provides a non-exhaustive list of regional disparity indices including: gross domestic product per head of population; average and median disposable household income per head of population; unemployment rates, employment rates and economic inactivity rates; productivity, including gross value added per employee; health data, including average life expectancy; education data, including attainment rates; indices of deprivation; affordable housing; access to airports; and the regional distribution of public capital expenditure.

The clause also defines "regions" by reference to statistical geographies within Northern Ireland designated by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency including, but not limited to, Local Government Districts as well as other data catchments.

22. Do you agree with how regional disparity may be defined by the Bill? Yes

23. Should regional disparity indices be specified in the Bill? Yes

24. What other indices should be used to define regional disparity? clause 7

There is a limit of 2500 characters

In addition to the indicators listed in the Bill, consideration should be given to measures including:

- Good jobs, including earnings, job quality and security.
- Skills shortages and employer demand.
- Innovation and research activity.
- Digital connectivity and mobile coverage.
- Public transport accessibility and journey times to employment.

- Infrastructure capacity, including wastewater, electricity network capacity and other enabling infrastructure that supports investment.
- Commercial property availability and employment land supply.
- Childcare accessibility and affordability.
- Access to higher and further education.
- Town centre vitality and vacancy rates.
- Carbon emissions and the transition to a low-carbon economy.

The indicators should be reviewed periodically to ensure they remain relevant and reflect changing economic priorities.

25. Do you agree with how the Bill may define a region within Northern Ireland? Yes

26. Do you have any other comments on Clause 7 or suggested amendments for this clause?
clause 7

There is a limit of 2500 characters

The Council supports the use of recognised statistical geographies but believes sufficient flexibility should be retained to reflect functional economic areas rather than relying solely on administrative boundaries.

Travel-to-work areas, business clusters, city regions and cross-boundary economic relationships frequently extend beyond Local Government District boundaries and should be considered where appropriate.

Clause 8 - Commencement and Short Title

Clause 8 sets out that the Bill will come into operation on the day after Royal Assent is received.

Clause 8 also sets out that the Bill may be cited as the Regional Balance Act (Northern Ireland) 2026.

27. Do you agree that the provisions of this legislation should be commenced immediately after Royal Assent? Yes

28. Do you have any other comments on Clause 8 or suggested amendments for this clause?
clause 7

There is a limit of 2500 characters

The Council has no objection to commencement following Royal Assent, provided sufficient time is allowed for the preparation of guidance, the development of the Strategic Regional Balance Framework and appropriate engagement with delivery partners before any statutory duties become operational.

Implementation should be phased where necessary to ensure that Departments and delivery partners are adequately prepared.

Proposed Additions and Amendments

29. Please provide information on any other potential amendments that you feel would enhance the Bill and the rationale for those.
Information on any potential amendments

There is a limit of 3500 characters

LCCC recommends that the Bill:

- Explicitly recognise the importance of creating good jobs and improving productivity alongside reducing regional disparities.
- Clarify the respective responsibilities of central government and local government, with strategic monitoring, evaluation and reporting led by DfE.
- Minimise duplication by requiring Departments to utilise existing reporting mechanisms and official datasets wherever possible.
- Strengthen links with Community Planning, Local Development Plans, City and Growth Deals and Sub-Regional Economic Plans.
- Include provision for a proportionate mid-term review of the Framework.
- Recognise functional economic areas alongside administrative boundaries where appropriate.

These amendments would strengthen delivery while ensuring resources remain focused on improving economic outcomes rather than increasing administrative burdens.

Additional Comments

30. Please provide any additional comments on the Bill you feel should be considered.

There is a limit of 3500 characters

The Council welcomes the ambition of the Bill and supports the principle of reducing regional disparities across Northern Ireland through a coordinated and evidence-based approach.

Achieving regional balance will require sustained collaboration across central government, local government, businesses, education providers and communities. The success of the legislation will depend not only on the quality of the Framework but also on clear governance, realistic expectations and appropriate resourcing.

Local government plays a vital role in delivering economic development initiatives, supporting businesses, promoting employability and shaping places. This delivery role should be protected. Councils should not be expected to absorb significant additional monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements without corresponding resources.

Strategic economic analysis, regional monitoring and performance reporting are functions most appropriately led by the Department for the Economy and other central government departments. Allowing councils to focus on delivery while central government leads on strategic oversight will provide the greatest opportunity to improve productivity, create good jobs and reduce regional disparities across Northern Ireland.

Almost done…

You are about to submit your response. By clicking 'Submit Response' you give us permission to analyse and include your response in our

results. After you click Submit, you will no longer be able to go back and change any of your answers.

31. If you provide an email address you will be sent a receipt and a link to a PDF copy of your response.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Committee:	Regeneration and Growth Committee
Date:	5 November 2026
Report from:	Head of Planning and Capital Development

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Targeted Public Consultation Review of the Classes and Thresholds in the Schedule to the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

1.0 **Background**

1. The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) has written to the Council on 14th August 2026 to inform that they had issued a public consultation paper on proposals to update the Classes and Thresholds in the Schedule to the Planning (Development Management) Regulations) Northern Ireland) 2015.

2. This public consultation is seeking views from interested stakeholders on proposed changes to the Classes and Thresholds in the Schedule to the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and comments are required before the extended deadline of 06 November 2026

Key Issues

1. The 2022 Review Report on the implementation of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 included several actions in relation to the above Regulations, namely a review of categories and thresholds for development contained in the Schedule to the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

2. These actions now form part of the Planning Improvement Programme (PIP) being brought forward by the Regional Planning, Governance and Legislation team in DfI.

3. The consultation focuses on a review of the existing classes of development and the thresholds used to determine whether development is classified as local, major or regionally significant.

4. The consultation follows on from stakeholder engagement sessions with local government and other with an interest in the planning process in Autumn 2025.

5. The proposed key amendments that might impact the day-to-day operations of local planning authorities are within the following categories:

   - Class 2 Energy Infrastructure
   - Class 3 Transport Infrastructure
   - Class 4 Waste Infrastructure
   - Class 5 Extractive Industry
   - Class 8 Business, Storage and Distribution
   - Class 9 Any Other Development

	6. A full copy of the consultation is attached (**see Appendix**). The alterations to the thresholds, definitions and minor text changes are relatively minor in nature and do not impact adversely on the operations of the Planning Unit. 7. No additional burden is created in terms of the requirement for expert consultants to support the work of the unit in processing these types of applications nor is there any additional training requirement for officers or Elected Members. 8. Given the limited nature of the changes it cannot be said that this will achieve a significant improvement in the processing of major planning applications, but it is recognised that it creates clarity and certainty in respect of those applications which may fall into the threshold and require pre-application community consultation. 9. Officers have prepared a response which advises that the Council is in agreement with the proposed changes to the six categories specified. 10. Members should note that there was no opportunity to provide general feedback at this stage and that the opportunity to look more widely a measuring the economic benefits of larger development was missed by not bringing more development into the major category.
2.0	**Recommendation** It is recommended that Members agree that a response to the consultation is issued advising that the Council is in agreement to the proposed changes to the six categories specified in the amended Classes and Thresholds Schedule to the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.
3.0	**Finance and Resource Implications** There are no finance or resource implications.
4.0	**Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments**

4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions **or** rationale why the screening was not carried out	N/A
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions **or** rationale why the screening was not carried out.	N/A

Appendices:	Appendix 2 - Consultation Document

-

Department for Infrastructure
An Roinn Bonneagair
Depairtment fur Infrastructure
www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Review of the Classes and Thresholds Schedule to The Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

August 2026

OGL

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1 Responding to this consultation document

The Department for Infrastructure would like to invite views and contributions from partners and stakeholders on this targeted consultation on potential changes to the **Classes and Thresholds in the Schedule to The Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015** (the Development Management Regulations), as set out in this document.

1.1 Consultation Period

The targeted consultation will run for 8 weeks from **14 August to the 9 October 2026.**

1.2 How to Respond

The preferred way to respond to this targeted consultation is **online** via the **NI Direct - Citizen Space** website using the link below:
https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/dfi-1/review-of-the-classes-and-thresholds

Copies in other languages and formats (including Braille, large print etc.), can be made available on request. If it would assist you to access this document in an alternative format or language other than English, please contact us using the Email or postal address below or by calling 0300 200 7830.

Written responses should reflect the structure of the consultation document as far as possible with references to question numbers where relevant. Where these cannot be submitted via Citizen Space, they can be sent to us by:

1. **Email:**
   Legislation.Planning@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

2. **Post:**
   Public Consultation
   Review of the Classes and Thresholds in the Schedule to The Planning (Development Management) Regulations (NI) 2015
   Regional Planning Governance and Legislation
   Department for Infrastructure
   3rd Floor, James House
   2 - 4 Cromac Avenue, The Gas Works
   Belfast BT7 2JA

The Department welcomes submissions up to 5.00pm Friday 9 October 2026; unfortunately, responses received after this date will not be considered.

If you have any comments or complaints about the consultation process itself (rather than the content of this document), these should be directed to the postal or Email address above.

1.3 Freedom of Information Act 2000 - Confidentiality of responses

The Department may publish a summary of responses following the closing date for receipt of comments. Your response, and all other responses to this publication, may be disclosed on request and/or made available on the DfI website (in a redacted form). The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response, please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of responses as this will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this publication.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) give the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this publication, including information about your identity, should be made public or treated as confidential. The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:

- The Department should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection with the exercise of any of the Department's functions and it would not otherwise be provided.
- The Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties 'in confidence' which is not confidential in nature.
- Acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.

The information you provide in your response, excluding personal information, may be published, or disclosed in accordance with FOIA or EIR. Any personal information you provide will be handled in accordance with the UK-GDPR and will not be published. If you want the non-personal information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please tell us why, but be aware that, under the FOIA or EIR, we cannot guarantee confidentiality.

For information regarding your personal data, please refer to the DfI Privacy Notice at www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/dfi-privacy.
For further details on confidentiality, the FOIA and the EIR please refer to www.ico.org.uk.

1.4 Impact Assessments

Government bodies are required to screen the impact of new policies and legislation against a wide range of criteria, including equality and human rights.

Equality Impact Assessment Screenings and a Preliminary Regulatory Impact Assessment have been undertaken and are available to view or download from the Citizen Space web link or the Department's website.

The Department has determined that there would be no differential impact in rural areas or on rural communities. It also determined that the proposals laid out in this document are fully compliant with the Human Rights Act 1998.

The Department welcomes views and comments on whether the conclusions contained in the above assessments are correct.

2 Introduction

2.1 This targeted consultation invites views from partners and stakeholders on potential changes to the Classes and Thresholds in the Schedule to **The Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015** ('the Development Management Regulations'). These potential changes focus on the following aspects of the Development Management Regulations:

- regulation 2 (Hierarchy of developments);

- regulation 3 (Department's jurisdiction in relation to developments of regional significance); and
- Schedule (Major development thresholds).

2.2 Changes to the Development Management Regulations are part of a wider package of measures delivering change through the **Planning Improvement Programme**[1] ('PIP'), brought forward by the **Department for Infrastructure** ('the Department'), local government and other stakeholders. This is one of many measures being brought forward that aim to create an efficient, effective and equitable planning system, trusted to deliver high quality, sustainable inclusive and healthy places.

2.3 The PIP includes actions and measures recommended through the review of the implementation of the **Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011** ('the 2011 Act'), which was required under section 228 of the 2011 Act. The recommendations emerged from numerous proposals, suggested revisions and recommendations for change or improvement submitted following the Call for Evidence**.**

2.4 In relation to the Development Management Regulations, the Department confirmed in its Review Report[2] that it would undertake a review of the classes of development, existing thresholds and categories of development to determine the need for revisions.

2.5 In December 2023 the Department issued an initial consultation paper on the review of the Development Management Regulations. The consultation was designed to obtain views and comments on a number of aspects including Pre-Application Community Consultation (PACC), Pre-Determination Hearings (PDHs) and various classes and thresholds for determining the hierarchy of development proposals in Northern Ireland. The review was separated into two phases, phase one which covered legislative amendments to the Development Management Regulations, PACC and PDH's provisions and procedures came into operation on the 1 August 2025. This targeted consultation represents the second phase of the review of the Development Management Regulations and specifically relates to the classes and thresholds schedule.

[1] https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/topics/planning/planning-improvement-programme
[2] https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/review-planning-act-ni-2011-report

2.6 Following the initial public consultation in December 2023, the Department hosted two workshops in Autumn 2025 to discuss the responses and the proposed changes. As a result of this process and having considered the very helpful, knowledgeable and informative input from all stakeholders, the Department has drafted the proposed amendments to the Schedule.

2.7 While some amendments are minor and reflect simple changes to the descriptions, thresholds or metrics, the responses received have resulted in other more fundamental amendments. Conscious these somewhat more significant changes will be unexpected and will represent a shift from the previous format, the Department has decided to hold a further 8-week targeted consultation period to obtain views on the proposed changes.

2.8 The classifications and thresholds set out in the Schedule form part of a screening framework. Their purpose is to determine whether a proposed development falls within the category of major, or regionally significant development, and therefore the procedural route it will follow within the planning system. They do not in themselves determine whether a proposal is acceptable in planning terms, nor do they assess the merits of an application or the extent to which any impacts may be mitigated. The acceptability of any development, including its environmental, social and economic effects, will continue to be assessed in full through the planning application process, in accordance with relevant policy, legislation and consultation requirements.

2.9 While the classifications aim to provide clarity and provide for future technologies, through broad and consistent categories, it is recognised that no system can capture every scenario precisely. Accordingly, safeguards remain in place. The Department retains the ability to call in applications where appropriate, and proposals falling to be screened by the Department may still be screened out and returned for determination by the councils. This ensures that the system remains flexible, proportionate, and capable of responding to the particular circumstances of individual developments.

3 Structure of the consultation

3.1 This targeted consultation sets out the aims and various amendment proposals to the Classes and Thresholds in the Schedule to the Development Management Regulations and seeks views and feedback on the proposed changes.

3.2 Section 4 of this consultation document explores the aims and key issues supporting regulations 2 and 3 relating to the hierarchy of development, which provide the thresholds and criteria for the category of major development, and developments prescribed for the purpose of section 26(1) of the 2011 Act. The consultation outlines a series of questions relating to proposals to amend the classes of development and their thresholds and criterion as set out in the *Major Development Thresholds* Schedule. The aim is to ensure they are relevant, fit for purpose and take account of future development trends.

Details of the Respondent

Q.1: Respondent Information:

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Individual ☐

Organisation ☐

Please provide your organisation's name:

_____

4 Regulations 2 and 3, and the Schedule (Major Development Thresholds) to The Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

Introduction

4.1 Section 25 of the 2011 Act introduced a hierarchy of development within the planning system, establishing development as one of two categories, major or local. The aim of the hierarchy is to encourage a more proportionate and responsive approach to processing planning applications, with resources and decision-taking mechanisms tailored according to the scale and complexity of the proposed development[3].

4.2 Proposals for major development, which tend to be more economically, environmentally and socially significant, are likely to require considerably more assessment and processing

[3] *Para 5.40 Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)*

resources than local developments which, by comparison, are less complex and, on the whole, are likely to raise fewer public interest issues.

4.3 The Development Management Regulations set out the categories of development and the relevant thresholds or criteria for each class. The Schedule provides clarity for prospective applicants and planning authorities about which process a proposed development should follow and which developments require consultation with the community during the pre-application phase.

4.4 In the Development Management Regulations, there are nine classes of development identified in Column 1 of the table in the Schedule (Major Development Thresholds), each with a threshold or criterion to establish major development. They also identify thresholds or criteria for major development which may be considered regionally significant under section 26(1).

Major development

4.5 Major developments have important economic, social, and environmental implications for a council area. With potential to deliver important benefits for the local community, planning applications for major development will be given appropriate resources to avoid undue delay and risk to investment decisions[4].

4.6 Regulation 2 of the Development Management Regulations confirms that major development is the relevant class of development which meets or exceeds the threshold or criterion outlined in Column 2 of the table in the Schedule. Planning applications for major development are submitted to the appropriate council, however they can also be called-in for determination by the Department under section 29 of the 2011 Act.

4.7 All major development is subject to section 27 of the 2011 Act and PACC must be undertaken prior to the submission of the planning application. In defining the classes and thresholds for major development, the aim is to achieve a balanced approach to the types of application that would most affect the community without over-burdening users of the system or the public by over-consultation.

[4] *Para 5.45 Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)*

4.8 Community consultation is an essential part of an effective and inclusive planning system. The aim of PACC is to inform local communities about forthcoming development proposals, allowing them the opportunity to view and comment on the emerging design proposals, and for the developer to take any comments into consideration, before a formal planning application is submitted. The intention is to add value and improve the quality of the proposed development, by addressing community issues, improving understanding, and mitigating potential negative impacts, where possible[5]. The process aims to encourage trust and more open, positive working relationships from the earliest stages in the development management process. The Department has brought forward legislative change to the Development Management Regulations PACC provisions and procedures, which came into operation on the 1 August 2025, to allow for a dual approach to PACC which now involves:

- A statutory requirement to hold at least one in-person public community consultation event, ensuring that those who prefer or need face-to-face engagement are not excluded.
- Developers being required to provide a dedicated website to display draft proposals and collect feedback at pre-application stage.

4.9 We appreciate that not everyone has easy access to the internet, and this approach ensures that no one is left out, retaining accessibility for all, while also embracing digital tools that can broaden participation and accessibility to information to make the process more transparent and inclusive. It also brings Northern Ireland into line with other jurisdictions, such as Scotland and Wales, where digital engagement is now a core part of pre-application consultation, helping to modernise planning practice and reach a wider audience.

Major development of regional significance

4.10 Regionally significant developments form the top tier of development proposals which have a critical contribution to make to the economic and social success of Northern Ireland as a whole, or a substantial part of the region. They also include developments which potentially have significant effects beyond Northern Ireland or involve a substantial departure from a local development plan (LDP)[6].

[5] *Development Management Practice Note 10 - https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/development-management-practice-notes*
[6] *Para 5.44 Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)*

4.11 Regulation 3 of the Development Management Regulations confirms that development prescribed for the purposes of section 26(1) is major development which meets or exceeds the threshold or criterion outlined in Column 3 of the relevant class of development within the Schedule to the Development Management Regulations. Where the thresholds are met or exceeded it does not automatically equate to the application being considered regionally significant, it is a prompt to enter into consultations with the Department and follow the procedures outlined in section 26 of the 2011 Act.

4.12 Planning applications for major development deemed regionally significant[7] are submitted to and determined by the Department. They are also subject to section 27 of the 2011 Act and require PACC.

Local development

4.13 Local developments comprise all other developments (other than permitted development[8]) that do not fall within the category of major development. The vast majority of local development proposals are for residential and minor commercial applications and are determined by councils.

Potential changes

4.14 The objective of bringing forward the proposed changes is to ensure that the classes of development and the corresponding thresholds in the Schedule remain fit for purpose and relevant for current and future development trends. The questions focus on specific proposals to amend the classes and thresholds as set out in the Development Management Regulations based on a previous public consultation and a number of tailored workshops and stakeholder events carried out by the Department.

Schedule classes and thresholds

4.15 In addition, since the Development Management Regulations were introduced in 2015, new technologies and types of development have been emerging which do not fall clearly into the current classes of development. Similarly, it is timely to evaluate whether the current thresholds are reasonable and proportionate to enable local communities to engage on

[7] *Confirmed by a notice issued under section 26(4) of the Planning Act (NI) 2011*
[8] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2015/70/contents/made

complex development proposals which may impact them, whilst ensuring there is a balanced approach to timely decision-making.

4.16 When considering the amendments to the Schedule, and in particular the *Energy Infrastructure* class, the Department was very conscious of the speed at which technology, specifically in the renewable energy sector, has been changing. This prompted us to think about how future technologies would be captured by the present schedule. To avoid constant future amendments to accommodate new or novel technologies, it was important that the classes and descriptions were broad enough but also that they remain relevant. This also offered the opportunity to make the schedule easier to understand, require less interpretation around development types and make the screening process more transparent.

The Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 Classes and Thresholds Proposed Amendments

5 Class 2 - Energy Infrastructure in the Schedule to The Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

5.1 The class of *Energy Infrastructure* has been largely redesigned in a move away from individually described developments and towards the fundamental purpose of the technology in question. The class includes *generation*, *storage* and *transmission*, and the types of development within that class include *heat* or *electricity generation*, and *thermal*, *electrical, mechanical*, or *chemical storage*. These elementary groupings are designed to ensure that whatever the development, now or in the future, it can be accommodated by the Schedule.

5.2 The thresholds have been considered with regard to their potential environmental, land use, safety and energy system impacts. Single, capacity-based thresholds have been used for each type of development, rather than multiple or hybrid metrics to provide consistency and in keeping with the aim of simplification.

5.3 The following sets out the rationale behind the proposed classifications and thresholds for energy-related development. The system is intended to:

- Provide clarity and proportionality in how energy projects are assessed;
- Ensure communities and stakeholders are appropriately consulted on developments of varying scale; and
- Create a robust, future-proof framework capable of accommodating existing and emerging renewable energy technologies.

5.4 The energy sector is undergoing rapid technological change, the proposed revised Class 2 - *Energy Infrastructure* table has been deliberately designed to be broad, flexible, and sector-agnostic, ensuring that technologies not yet widely deployed, such as next-generation batteries, advanced hydrogen systems, long-duration thermal storage, or novel renewable generation technologies, can nevertheless fit within the framework without future legislative overhaul.

5.5 *Energy infrastructure* currently incorporates several types of development including electricity generating stations, electrical power lines, storage, extraction, and pipelines. Each type of development has a different threshold for both major development and consideration as regionally significant development under section 26(1).

5.6 Whilst the growth in traditional renewable energy technologies, such as wind and solar, is likely to continue, new viable energy technologies and solutions may emerge in the coming years which merit new or adapted energy infrastructure descriptions. In tandem, it is likely that new electricity support technologies and infrastructure may also be required to support a flexible and resilient renewables-based electricity network.

5.7 The thresholds are intended to ensure that developments are classified in a way that reflects their scale, likely impacts and strategic importance, so that projects with the greatest potential impacts are subject to the appropriate level of planning scrutiny. They are primarily based on energy storage capacity Mega-watt hour ('MWh') or Giga-watt hour ('GWh'), as this provides a consistent and comparable measure of the size and contribution of different technologies, and generally correlates with physical infrastructure, land use and environmental effects. The levels have been set to strike a balance between capturing genuinely significant infrastructure as major development, while avoiding disproportionate regulation of smaller or emerging projects, and cognisant of scale in a Northern Ireland context. The approach also maintains broad consistency across different technology types, so that similar-scale developments are treated in a comparable way, while allowing for

proportionate variation where impacts arise differently, such as between above-ground and below-ground forms. It is recognised that applying a single framework across a wide and evolving range of technologies is inherently challenging, and the thresholds therefore represent a pragmatic, high-level structure designed to accommodate diverse proposals within a limited number of clear and workable categories.

Revised Classes and Thresholds - Generation

5.8 The first revised development type relates to *Generation* and covers any technology that produces electricity or heat, regardless of fuel source. By defining *generation* by functional output rather than technology type, the framework ensures that established technologies (wind, solar, biomass, gas and combined heat power) are captured and that emerging technologies (advanced geothermal, marine energy, hybrid renewable parks, or future net-zero fuels) are automatically included.

5.9 The Department proposes introducing a new description under *Generation for the construction of an onshore heat generating station*, with the proposed threshold being set at 10 Mega-watt ('MW') for Major Development and 30MW for the purpose of section 26(1) Major Development proposals.

5.10 The Department proposes changing the current threshold for *the construction of an onshore electricity generating station* from 5MW to 10MW for Major Development and from 30MW to 75MW for Major Developments prescribed for the purpose of section 26(1), this would include but is not limited to development related to solar PV, wind farms and geothermal.

5.11 For *onshore development associated with offshore electricity generating stations*, it is proposed that all such development falls within the Major Development category, with a 75MW threshold applied for classification as Major Developments prescribed for the purpose of section 26(1).

5.12 Using output-based definitions (e.g. "electricity-generating station" and "heat-generating station") ensures that *generation* is categorised by its functional output rather than specific technology. This means both today's technologies and tomorrow's (e.g. floating offshore wind landfall substations, new bioenergy systems, solar-thermal concentrators) are naturally included.

5.13 After considering the various responses to this question in the initial public consultation, the Department will not be bringing forward any proposals to establish a separate wind farm description under *Generation*. The Department considers the newly proposed categorisation of the development types and updated threshold parameters for *the construction of an onshore electricity generating station* will give appropriate coverage for wind farms and other development proposals.

Revised Classes and Thresholds - Energy storage

5.14 The second revised development type is *Energy storage*, and the Department proposes 4 distinct types within this description which will appropriately cater for new technologies now and in the future. The 4 proposed new energy storage types as set out below will include *thermal, electrical, mechanical* and *chemical*.

5.15 *Energy storage* is essential to renewable integration and is rapidly diversifying into thermal, electrical, mechanical, and chemical solutions. By defining storage functionally rather than technologically, the class accommodates current systems (battery energy storage, pumped heat storage, mechanical flywheels) and future innovations (including long-duration technologies such as compressed CO_2 energy storage).

Thresholds and Metrics for *Energy storage*

5.16 GWh and MWh are the preferred metrics for energy storage because they directly measure the total amount of usable energy a system can deliver, rather than its instantaneous power output. These metrics are considered to scale proportionately with the environmental and operational impacts of storage installation, such as land take, infrastructure size and safety requirements, and they also reflect the contribution the facility can make to the wider energy system in terms of duration, resilience, and flexibility. Using stored energy metrics ensures consistent comparison across different technologies, present and future, and provides a clear indicator of the strategic value of a storage project.

5.17 We propose introducing a *Thermal energy storage* description for *the development of a facility for the storage of energy in thermal form above and below ground* - this will include hot water tanks and district heat systems. Part of the rationale for this development type was to establish a meaningful measurement for the threshold. We therefore propose introducing a MWh/GWh measurement for this activity and setting a 200MWh threshold for

Major Development and a 1GWh threshold for Major Developments prescribed for the purpose of section 26(1), for above and below ground thermal energy storage facilities.

5.18 Under the development type of *Electricity storage* we propose introducing a description '*the development of an electricity storage facility which consists of battery energy storage'*. This threshold will also be measured in MWh/GWh and we propose a threshold of 200MWh for Major Development and a 1GWh threshold for Major Developments prescribed for the purposes of section 26(1) development proposals.

5.19 To be certain that all aspects of *Energy storage* are covered appropriately we propose introducing a development type *Mechanical energy storage* to cover '*development of a facility for the storage of energy in mechanical form*' which would include development for flywheels, pumped hydro and compressed air energy storage, again we propose measuring the threshold in MWh/GWh and the Major Development threshold will be set at 200MWh with the Major Developments prescribed for the purposes of section 26(1) threshold being set at 1GWh.

5.20 We also propose introducing a *Chemical energy storage* description '*installations for the above and below ground storage of energy in chemical form'*. The proposal is to be measured in stored energy capacity with the threshold in MWh/GWh. The threshold for **above ground** major development will be set at a stored energy capacity of 1GWh for Major Development and 5GWh for Major Developments prescribed for the purposes of section 26(1) development proposals, while **underground** chemically stored energy capacity will be set at 500MWh for Major Development and 2GWh for Major Developments prescribed for the purposes of section 26(1). Lower thresholds for underground storage reflect the additional geotechnical, groundwater and long-term containment considerations associated with subsurface development, which may give rise to significant planning impacts at comparatively smaller scales.

5.21 Energy storage descriptions (*thermal, electrical, mechanical, and chemical*) are internationally recognised classifications. Treating energy storage in this way ensures the framework remains relevant as new storage chemistries and long-duration solutions become commercially viable.

Revised Classes and Thresholds – Transmission and distribution

5.22 Under the *Energy infrastructure* class we will also propose maintaining the development type 'electrical power lines and pipelines', but with a new heading under *Transmission and distribution* with no proposed changes to the current thresholds or descriptions.

Additional information

5.23 Part of the overall proposals includes the transfer of the *Extractive* development classification from Class 2 *Energy Infrastructure* to the Class 5 *Extractive Industry;* this matter will be covered as part of question 5.

5.24 In arriving at these proposals the Department has carefully considered all the responses to the initial public consultation, along with other information gathering exercises and specific discussions with key stakeholders.

5.25 Table 1 below sets out the proposed changes to the Major Development Thresholds for Class 2 Energy Infrastructure.

Table 1.

SCHEDULE

Major Development Thresholds - Class 2 Energy Infrastructure

Description of Development	***Major Developments Threshold or Criteria***	***Major Developments prescribed for the purpose of section 26(1) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011***
2. Energy Infrastructure - Generation		
Heat generating stations The construction of an on-shore heat generating station (when constructed or extended).	Where its capacity is or exceeds 10 megawatts.	Where its capacity is or exceeds 30 megawatts.
Electricity generating stations The construction of an on-shore electricity generating station (when constructed or extended).	Where its capacity is or exceeds 10 megawatts.	Where its capacity is or exceeds 75 megawatts.
Onshore development associated with the construction of an off-shore electricity generating station	All proposals.	Where its capacity is or exceeds 75 megawatts.
Energy Infrastructure - Storage		
Thermal Energy Storage The development of a facility for the storage of energy in thermal form above or below ground	Where its capacity is or exceeds 200 megawatt-hours.	Where the total maximum stored thermal energy capacity exceeds 1 gigawatt-hour.
Electricity Storage* The development of an electricity storage facility which consists of Battery Energy Storage	Where its capacity is or exceeds 200 megawatt-hours.	Where the rated energy storage capacity exceeds 1 gigawatt-hour.
Mechanical Energy Storage The development of a facility for the storage of energy in mechanical form	Where its capacity is or exceeds 200 megawatt-hours.	Where the maximum stored mechanical energy capacity exceeds 1 gigawatt-hour.
Chemical Energy Storage Installations for the above ground storage of energy in chemical form (Excluding Battery Energy Storage)	Where its stored energy capacity is or exceeds 1 gigawatt-hour.	Where the total maximum energy content of stored materials exceeds 5 gigawatt-hours.
Installations for the below ground storage of energy in chemical form (Excluding Battery Energy Storage)	Where its stored energy capacity is or exceeds 500 megawatt-hours.	Where the total maximum energy content of stored substances exceeds 2 gigawatt-hours.
Energy Infrastructure - Transmission / distribution		
Pipelines Pipelines for the transport of gas/oil/chemicals or for the transport of carbon dioxide streams for the purposes of geological storage, including associated booster stations	With a diameter of more than 400 millimetres or a length of more than 20 kilometres.	With a diameter of more than 800 millimetres or a length of more than 40 kilometres.
Electrical power lines The installation of an electrical power line.	Where the voltage exceeds 33 kilovolts if the purpose of the line is the provision of a supply to more than one customer.	Where the voltage: -is 110 kilovolts double circuit overhead line; or -is or exceeds 275 kilovolts, and a length of more than 15 kilometres.

* **Definition in the regulations to be finalised.**

Q.2: Do you agree with the amendment proposals outlined in Class 2 - Energy Infrastructure to the Schedule of the Development Management Regulations?

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

If no, please outline suggestions for change and explain your reasoning.

6 Class 3 - Transport Infrastructure in the Schedule to The Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

6.1 The *Transport infrastructure* class covers the construction of new or replacement railway lines, airport runways, port and harbour installations, waterways and transit ways. There have been no proposed changes to the current thresholds for Major Development or Major Developments prescribed for the purpose of section 26(1) for this class. However, we have taken the opportunity to separate the various sub-classes and change the format, setting out the unique thresholds to the various descriptions under this class.

6.2 Table 2 below sets out the proposed changes to the Major Development Thresholds for Class 3 Transport Infrastructure.

Table 2.

SCHEDULE

Major Development Thresholds – Class 3 Transport Infrastructure

Description of Development	***Major Developments Threshold or Criteria***	***Major Developments prescribed for the purpose of section 26(1) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011***
3. Transport infrastructure. Construction of new or replacement:		
a) Railway Lines	The area of works is or exceeds 1 kilometre in length or 1 hectare.	a) Lines for long-distance railway traffic
b) Airport Runways	The area of works is or exceeds 1 kilometre in length or 1 hectare	b) the runway length is or exceeds 2100 metres
c) Port and Harbour Installations	The area of works is or exceeds 1 kilometre in length or 1 hectare	c) trading ports, piers for loading and unloading connected to land and outside ports (excluding ferry piers) which can take vessels of over 1,350 tonnes.
d) Waterways and transit ways	The area of works is or exceeds 1 kilometre in length or 1 hectare	d) Inland waterways and ports for inland waterway traffic which permit the passage of vessels of over 1,350 tonnes.

Q.3: Do you agree with the amendment proposals outlined in Class 3 - Transport Infrastructure to the Schedule of the Development Management Regulations?

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

If no, please outline suggestions for change and explain your reasoning.

7 Class 4 - Waste Infrastructure in the Schedule to The Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

7.1 Class 4 of the Schedule to the Development Management Regulations covers development and construction of facilities related to waste infrastructure for the purpose of waste management, treatment or disposal and also waste water treatment plants.

7.2 The Development Management Regulations prescribe a Major Development threshold for installations for the disposal, treatment or recovery of hazardous waste with a capacity for an annual intake of more than 25,000 tonnes. The Department proposes removing this threshold and instead requiring consultation with the Department for all development proposals within this class. However, the Department proposes no change to the separate threshold for Major Development prescribed for the purposes of section 26(1), under which an installation for the disposal, treatment or recovery of hazardous waste with a capacity for an annual intake of or more than 100,000 tonnes is treated as a development of regional significance.

7.3 The Development Management Regulations prescribe a Major Development threshold for waste disposal installations for the incineration or chemical treatment (as defined in Annex I to Directive 2008/98/EC under heading D9) of non-hazardous waste with a capacity exceeding 100 tonnes per day. The Regulations also prescribe for the purposes of section 26(1), a threshold for waste disposal installations for the incineration or chemical treatment of non-hazardous waste with a capacity for an annual intake exceeding 100,000 tonnes. The Department proposes changing the Major Development threshold from 100 tonnes per day to a capacity for an annual intake exceeding 25,000 tonnes. No change is proposed to the threshold prescribed for the purposes of section 26(1). The Department also proposes changing the description of the class to include landfill of non-hazardous waste.

7.4 Table 3 below sets out the proposed changes to the Major Development Thresholds for Class 4 Waste Infrastructure.

Table 3.

SCHEDULE

Major Development Threshold – Class 4 Waste Infrastructure

Description of Development	***Major Developments Threshold or Criteria***	***Major Developments prescribed for the purpose of section 26(1) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011***
4. Waste infrastructure.		
Construction of facilities for use for the purpose of waste management, disposal, recovery, or treatment.	Any proposal for hazardous waste.	Where the annual intake capacity of hazardous waste exceeds 100,000 tonnes per annum.
Waste disposal installations for the incineration orchemical treatment (as defined in Annex I to Directive 2008/98/EC under heading D9(5)) or **landfill** of non-hazardous waste (as defined in regulation 6 of the Hazardous Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005).	Where the annaul intake capacity of non- hazardous waste exceeds 25,000 tonnes per annum.	Where the annual intake capacity of non-hazardous waste exceeds 100,000 tonnes per annum.
Waste water treatment plants	With a capacity exceeding 50,000 population equivalent.	With a capacity exceeding 150,000 population equivalent as defined in Article 2 point (6) of Directive 91/271/EEC(5).

Q.4: Do you agree with the amendment proposals outlined in Class 4 - Waste Infrastructure to the Schedule of the Development Management Regulations?

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

If no, please outline suggestions for change and explain your reasoning.

8 Class 5 - Extractive Industry in the Schedule to The Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

8.1 The Department proposes re-formatting this Class by firstly changing the Class title from *Minerals* to *Extractive Industry*, along with reformatting the layout and descriptions. The proposals also include the introduction of a new subclass of *Exploration or extraction of geothermal energy* as well as the transfer of the *Extraction* subclass from Class 2 *Energy Infrastructure* to the newly titled Class 5 *Extractive Industry*.

8.2 While the layout of the subclasses for *Quarries and Open Cast Mining, Peat Extraction and Underground Mining* has been updated the Department proposes no changes to the thresholds for either Major Development or Major Development prescribed for section 26(1).

8.3 The Department proposes adding an additional subclass for the *Exploration and extraction of geothermal energy* to Class 5 *Extractive Industry*, and establishing a Major Development threshold for drilling of 200m and setting the threshold at 500m for Major Developments prescribed for section 26(1) development proposals.

8.4 The Department also proposes transferring the *Extraction* subclass from Class 2 *Energy Infrastructure* to the Class 5 *Extractive Industry* class under the heading *Petroleum and Natural Gas*. Both Major Development and section 26(1) development proposals will be categorised as any proposal relating to the exploration or extraction of hydrocarbons, with the Department being consulted on all development proposals under this class, this is considered a more appropriate fit for this type of development.

8.5 Table 4 below sets out the proposed changes to the Major Development Thresholds for Class 5 Extractive Industry.

Table 4.

SCHEDULE

Major Development Thresholds - Class 5 Extractive Industry

Description of Development	***Major Developments Threshold or Criteria***	***Major Developments prescribed for the purpose of section 26(1) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011***
5. Extractive Industry		
Quarries and Open Cast Mining	The area of the site is or exceeds 2 hectares.	The area of the site exceeds 25 hectares.
Peat Extraction	The area of the site is or exceeds 2 hectares.	The area of the site exceeds 150 hectares.
Underground Mining	The area of the site is or exceeds 2 hectares.	The area of the site is or exceeds 2 hectares.
Exploration or extraction of Geothermal Energy	Where the drilling is or exceeds 200m	Where the drilling is or exceeds 500m
Petroleum and natural gas	Any proposal relating to the exploration or extraction of hydrocarbons.	Any proposal relating to the exploration or extraction of hydrocarbons.

Q.5: Do you agree with the amendment proposals outlined in Class 5 - Extractive Industry to the Schedule of the Development Management Regulations?

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

If no, please outline suggestions for change and explain your reasoning.

9 Class 8 - Business, Industry, Storage and Distribution in the Schedule to The Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

9.1 We propose introducing a sub-class to Class 8 Business, Industry, Storage and Distribution for carbon capture installations as these installations are often associated with industrial activities. Carbon capture and storage (CCS) is a process by which carbon dioxide (CO_2) from industrial installations and other large-scale emission sources is separated before it is released into the atmosphere, then transported to a long-term storage location. The CO_2 is captured from a large point source, such as power stations, cement or steel plants, or natural gas processing facilities and is typically stored in a deep geological formation. Where the captured CO_2 is used, for example in enhanced oil recovery, the process is more accurately described as carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS), which is a broader term that encompasses CCS and the utilisation of captured CO_2.

9.2 Table 5 below sets out the proposed changes to the Major Development Thresholds for Class 8 Business, Industry, Storage and Distribution.

Table 5.

SCHEDULE

Major Development Thresholds - Class 8 Business, Industry, Storage and Distribution

Description of Development	***Major Developments Threshold or Criteria***	***Major Developments prescribed for the purpose of section 26(1) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011***
8. Business, Industry (Light and General), Storage and Distribution		
According to Part B of the Schedule to the Planning (Use Classes) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.	a) development that comprises 5,000 sq metres or more gross floorspace; or b) the area of the site is or exceeds 1 hectare.	
Carbon Capture Installations	Any proposals related to the underground storage / sequestration of carbon.	Any proposals related to the underground storage / sequestration of carbon.

Q.6: Do you agree with the amendment proposals outlined in Class 8 - Business, Industry, Storage and Distribution to the Schedule of the Development Management Regulations?

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

If no, please outline suggestions for change and explain your reasoning.

10 Class 9 - Any Other Development in the Schedule to The Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

10.1 The Department proposes the following amendment to the Class 9 *All other development* narrative as follows – '*Development not falling within any class or sub-class of development described in Parts 1 – 8 above'*. This removes the words "wholly" and "single" from the class description to clarify the requirement and the threshold.

10.2 Table 6 below sets out the proposed changes to the Major Development Thresholds for Class 9 All other Development.

Table 6.

SCHEDULE

Major Development Thresholds - Class 9 All Other Development

Description of Development	***Major Developments Threshold or Criteria***	***Major Developments prescribed for the purpose of section 26(1) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011***
9. All other development.		
Development not falling within any class or sub-class of development described in Parts 1 to 8 above.	a) development that comprises 5,000 sq metres or more gross floorspace; or b) the area of the site is or exceeds 1 hectare.	

Q.7: Do you agree with the amendment proposals outlined in Class 9 - All Other Development to the Schedule of the Development Management Regulations?

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

If no, please outline suggestions for change and explain your reasoning.

11 Draft Statutory Rule amending The Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2026 No.

PLANNING

The Planning (Development Management) (Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026

Made - - - - ***

Coming into Operation - ***

The Department for Infrastructure, in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 25(2), and 247(1) and (6) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011([9]) makes the following Regulations.

Citation, commencement

1.—(1) These Regulations may be cited as the Planning (Development Management) (Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026 and come into operation on ******.

Amendment to the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

2. — (1) In regulation 3(b) after "5" insert "and 8".

(2) Subsitute the Schedule (Major Development Thresholds) to the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 as set out in these regulations.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department for Infrastructure on XXXX

L.S.

Rosemary Daly
A senior officer of the
Department for Infrastructure

([9]) 2011 c.25 (NI)

SCHEDULE Regulation 2

SUBSTITUTION OF THE SCHEDULE TO THE PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2015

"SCHEDULE Regulations 2 and 3

Major Development Thresholds

1. In the Table below –

"airport" means an airport which complies with the definition in the 1944 Chicago Convention setting up the International Civil Aviation Organisation (Annex 14)([10]),

"area of works" includes any area occupied by apparatus, equipment, machinery, materials, plant, spoil heaps or other facilities or stores required for construction or installation;

"floorspace" means floorspace in a building or buildings,

"electricity storage" means a facility that stores electricity within electrochemical battery systems for subsequent discharge as electricity.

2. The Table below sets out the classes of development belonging to the category of major development.

Description of Development	***Major Developments Threshold or Criteria***	***Major Developments prescribed for the purpose of section 26(1) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011***
1. EIA development.	Development of a description in paragraph; 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, and 24; mentioned in Schedule 1 to The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017.	Development of a description in paragraph 1, 3, 22, 23 and 24 mentioned in Schedule 1 to The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017.
2. Energy infrastructure. Generation: <u>Heat generating stations</u> The construction of an on-shore heat generating station (when constructed or extended). <u>Electricity generating stations</u> The construction of an on-shore electricity generating station (when constructed or extended).	Where its capacity is or exceeds 10 megawatts. Where its capacity is or exceeds 10 megawatts.	Where its capacity is or exceeds 30 megawatts. Where its capacity is or exceeds 75 megawatts

S.I. 1994/426 (N.I.1).

Onshore development associated with the construction of an off-shore electricity generating station.	All proposals.	Where its capacity is or exceeds 75 megawatts.
Energy Storage:		
Thermal Energy Storage The development of a facility for the storage of energy in thermal form above or below ground.	Where its capacity is or exceeds 200 megawatt-hours.	Where the total maximum stored thermal energy capacity exceeds 1 gigawatt-hour.
Electricity Storage The development of an electricity storage facility which consists of Battery Energy Storage.	Where its capacity is or exceeds 200 megawatt-hours.	Where the rated energy storage capacity exceeds 1 gigawatt-hour.
Mechanical Energy Storage The development of a facility for the storage of energy in mechanical form.	Where its capacity is or exceeds 200 megawatt-hours.	Where the maximum stored mechanical energy capacity exceeds 1 gigawatt-hour.
Chemical Energy Storage Installations for the above ground storage of energy in chemical form (Excluding Battery Energy Storage).	Where its stored energy capacity is or exceeds 1 gigawatt-hour.	Where the total maximum energy content of stored materials exceeds 5 gigawatt-hours.
Installations for the below ground storage of energy in chemical form (Excluding Battery Energy Storage).	Where its stored energy capacity is or exceeds 500 megawatt-hours.	Where the total maximum energy content of stored substances exceeds 2 gigawatt-hours.
Transmission / distribution:		
Pipelines		
Pipelines for the transport of gas/oil/chemicals or for the transport of carbon dioxide streams for the purposes of geological storage, including associated booster stations.	With a diameter of more than 400 millimetres or a length of more than 20 kilometres.	With a diameter of more than 800 millimetres or a length of more than 40 kilometres.
Electrical power lines		
The installation of an electrical power line.	Where the voltage exceeds 33 kilovolts if the purpose of the line is the provision of a supply to more than one customer.	Where the voltage: -is 110 kilovolts double circuit overhead line; or -is or exceeds 275 kilovolts, and a length of more than 15 kilometres.

3. Transport infrastructure. <u>Construction of new or replacement:</u>		
a) Railway Lines	The area of works is or exceeds 1 kilometre in length or 1 hectare.	Lines for long-distance railway traffic.
b) Airport Runways	The area of works is or exceeds 1 kilometre in length or 1 hectare.	Runway length is or exceeds 2,100 metres.
c) Port and Harbour Installations	The area of works is or exceeds 1 kilometre in length or 1 hectare.	Trading ports, piers for loading and unloading connected to land and outside ports (excluding ferry piers) which can take vessels of over 1,350 tonnes.
d) Waterways and Transit Ways	The area of works is or exceeds 1 kilometre in length or 1 hectare.	Inland waterways and ports for inland waterway traffic which permit the passage of vessels of over 1,350 tonnes.
4. Waste infrastructure. <u>Waste Management Facilities</u>		
Construction of facilities for use for the purpose of waste management, recovery, treatment or disposal.	Any proposal for hazardous waste.	Where the annual intake capacity of hazardous waste exceeds 100,000 tonnes per annum.
Waste disposal installations for the incineration, chemical treatment (as defined in Annex I to Directive 2008/98/EC), of the European Parliament and of the Council on waste and repealing certain directives under heading D9) or landfill of non-hazardous waste (as defined in regulation 6 of the Hazardous Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005).	Where the annual intake capacity of non- hazardous waste exceeds 25,000 tonnes per annum.	Where the annual intake capacity of non- hazardous waste exceeds 100,000 tonnes per annum.
<u>Waste Water</u>	Waste water treatment plants with a capacity exceeding 50,000 population equivalent.	Waste water treatment plants with a capacity exceeding 150,000 population equivalent as defined in Article 2 point (6) of Directive 91/271/EEC(5).
5. Extraction Industry. a) Quarries and Open Cast Mining.	The area of the site is or exceeds 2 hectares.	The surface of the site exceeds 25 hectares.

b) Peat Extraction.	The area of the site is or exceeds 2 hectares.	The surface of the site exceeds 150 hectares.
c) Underground Mining.	The area of the site is or exceeds 2 hectares.	The surface of the site is or exceeds 2 hectares.
d) Exploration or extraction of Geothermal Energy.	Where the drilling is or exceeds 200m.	Where the drilling is or exceeds 500m.
e) Petroleum and natural gas.	Any proposal relating to the exploration or extraction of hydrocarbons.	Any proposal relating to the exploration or extraction of hydrocarbons.
6. Housing. Construction of buildings, structures or erections for use as residential accommodation; includes private schemes.	a) development that comprises 50 units or more; or b) the area of the site is or exceeds 2 hectares.	
7. Retailing, Community, Recreation and Culture. (according to Parts A and D of the Schedule to the Planning (Use Classes) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015). Including cultural and community facilities, retail, leisure and entertainment development.	a) development that comprises 1,000 sq metres or more gross floorspace outside town centres; or b) the area of the site is or exceeds 1 hectare.	
8. Business, Industry (Light and General), Storage and Distribution. (according to Part B of the Schedule to the Planning (Use Classes) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015). Carbon Capture Installations	a) development that comprises 5,000 sq metres or more gross floorspace; or b) the area of the site is or exceeds 1 hectare. Any proposals related to the underground storage / sequestration of carbon.	Any proposals related to the underground storage / sequestration of carbon.
9. All other development. Development not falling within any class or sub-class of development described in Parts 1 to 8 above.	a) development that comprises 5,000 sq metres or more gross floorspace; or b) the area of the site is or exceeds 1 hectare.	

"

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Committee:	Regeneration and Growth Committee
Date:	5 November 2026
Report from:	Head of Planning and Capital Development

Item for:	Noting
Subject:	Change to Adult: Child Ratios - Childminding

1.0 **Background**

1. On 23 July 2026 the Minimum Standards for Childminding and Day Care Review Team from the Department of Health wrote to the Council to advise that from 9 November 2026 a single registered childminder will be permitted to:
   - care for a maximum of two children under 18 months (rather than the current limit of one child under 12 months);
   - care for no more than three children under compulsory school-age, or four where two or more of the children being minded together are siblings and at least one of them is under school-age, in which case the maximum number of under school-age children is four; and
   - care for up to eight children under 12, including their own children (no more than six children under age eight).

2. Currently the advice offered in the supplementary planning guidance (SPG) issued with the Plan Strategy in September 2023 states at page 12 that:

   Persons who wish to use their own homes for child minding will not normally require planning permission for such a use where the number of children is restricted to 6 or less. Other factors such as hours of operation, size of premises, potential traffic hazards, etc, may however have important implications in particular situations and in such cases a planning application may be necessary.

3. Page 19 of the SPG goes on to say:

   Homeworking does not necessarily require planning permission. Permission is not normally required where the use of part of a dwelling house for business purposes does not change the overall character of the property's use as a single dwelling, for example, the use by a householder of a room as an office or the provision of a child-minding service.

   With regard to this latter example, the Council considers that persons who wish to use their homes for child-minding will not normally require planning permission where the number of children does not exceed six. This is based on the maximum number of children between the ages of 0- 12 years (including their own children) that child-minders registered by the Health & Social Care Trust can care for.

4. The greater flexibility offered to childminders by the Minister requires the supplementary guidance to be updated to be consistent with Department of Health advice above.

5. It does not alter the requirement for registered childminders working from home to assure themselves that they are acting lawfully and within the balance of the criteria set out in the guidance for home working at page 19 of the SPG.

6. Officers will be briefed that it is for the registered childminder to assure themselves that they are operating in accordance with the published guidance as amended. Should the childminder be in any doubt they should apply for a Certificate of Lawfulness.

Key Issues

1. Currently, the Local Development Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) at pages 12 and 19 advises there is no requirement for planning permission where a person wishes to use their home to care for six children or less.

2. Members should note that it is proposed to amend the published SPG at page 12 to read:

   Persons who wish to use their own homes for child minding will not normally require planning permission for such a use. Factors such as hours of operation, size of premises, potential traffic hazards, etc, may however have important implications in particular situations and in such cases a planning application may be necessary

3. It should be noted that it is further proposed to amend page 19 to read:

   Homeworking does not necessarily require planning permission. Permission is not normally required where the use of part of a dwelling house for business purposes does not change the overall character of the property's use as a single dwelling, for example, the use by a householder of a room as an office or the provision of a child-minding service.

   With regard to this latter example, the Council considers that persons who wish to use their homes for child-minding will not normally require planning permission where the number of children does not exceed the maximum number of children between the ages of 0- 12 years (including their own children) that child-minders registered by the Health & Social Care Trust can care for.

4. The amendment will be operative from 09 November 2026. The wording will also allow for any future amendment to the current Department of Health guidance without the need to amend the SPG.

2.0 **Recommendation**

Members are asked to note the above amendments to the supplementary planning guidance of the Lisburn and Castlereagh Local Development Plan 2032

3.0	**Finance and Resource Implications** There are no finance or resource implications.	
4.0	**Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments**	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions **or** rationale why the screening was not carried out	N/A
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions **or** rationale why the screening was not carried out.	N/A

Appendices:	Appendix 3 -Extract from Local Development Plan 2032 – Supplementary Planning Guidance

APPENDIX 1

Extract from Supplementary Planning Guidance (P12)
Lisburn & Castlrereagh Local Development Plan 20232

Homeworking

Many small businesses are started by people working in their own homes, and technological innovations are likely to increase the incidence of homeworking. This will be particularly important in rural areas where modern communications permit businesses to be located without any major disadvantage.

Homeworking does not necessarily require planning permission. Permission is not normally required where the use of part of a dwelling house for business purposes does not change the overall character of the property's use as a single dwelling, for example, the use by a householder of a room as an office or the provision of a child-minding service.

With regard to this latter example, the Council considers that persons who wish to use their homes for child-minding will not normally require planning permission where the number of children does not exceed six.

This is based on the maximum number of children between the ages of 0- 12 years (including their own children) that child-minders registered by the Health & Social Care Trust can care for. This advice now takes precedence over the provisions of Development Control Advice Note 13 ‘Crèches, Day Nurseries and Pre-School Playgroups’ (1993) insofar as it relates to childminding.

Those considering working from home are advised to seek the advice of the Council’s Planning Department at an early stage. Homeworking is likely to be ancillary to the residential use if:

- work is carried out primarily by persons living in the residential unit;
- the business use is clearly secondary to the main use of the property as a dwelling house;
- the use is carried out totally within the building;
- there will be no loss of amenity for neighbouring residents, for example, from noise, advertising, impact on visual amenity or traffic generation; and
- the use is not one which by its nature would attract more than occasional visitors.

Where the business activity increases and the non-residential use of the property ceases to be ancillary to its use as a single dwelling, a material change of use for which planning permission is required is likely to have taken place. The likelihood of there having been such a material change of use may be indicated where the following have occurred:

- a significant alteration to the appearance of the dwelling;
- a significant increase in the volume of visitors or traffic;
- a significant increase in noise, fumes or smell;
- the installation of special machinery or equipment not normally found in a dwelling; and,
- the laying out of rooms in such a way that they could not easily revert to residential use at the end of the working day.

APPENDIX

Extract from Supplementary Planning Guidance (P12)
Lisburn & Castlrereagh Local Development Plan 20232

Homeworking

Many small businesses are started by people working in their own homes, and technological innovations are likely to increase the incidence of homeworking. This will be particularly important in rural areas where modern communications permit businesses to be located without any major disadvantage.

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With regard to this latter example, the Council considers that persons who wish to use their homes for child-minding will not normally require planning permission where the number of children does not exceed six.

This is based on the maximum number of children between the ages of 0- 12 years (including their own children) that child-minders registered by the Health & Social Care Trust can care for. This advice now takes precedence over the provisions of Development Control Advice Note 13 ‘Crèches, Day Nurseries and Pre-School Playgroups’ (1993) insofar as it relates to childminding.

Those considering working from home are advised to seek the advice of the Council’s Planning Department at an early stage. Homeworking is likely to be ancillary to the residential use if:

- work is carried out primarily by persons living in the residential unit;
- the business use is clearly secondary to the main use of the property as a dwelling house;
- the use is carried out totally within the building;
- there will be no loss of amenity for neighbouring residents, for example, from noise, advertising, impact on visual amenity or traffic generation; and
- the use is not one which by its nature would attract more than occasional visitors.

Where the business activity increases and the non-residential use of the property ceases to be ancillary to its use as a single dwelling, a material change of use for which planning permission is required is likely to have taken place. The likelihood of there having been such a material change of use may be indicated where the following have occurred:

- a significant alteration to the appearance of the dwelling;
- a significant increase in the volume of visitors or traffic;
- a significant increase in noise, fumes or smell;
- the installation of special machinery or equipment not normally found in a dwelling; and,
- the laying out of rooms in such a way that they could not easily revert to residential use at the end of the working day.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Committee:	Regeneration & Growth Committee
Date:	5 November 2026
Report from:	Director of Regeneration and Growth

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Notice of Motion re Further Education Colleges

1.0 **Background and Key Issues**

1. The undernoted Notice of Motion (**and see Appendix**) was brought to the Council by Councillor Gretta Thompson and seconded by Alderman Allan Ewart, and has been referred to the Regeneration and Growth Committee in accordance with Standing Order 16.1.

"This Council:

Notes with concern reports that Further Education colleges across Northern Ireland are being forced to reduce student enrolments for the 2026/27 academic year due to funding pressures, with thousands of prospective learners losing access to education and training opportunities.

Recognises the vital role Further Education colleges play in supporting young people, apprentices, adult learners, those returning to education, and workers seeking to retrain or upskill.

Acknowledges that many sectors facing skills shortages, including construction, manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality and digital industries, rely on colleges to provide a pipeline of skilled workers.

Further recognises that reductions in essential skills, ESOL, community education and evening courses risk disproportionately impacting those from disadvantaged backgrounds, people returning to work, and those seeking pathways into employment.

Council therefore resolves to:

- Write to the Minister for the Economy expressing concern at the impact of reduced Further Education provision on learners, employers and economic development.
- Seek a briefing from local FE college representatives on the implications of the planned reductions for residents and employers within this council area.
- Explore how the council's own employability, economic development and skills programmes can support affected learners and help address local skills shortages.

2.0	**Recommendation** It is recommended that Members consider the Notice of Motion and take such action as may be determined.	
3.0	**Finance and Resource Implications** Implications are unknown at this stage, pending agreement by the Committee.	
4.0	**Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments**	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions **or** rationale why the screening was not carried out This is a new matter brought before Committee. Any required assessments against planned agreed programmes will be carried out in due course and subject to further consideration by Committee.	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions **or** rationale why the screening was not carried out. This is a new matter brought before Committee. Any required assessments against planned agreed programmes will be carried out in due course and subject to further consideration by Committee.	

Appendices:	Appendix 4 – Notice of Motion

NOTICE OF MOTION

This Council:

Notes with concern reports that Further Education colleges across Northern Ireland are being forced to reduce student enrolments for the 2026/27 academic year due to funding pressures, with thousands of prospective learners losing access to education and training opportunities.

Recognises the vital role Further Education colleges play in supporting young people, apprentices, adult learners, those returning to education, and workers seeking to retrain or upskill.

Acknowledges that many sectors facing skills shortages, including construction, manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality and digital industries, rely on colleges to provide a pipeline of skilled workers.

Further recognises that reductions in essential skills, ESOL, community education and evening courses risk disproportionately impacting those from disadvantaged backgrounds, people returning to work, and those seeking pathways into employment.

Council therefore resolves to:

- Write to the Minister for the Economy expressing concern at the impact of reduced Further Education provision on learners, employers and economic development.
- Seek a briefing from local FE college representatives on the implications of the planned reductions for residents and employers within this council area.
- Explore how the council's own employability, economic development and skills programmes can support affected learners and help address local skills shortages.

Signed

Cllr Gretta Thompson

Signed:

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Committee:	Regeneration & Growth
Date:	5 November 2025
Report from:	Director of Regeneration & Growth

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Change of date and time of Committees

1.0 **Background**

1. Within the Standing Orders the rescheduling of the date and/or time of Committee meetings is determined by the respective Committee.

Key Issues

1. The December meeting of the Regeneration & Growth Committee is due to take place on the same evening as some community events and therefore agreement is required to bring forward the Committee meeting start time to 5.00pm on 3 December to accommodate Members' attendance at these community events.

2. To finalise the annual Estimates process and the setting of the District Rates, officers are currently scheduling special Council and Corporate Services meetings in February 2027. Consequently, it has been requested that the Regeneration and Growth Committee considers the rescheduling of the February 2027 meeting. Members are therefore asked to consider rescheduling the February Committee to Thursday 11 February 2027 at the usual time of 6pm.

2.0 **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Committee agrees to:

1. The rescheduling of the time of the Regeneration & Growth Committee on 3 December to 5.00pm.
2. The rescheduling of the date of the February 2027 Regeneration & Growth Committee to Thursday 11 February 2027 at the usual time of 6pm.

3.0 **Finance and Resource Implications**

No additional finance or resource implications

4.0 **Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments**

4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out on the proposal/project/policy?	N/A
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions **or** rationale why the screening was not carried out	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	N/A

4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions **or** rationale why the screening was not carried out.	

Appendices:	N/A