

Northern Health and Social Care Trust Board Meeting in Public - Cover Sheet

Subject:	Birch Hill Centre for Mental Health Capital Scheme		Date of Meeting: 27 November 2025	
Prepared By:	Simon Daly, Head of Capital Projects Mental Health			
Approved By:	Alison Renfrew, Assistant Director of Capital Development			
Presented By:	Petra Corr, Director of MHLDPs			
Purpose				
To provide an update on progress with the Birch Hill Centre for Mental Health project, for noting.			Approval	
			Assurance	
			Update	
			Noting	✓
Strategic Objectives				
Build Northern Partnerships and Integrate Care	Continue to improve Outcomes & Experience	Deliver value by optimising Resources	Nurture our People, Enable our Talent & Build Our Teams	Improve population Health & address health & social care inequalities
•	•		•	•
Risk – please note if links to any principal, corporate or divisional risk				
Corporate Risks	A new build will reduce the ligature related issues and incidents of violence and aggression to a rating of 12 on the Trust Risk Register. Not compliant at present, high rating of 20. A new build may reduce the current inability to secure acute psychiatric beds to a rating of 12 on Trust Risk Register. Not compliant at present, high rating of 25.			
Committees/groups where this item has been presented before				
Executive Team				
Acronyms				
Executive Summary				
Mental Health Inpatient Addendum: The revised Addendum for the Mental Health Inpatient Service / Birch Hill Business Case and associated query responses were submitted to the DoH and SPPG on 21 October 2025. DoH have classified Birch Hill Mental Health Project as one of the 12 Partially Committed Projects (PCPs). Capital funding allocations have not been made to the PCPs for 2025/26. While the hope is that sufficient funding will be available to allow the PCPs to progress, this will depend on the outcome from the NI Executive Budget 2026 Process. DoH have advised the Trust that in the current funding context, and to avoid nugatory activity, the Addendum to the OBC for the proposed new Mental Health Inpatient Hospital at NHSCT will only be formally reviewed by DoH Economic Analysis & Business Case Unit and other Departmental officials when the DoH capital budget is confirmed and there is greater certainty in respect of when funding will be available for the project.				

We provide compassionate care with our community, in our community

Trust Board Reference Number: TB168/18/N

NI Assembly Adjournment Debate: A motion was brought by Declan Kearney MLA: “The urgency of delivering the Birch Hill Centre for Mental Health” on 18th November 2025. Overall, those in attendance were extremely supportive of the need for Birch Hill to be progressed.

It was acknowledged that Northern Ireland has the highest incidence of mental health illness in the UK and the provision of high-quality mental health care is seen as a critical priority within the community. Many present described visits to Holywell Hospital and how the conditions from which staff are managing every care for patients was untenable. It also noted the outline business case gained original approval in August 2020 and planning permission was granted in 2024. Without Birch Hill the Trust’s strategic vision aimed at optimising patient assessment, treatment and recovery, cannot be realised.

Consequently, the members called for an urgent decision as to the commitment of funding for Birch Hill as the facilities at Holywell Hospital are at breaking point.