

Planning Committee

Wednesday, 31st August, 2022

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Whyte (Chairperson);
The High Sheriff, Councillor Hussey;
Alderman Rodgers;
Councillors Bower, Carson, Douglas,
Garrett, Groogan, Hutchinson, Maskey,
Murphy and Spratt.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor;
Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management);
Ms. L. Walshe, Senior Planning Officer; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported for Councillors Matt Collins and Hanvey.

Declarations of Interest

The Chairperson (Councillor Whyte) declared an interest in relation to item 2a, LA04/2021/2856/O – Proposed mixed use regeneration development on lands surrounding the new Belfast Transport Hub, in that he had a professional relationship with the agent, Juno Planning. He left the meeting for the duration of the item.

Withdrawn Items

The Committee noted that the following item had been withdrawn from the agenda by the Applicant:

- LA04/2021/1231/O - Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 36. apartments in 2 blocks at 385 Holywood Road

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Planning Applications

**THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN PURSUANCE OF THE
POWERS DELEGATED TO IT BY THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 37(e)**

LA04/2021/2856/O - Proposed mixed use regeneration development comprising office (Class B1), residential apartments (including affordable), retail (Class A1), hotel, leisure (Class D2), public realm, active travel uses, cafes, bars and restaurants, and community uses (Class D1), on lands surrounding the new Belfast Transport Hub and over the Transport Hub car park, to the east and west of Durham St and south of Grosvenor Rd. At Lands to east of West Link (A12) and south of Grosvenor Road; Lands at Grosvenor Road and intersection of Grosvenor Road and Durham Street; Lands to the east of Durham Street and north of Glengall Street; Lands at Glengall Street; Lands between Glengall Street and Hope Street including Europa Bus Station, Great Victoria Rail Station surface car parks at St Andrew's Square; Translink lands to west of Durham Street, south of BT Exchange building and north of Murray's Tobacco Works

(The Chairperson, having declared an interest in the item, left the meeting while the item was under consideration.)

(Councillor Maskey in the Chair)

The Senior Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application for a mixed use regeneration development that would be comprised of office (Class B1), residential apartments (including affordable), retail (Class A1), hotel, leisure (Class D2), public realm, active travel uses, cafes, bars and restaurants, and community uses (Class D1), on lands surrounding the new Belfast Transport Hub and over the Transport Hub car park, to the east and west of Durham Street and south of Grosvenor Road..

She pointed out that there had been one late item, an additional representation which, in error, had not been included in the total number of representations within the report, however, it did not raise any further issues to that which had been contained within the case officer report.

She provided the Committee with aerial views of the site location plan and the Transport Hub planning permission site layout.

She pointed out that the Weaver's Cross Regeneration Project sought to redevelop lands which would be freed up by the future closure of the existing Europa Bus Station and Great Victoria Street train station and other vacant lands that were in the ownership of Translink, to the west of the Belfast Transport Hub development, and she outlined matters that would be reserved for subsequent approval, which included:

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- Siting;
- Design;
- External appearance;
- Means of access; and
- Landscaping.

She explained that, whilst most matters would be reserved, the application was supported by an Environmental Statement, an Indicative Scheme, a Planning and Design Principles document and a series of Parameters Plans.

The Senior Planning Officer referred to the main issues which were to be considered in the assessment of the outline applications, which included:

- The principle of the proposed uses at the locations;
- Regeneration, employment and investment;
- Housing, inclusive of affordable housing;
- Transportation, that included transport sustainability, parking and road safety;
- Impact on character and appearance of the area;
- Impact on amenity of nearby residents and businesses;
- Impact on built heritage and archaeology;
- Human health;
- Drainage and flood risk;
- Wastewater infrastructure;
- Natural heritage;
- Developer contributions and planning agreement; and
- Pre-application community consultation.

She referred the Committee to the Planning and Designed Principles document which contained seven key principles with which reserved matters applications must accord and outlined the parameter plans for the proposed Saltwater Square open space.

She stated that the City Fringe area had been designated as non-residential, however, a minimum of 21% of the total floorspace for all three zones would be residential, that would equate to 29% of the City Entries and Saltwater Square. She added that a minimum of 20% of the designated residential floorspace would be affordable.

She outlined the Developer Contributions to the scheme, a number of clauses would be included to secure key issues, that included:

- Minimum residential floorspace;
- Minimum 20% affordable residential floorspace;
- Green travel measures;
- Employability and skills, and
- Management of private spaces.

She informed the Committee that 159 representations had been received, which included 14 letters of support and the remaining having been considered as objections. She pointed out that the letters of support had welcomed the regeneration, investment and tourism

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potential, and that the majority of concerns which had been raised in objection referred to the demolition of the Boyne Bridge and the toucan crossing, both of which had been approved under the Transport Hub application by the Department for Infrastructure and were situated outside the red line of the application in front of the Committee.

She pointed out that all of the statutory consultees had responded with no objections, and that Belfast City Airport had stated that mitigations of tall buildings may be required, which had been included as a condition. She added that no non-statutory consultees had responded with objections, however, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive had pointed out that there is a social housing requirement in the area.

She concluded by stating that it was recommended that planning permission would be granted, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. W Dickson, Mr. B. McMahon and Mr. D. Hill to the meeting.

Mr. Hill informed the Committee that he had 38 years of experience working in the field of architecture. He stated that concerns about Translink's proposal had been well documented in the media and that he had two questions that he wished for the Committee to submit to Translink's Planning Consultants, Juno Planning:

- The Gunning Principles set out clearly how Consultation be carried out on large scale applications. Why had Translink not followed the Gunning Principles? and
- At a Consultation organised by Translink, on the top Floor of the Europa Hotel, in Spring 2017, 18 of the 19 people who spoke had serious concerns with regard to the buildings around the station, and Chris Conway, Chief Executive of Translink, had stated the concerns would be addressed in a Gateway Review, why had the review not taken place?

He concluded by stating that, should the Committee approve the application, he would undertake to submit a judicial review, which would delay the project and he asked the Committee to show civic leadership in the development of Belfast for future generations.

Mr. McMahon informed the Committee that he had worked for the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation and had worked in traffic management and engineering for the previous 30 years. He stated that he supported the concept but had a major concern regarding the safety of users of the Transport Hub.

He stated that he had voiced his concern regarding the traffic management plans since 2017 and had met with the consultants and that the implications of pedestrian crossings should be considered, as they were not necessarily a safe place to cross.

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. H. Harrison and Mr. L. McComb, Juno Planning, Ms. G. Thompson, Translink, Mr. D. McAllister, Weaver's Cross, Mr. C. Bennie, McAslan and Partners, to the meeting.

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Mr. McComb stated that the station was on programme to be opened in 2024 and would act as a catalyst for Weaver's Cross, a transport led regeneration project which would be to deliver a new city neighbourhood with a high-quality public realm at its heart.

He outlined the key benefits of the development to the Committee, which included:

- Support an environmentally conscious lifestyle amongst residents and travellers;
- Support the delivery of the Belfast agenda and A Bolder Vision;
- Provide employment and living space;
- Benefit to the local economy; and
- Regeneration through reconnection.

He stated that a development partner would be appointed the following year and would be required to be ready to commence on development sites and be able to demonstrate long term partnership working approaches, experience of placemaking and creativity while demonstrating strong social value credentials.

He concluded by stating that Weavers Cross' impact on the wider community would be of paramount importance and, alongside the right partner, would provide a unique opportunity to create significant social value for the local economy for 20 to 30 years.

Ms. Harrison provided the Committee with an overview of the public consultation which had been undertaken.

In response to questions raised by several Members regarding the demolition of the Boyne Bridge, Ms. Harrison stated that the removal of the Boyne Bridge had been approved in 2019 through the previous Transport Hub works application.

After providing further clarifications to the Members, the Chairperson thanked the representatives for their presentation and they retired from the meeting.

The Committee approved the application and granted delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and the Section 76 Planning Agreement, to resolve anomalies identified by the Senior Urban Design Officer as appropriate, and to explore appropriate restrictions on hours of operation of the restaurants, bars, leisure, food and drink establishments.

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LA04/2022/0063/F - Construction of warehouse distribution facility, associated ancillary office, yards, car parking and access from Westbank Road. At Lands to the north east of 3 Westbank Road and immediately south west of the existing Stena Line Terminal, Belfast Harbour Estate

(Councillor Whyte, Chairperson, resumed the Chair)

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the application . He pointed out that DfI Roads had indicated that it had no objections to the application and recommended conditions, as contained within the Late Items Report.

He presented the Committee with outline maps, aerial views and proposed elevations and stated that there had been no objections from consultees and that the proposals were in keeping with the locality.

The Committee approved the application and granted delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and to deal with any DfI Roads comments or other issues that might arise.

LA04/2022/0853/F - Provision of a two-storey multi-purpose shared space building comprising main hall (to facilitate 3no. indoor pitches), changing and toilet facilities, kitchens, multi-function rooms. Car and cycle parking areas, service yard, perimeter fencing, temporary construction compound hoarding, associated external lighting and landscaping. Proposed vehicular and pedestrian accesses from Springfield Heights and Ballygomartin Road, service vehicles from Ballygomartin Road and all associated site works. At Site of the former Finlay's Factory SE of Ballygomartin Road, N of Moyard Crescent, NW of Springfield Heights and Springfield Park

The Senior Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the proposal accompanied by site location and layout maps and the proposed elevation imaging.

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. S. McDowell, Resolve Planning, on behalf of the Applicant, to the meeting. Ms. McDowell stated that the proposal would provide a range of integrated services and facilities that would include indoor leisure, community space, sport and wellbeing, education and multipurpose spaces.

She pointed out that the development would introduce significant landscaping and promote outdoor recreation on a derelict space which had been unused for a number of years.

She reported that the space would be managed by the Black Mountain Shared Space Partnership which aimed to bring together representatives from a number of representatives from the local communities to promote good relations within the interface area.

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She pointed out that all of the planning material matters which had been raised by single representation had been considered during the planning process.

The Committee approved the application and granted delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and to resolve any further issues that might be raised by DfI Rivers and any other matters.

Restricted Item

Update on the replacement Planning Portal

The Director of Planning and Building Control updated the Committee on the progress of the implementation of the new regional Planning IT System to be shared by Belfast City Council, nine other councils and the Department for Infrastructure.

The Committee noted the content of the report

Chairperson