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**Committee and Members' Services Section**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Adelaide Exchange**  
**24-26 Adelaide Street**  
**Belfast BT2 8GD**



20<sup>th</sup> October, 2008

**SPECIAL MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Dear Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Council Chamber, 3rd Floor, Adelaide Exchange on Monday, 27th October, 2008 at 10.00 am, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully

PETER McNANEY

Chief Executive

**AGENDA:**

1. Routine Matters
  - (a) Apologies
2. Department for Social Development's Retail Sequencing Policy (Pages 1 - 2)

In pursuance of the Committee's decision of 13<sup>th</sup> August to receive presentations from representatives of Westfield Shoppingtowns Limited and William Ewart Properties Limited regarding their respective developments.

**Belfast City Council**

<b>Report to:</b>	Special Development Committee Meeting
<b>Subject:</b>	DSD Retail Sequencing Policy
<b>Date:</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> October 2008
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Marie-Therese McGivern Director of Development, Ext: 3470
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, Ext: 3459 Pamela Davison, Estates Surveyor, Ext: 3506

**Relevant Background Information**

Members will recall that at the Development Committee meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2008 it had deferred consideration of a report regarding the Department for Social Development Retail Sequencing Policy to enable a planning advisory report entitled Major Retail Led Redevelopments Proposals for Belfast City Centre which had been prepared by Braniff Associates on behalf of the Council to be circulated to the Members.

The Braniff report concluded that Council review the situation of major retail-led regeneration schemes in three years time in 2011. By this time, the after shocks from the opening of Victoria Square will have passed and the Royal Exchange project will hopefully be at an advanced stage. The firm recommendation of the report is that Council should withhold its proactive support for Westfield's proposal to accelerate the sequencing process at this particular time.

The report had been prepared to assist the Committee to consider its response to a request from Westfield Shoppingtowns Limited for the Council to support the company's proposal to bring forward the project for the extension of Castlecourt within the Department for Social Development's Sequencing Policy on retail led regeneration in the city. Westfield made a presentation to Committee of their proposals for the Castlecourt area on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2007.

Committee agreed at their meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2008 that a special meeting be held to enable it to be provided with an update regarding the situation and to receive presentations from Westfield, Ewarts the developers of Royal Exchange and the Department for Social Development.

Presentations will be received at meeting from Westfield and Ewarts and representatives of the Department for Social Development will be in attendance.

**Key Issues**

The Planning Advisory Report concluded that there will be capacity for another substantial retail development in Belfast City Centre some time in the future. This scheme will be in addition to the Royal Exchange scheme selected by DSD as the next major retail led regeneration scheme in Belfast City Centre. The analysis conducted for the Council would suggest that all spare capacity for additional floor space in Belfast City Centre has been exhausted by the opening of Victoria Square and the commitment to Royal Exchange. The evidence suggests that there will be no extra income in the population for retail expenditure until 2015.

The key statutory bodies are agreed that there is a need to encourage mixed – use development in the North West Quarter that is sympathetic to the historic streetscape and which enhances the permeability of the area. Westfield’s previous presentation to Committee recognises the need for high levels of design within any future scheme. Westfield have not yet submitted a planning application based on the presentation to Committee and are reluctant to commit to the expenditure on the fresh application without the certainty that DSD will set aside the sequencing of major retail led regeneration schemes. Westfield could extend and refurbish Castlecourt now by private land acquisition and submission of a planning application rather than wait for the support of the DSD’s land assembly powers.

DSD have informed BCC officers that they would consider bringing forward a scheme at the Castlecourt site if it represented a major change in the retail offer in the city centre and created a significant point of difference for example similar to the John Lewis proposals for major new development stores in the city centres of Cardiff and Dublin. Westfield had a meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2008 with the Minister for Social Development, Margaret Ritchie and Jackie Johnston of Belfast City Centre Regeneration Directorate. At a meeting with BCC officers on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2008 Cherton who act on behalf of Westfield advised that the meeting with DSD was not progressive.

**Resource Implications**

Asset

The Westfield Proposal will involve the relocation and disposal of the existing Smithfield Market.

Financial

The Westfield proposal is a £150 million development in the North West Quarter of The City.

**Recommendations**

Members are asked to move to make a decision as to whether or not in the light of the evidence and presentations received Belfast City Council can support Westfield’s request for an acceleration of the sequencing of major retail-led regeneration schemes in Belfast City Centre.

**Abbreviations**

Department - Department for Social Development  
Westfield - Westfield Shoppingtowns Limited