



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) - Update
<b>Date:</b>	16 January 2008
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### Relevant Background Information

#### Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan

Stage 2 of the BMAP Public Local Inquiry, coordinated by the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC), for the purpose of considering objections to the Draft BMAP Plan commenced on 1 October 2007. The second phase of the inquiry has addressed the remaining strategic housing issues from Stage 1 and commenced consideration of the Site Specific issues for the different Council areas.

The Council submitted Stage 2 written statements to the PAC on the 23 August 2007. Following the subsequent exchange of evidence the Council directly participated in informal inquiry hearings in relation to remaining strategic housing issues and Belfast site specific issues including the Harbour Strategy; North Foreshore; Titanic Quarter; Gasworks Northern Fringe; Kennedy Way Park & Ride and the protection of urban trees. A summary of the main outcomes is included in **Appendix 1**. The participation was assisted by use of specialist witnesses who provided technical evidence to support the Council position at the Inquiry hearings and responded to any new evidence submitted by objectors or Planning Service. A summary of the issues submitted for written representation, as discussed at the August Development Committee only is included in **Appendix 2**.

The inquiry process will continue through into 2008 and is currently considering issues from the other local authority areas. The remaining participation will focus on sites outside of the Belfast Council area in which there is either a direct Council interest due to ownership or potential for development proposals that could have a broader impact e.g. Sprucefield.

### Key Issues

The full list of Stage 2 issues addressed by the Council is set out in **Appendix 2**. This report provides a summary of the more significant site specific issues for which the Council made representations at the informal inquiry sessions:

- Strategic Housing – The Council made representations on the following issues: BMAP contains no policy for sequencing and phasing the release of housing land; the issue of social housing and affordable housing is not addressed; the issue of windfall allowance and increased densities in Brownfield sites is not being considered before Greenfield land release. Planning Service stated that the site search sequence was carried out a draft plan stage and there was limited capacity therefore phasing was not a necessary; social housing will be addressed at development control stage where a needs assessment is shown; and windfall allowances. Increased densities were unknown factor that could not be adequately assessed.
- Belfast Harbour Strategy – the Harbour Commissioners made representations for the Port of Belfast to be designated a Special Economic Zone, in recognition of its strategic importance, with reference to be made in the policy to expedite planning processes in relation to future planning applications. Planning Service stated that the BMAP Harbour Strategy is already a positive policy which recognised the importance of the Harbour and did not agree to include a reference to expedite planning applications as this was considered an operational rather than plan matter.
- North Foreshore – Planning Service conceded at the hearing that Draft BMAP zoning BHA 19 for new open space in North Foreshore should be removed and the wider North Foreshore area zoned as one mixed use site on the basis that the policy text would specify that open space is a major component of the development. Roads Service conceded that any infrastructure improvements, that may be necessary for the development of North Foreshore, should be identified through a transport assessment at planning application stage rather than through a requirement in the Plan.
- Zoning BHA 01 Titanic Quarter - A Development Framework has been agreed with Planning Service therefore the Draft BMAP Zones A to G should be removed as they are overly prescriptive. Planning Service stated that it would continue to be necessary to restrict the size and type of office development in the Titanic Quarter area in order to protect the city centre and this would be reflected in policy.
- Gasworks Estate - The Council proposed the development of the Gasworks Northern Fringe through the extension of the Development Opportunity Site and Gateway designation through reference to the Masterplan for the site. Planning Service agreed to extend the Development Opportunity Site designation and the gateway designation to reflect the current Masterplan process for the Northern Fringe and the scale of development that could be accommodated.
- Kennedy Way Park & Ride - The Council made representations challenging the location of the proposed site at Kennedy Way and seeking consideration of the potential for existing provisions at Blacks Road and Sprucefield to be made permanent. It was suggested that the proposed location was too close to the city centre and could have detrimental affect on the air quality in the vicinity. The Roads Service response stated that Kennedy Way was as part of an overall park & ride strategy for the city and it would be problematic to continue use of existing temporary sites due to capacity and land acquisition issues.
- Urban Trees - The Council made a representation seeking inclusion of a statement regarding the importance of urban trees and commitment to protect trees through monitoring and enforcement. The Department recognised there was merit of protecting urban trees and that a statement should be included in Draft BMAP.

### **Resource Implications**

#### Financial

No additional financial implications in respect of participation in the public inquiry process.

### **Recommendations**

Members are asked to:

- note the information set out in **Appendix 1** in relation to Stage 2 of the Inquiry

### **Key to Abbreviations**

BMAP	–	Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan
RDS	–	Regional Development Strategy
PAC	–	Planning Appeals Commission
SEL	–	Strategic Employment Location
MEL	–	Major Employment Location

### **Documents Attached**

- Appendix 1** – Stage 2 participation summary  
**Appendix 2** – Stage 2 written representations summary

# APPENDIX 1

## **Appendix 1**

In addition to the 41 written submissions Council officers attended a total of 13 inquiry sessions during Stage 2 of the BMAP Inquiry between 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008 and 7<sup>th</sup> November 2008. This attendance was required to: monitor the sessions for issues where the Council had submitted “Written representations”; ensure the Council could respond to potential counter objectors and present evidence directly or through the use of specialist consultants.

The Council participated at 8 sessions as part of the Stage 2 process. A summary of the main Site Specific issues for which the Council was represented at Stage 2 are outlined below:

### **Strategic Housing**

In response to the Planning Service paper (June 2007) on distribution of housing growth as a result of the revised Housing Growth Indicators figures the Council made representations reiterating a number of issues raised at stage 1:

- There is no policy for sequencing and phasing the release housing land
- Planning Service did not carry out any further Urban Capacity Studies or densities studies
- The issue of social housing and affordable housing is not addressed
- The scoring mechanism was welcomed to assess sites but the criteria was viewed as having a green field bias
- The issue of windfall allowance and increased densities in Brownfield sites is not fully assessed and should be considered before Greenfield housing land release.

The Planning Service comments or responses to the issues were:

- The site search sequence was carried out at draft plan stage and there was limited capacity therefore phasing was not seen as necessary.
- The windfall allowance and increased densities is an unknown entity and could not be adequately assessed.

### **Belfast Harbour Strategy**

Representations from other bodies were made on a number of issues;

- For BMAP to identify the Port of Belfast as a Special Economic Zone recognising its strategic importance.
- A reference in the policy to expedite planning processes in relation to planning applications for the Harbour area
- The inclusion of D3 site within the Harbour Lands
- The designation of the Harbour area as a SEL rather than a MEL. There is no policy context for a MEL in the RDS.

The Planning Service comments or responses to the issues were:

- The BMAP Harbour Strategy is a positive policy which recognises the importance of the Harbour. Any policy restrictions relate to protecting the primary role of Belfast City centre and environmental protection. There is no policy context to allow for the designation of a Special Economic Zone
- Planning Service did not consider it appropriate to include a reference to “expedite planning applications relating to the Harbour” as this was an operational and not a development plan matter.
- Planning Service agreed that D3 could be zoned as port related land if Environment and Heritage Service provided approval.

## **North Foreshore**

Council representations were made on a number of issues;

- Objected to the Draft BMAP BHA 19 open space zoning on North Foreshore as it did not reflect the actual site and could restrict future development options.
- Objected to the Key Site Requirements under Zoning BHA 07 relating to the necessity for an upgrade of the Fortwilliam junction for the development of the North Foreshore site and additional protection of landscape elements.

Representations on behalf of the Harbour were made on the following issues;

- Seeking the inclusion of the term 'port related uses' in the key site requirements.
- Objecting and requesting the removal of the Park & Ride from the North Foreshore Key Site Requirements.

The Planning Service comments or responses to the issues were:

- It was conceded at the start of the inquiry hearing that the Draft BMAP zonings BHA 19 for proposed new open space in North Foreshore should be removed and the whole North Foreshore area zoned as one mixed use site. The policy text should specify that open space is a major component of the site.
- It was agreed that the Article 40 reference in relation to landscaping would be removed from the policy box but stated it should be included in the amplification text to give clarity.
- Roads Service stated that Park & Ride was considered necessary in this location as an alternative to the private car and as part of an overall park & ride strategy for the city.
- There was no objection to including the use of the term 'port related use' within the key site requirements. The Council counter objected to this objection and requested that the term 'port related uses' should not be added to the key site requirements as the reference to port related uses in the amplification text was adequate. The Council stated to the PAC that the primary role of the site was for waste management and environmental businesses and that the existing zoning does not exclude Port Related uses.

## **Zoning BHA 01 Titanic Quarter**

Representations were made on the following main issues

- Consultants on behalf of Titanic Quarter made the following representations - a Development Framework has been agreed with Planning Service therefore the Zones A to G should be removed as they are overly prescriptive
- Titanic Quarter also sought to increase the floor space allowance for Office Use Class B1 (A) from 5,000 sq m to 80,000 sq m.
- The consultants on behalf of Titanic Quarter also sought to change the reference from 10%-15% social housing to affordable housing
- The Council whilst supporting the principle of development in Titanic Quarter highlighted the necessity of ensuring development is complementary to the City Centre. The Council made a representation as a counter objector to the relaxation of office policy within Titanic Quarter. The increase in the restriction of floorspace from 5,000 to 80,000 sq m would be detrimental to the regeneration of the city centre and it was argued that the exception already included in BMAP Office Policy, that offices which could not be catered for in the city centre could be located in TQ, provided adequate flexibility.

The Planning Service comments or responses to the issues were:

- Reaffirmation that it was necessary to restrict the size and type of office development in the Titanic Quarter area in order to protect the city centre
- Concession that removal of the policy reference to Zones A to G to simplify the Titanic Quarter policy in line with the agreed Development Framework.
- Agreement that the social housing reference could change to affordable housing.

### **Gasworks Estate**

Council representations;

- Proposed the development of the Gasworks Northern Fringe through the extension of the Development Opportunity Site and Gateway designation with reference made to the Masterplan for the site.

The Planning Service comments or responses to the issues were:

- Following detailed discussion agreement that the Development Opportunity Site designation and the gateway designation could be extended to reflect the current Masterplan process for the Northern Fringe.

### **Kennedy Way Park & Ride**

Council representations;

- Objection to Kennedy Way seeking removal and consideration of the existing provisions at Blacks Road and Sprucefield to be made permanent. The proposed location was considered too close to the city centre and may have detrimental affect on the air quality in the vicinity.

The Roads Service comments or objections were:

- That Kennedy Way was as part of an overall park & ride strategy for the city and it would be problematic to continue use of existing temporary sites due to capacity and land acquisition issues.

### **Urban Trees**

Council representations;

- The comment sought inclusion of a statement in BMAP regarding the importance of urban trees and commitment to protect trees through monitoring and enforcement.

The Planning Service comments or responses to the issue:

- It was recognised there was merit of protecting urban trees and that a statement should be included in Draft BMAP.

# APPENDIX 2



## **STAGE 2 ISSUES**

### **Transport**

- Objection to Proposed location of BHA13: - New Railway Station – Tillysburn & objection to Matters Relating To Proposal - Park and Ride Scheme – Tillysburn – an overall corridor approach should be adopted
- Objection to Proposal to relocate Great Victoria Street Station to CC100: - New Railway Station - Grosvenor Road
- Rapid Transit Route: Objection to Non Designation of a Rapid Transit Route For Belfast North

### **Open Space & Environment**

Open space and Environmental Designations – The Council proposed the extension of a number of SLNCI designations in order to protect areas of environmental interest. A number of environmental designations have also been identified as unnecessary and were challenged.

- Natural Environment Strategy: Objection to Lack of Clarity Regarding Protection of Trees on Development Sites
- Objection To Inclusion Of Lands In LVRP - Stranmillis Car Park
- BT102/04: Objection to Exclusion Of Specified Lands From SLNCI - Barnett's Demesne
- BT102/13: Objection to Exclusion of Specified Lands from SLNCI - Clement Wilson Park
- BT102/17: Objection to Exclusion of Specified Lands from SLNCI - Stranmillis And Riddel Hall
- BT102/20: Objection to Exclusion of Specified Lands from SLNCI - Lagan Meadows
- MCH32/03: Objection to Exclusion of Specified Lands from SLNCI - Belvoir
- Objection to Exclusion of Specified Lands from SLNCI - Braniel Village
- BT101: Objection to Matters Relating To Designation - Urban Landscape Wedge - Colin Glen (Belfast)
- BT084: Objection To Inclusion Of Specified Lands In Historic Park And Garden - Botanic
- BT102/25: Objection To Inclusion Of Specified Lands In SLNCI - South Of M1 Roundabout
- BT140: Objection To Inclusion Of Specified Lands In LLPA - Musgrave
- BT102/18: Objection to Exclusion of Specified Lands from SLNCI - Inverary
- Objection to Exclusion of Specified Lands from LLPA - Blanchflower/Patton
- Urban Environment Strategy: Objection To Lack Of Designation Of Urban Landscape Wedge - Harbour Estate
- Urban Environment Strategy: Objection To Lack Of Designation Of Urban Landscape Wedge At Shandon Park Golf Course
- Open Space Strategy: Objection To Lack Of Housing Zoning On Open Space At Ballysillan Road

### **Development Opportunity Site**

- CC055: Objection to Zoning - Development Opportunity Site - Westlink, Grosvenor Road

### **Housing**

- Housing Strategy: Objection to Matters Relating To Treatment of HMO's
- Housing Strategy: Objection to Lack of Housing Zoning In Belfast Zoo Area

### **Retail**

- Retail Strategy: Objection to Lack of Designation of District Centre - Shore Road/Loughside
- Retail Strategy: Objection to Lack of Designation of District Centre at Hillview

### **City Centre**

- Belfast City Centre Strategy: Objection to Lack of Detail Regarding Belfast City Centre Land Uses
- CC018: Objection to Matters Relating To Designation - Laganside North and Docks Character Area
- CC013: Objection to Matters Relating To Designation - Scotch and Cathedral Quarters Character Area

### **Parking Restraint on Arterial Routes**

- AR03/15: Objection to Matters Relating To Commercial Nodes and Areas of Parking Restraint on Arterial Routes - Upper Newtownards Road Etc
- AR03/03: Objection to Matters Relating To Commercial Nodes and Areas of Parking Restraint on Arterial Route - Antrim Road/Crumlin Road
- AR03/09: Objection to Matters Relating To Commercial Nodes and Areas of Parking Restraint on Arterial Route - Falls Road/Glen Road

### **Arterial Routes**

- AR01/01: Objection to Matters Relating To Designation of Arterial Route - York Street/York Road/Shore Road
- AR01/09: Objection to Matters Relating To Designation of Arterial Route - Donegall Road
- Arterial Routes Strategy: Objection to Lack of Commercial Node Designation - Lower Ormeau Road
- Arterial Routes Strategy: Objection to Lack of Commercial Node Designation - Lower Ravenhill Road
- Arterial Routes Strategy: Objection to Lack of Commercial Node Designation - Donegall Road
- Arterial Routes Strategy: Objection to Lack of Commercial Node Designation - Lisburn Road
- Arterial Routes Strategy: Objection to Lack of Commercial Node Designation - Andersonstown Road Area
- Arterial Routes Strategy: Objection to Failure to Designate Sandy Row as A Arterial Route
- Arterial Routes Strategy: Objection to Failure to Designate Donegall Pass as An Arterial Route
- Ar05/03: Objection to Designation - Shopping/Commercial Areas on Arterial Routes - Antrim Road

