



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Belfast City Centre West Side Regeneration District Draft Regeneration Plan
Date:	10 September 2008
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Relevant Background Information

The Draft Regeneration Masterplan for the South West Quarter area of Belfast City Centre constitutes proposed supplementary guidance to the Department for Social Developments' Regeneration Policy Statement for Belfast City Centre adopted by the Department in April 2004. It sets out further guidance on the proposed range of uses for the South West Quarter area of Belfast City Centre, to maximise the physical, social and economic regeneration of the area.

Victoria Square opened for trade in March in 2008. Masterplans for Part One of the North West and North East Quarter were adopted by the Department for Social Development in August 2005. The Royal Exchange development proposed for the North East Quarter was selected by the Department for Social Development in March 2006 and a Regeneration Framework for the North West Quarter Part 2 area is currently being finalised. Work on the "Belfast: Streets Ahead" public realm project commenced in July 2007 and the first phase is due to be completed in 2010.

Key Issues

Department for Social Development have set three key themes to provide a focus for consultation on the Draft Regeneration Plan as:-

1. The Guiding Development Principles
Underpinning the regeneration of the South West Quarter the Department for Social Development have recommended attention is given to character

preservation, sense of place, scale, mixed use development, promotion of independent retail, traffic calming, improved linkages and quality public spaces. Belfast City Council was represented on the South West Quarter Masterplan Stakeholder Group and approved the guiding development principles for the regeneration of the South West Quarter.

2. The preferred concept Masterplan, including the key features.
The preferred Masterplan option offers the longer term potential to provide for 322 residential units (including 20% as affordable provision).

22,928 sq m retail / café / restaurant use
23,807 sq m office / business use
280 additional hotel rooms, and
an estimated 2416 jobs

Central to the preferred concept Masterplan is the provision of a New Street for pedestrians only through the heart of the quarter linking Chapel Lane and Fountain Lane. The new street seeks to draw in some of the considerable footfall from Donegall Place and the Castlecourt Shopping Centre and contribute to the creation of a wider retail circuit around the city centre. See Appendix I preferred Concept Masterplan - identifies new street.

3. The benefits of the Masterplan
The key benefits of the preferred concept Masterplan as concluded by Department for Social Development include a better integration of the South West Quarter to the rest of the city centre, a strengthened independent retail section, protection of heritage by encouraging the re-use of historic buildings, high quality public realm, improved public transport connectivity, enhanced bus and pedestrian priority for Castle Street and reduced levels of car parking for the residential units.

Appendix II to this Committee report contains the full response of Belfast City Council to the above issues.

Resource Implications

None to Belfast City Council.

The implementation of the eventual adopted Masterplan is subject to market response, available funding, economic appraisal, satisfying all statutory requirements and equality impact assessment.

Recommendations

Council endorses the West Side Regeneration District Draft Regeneration Plan as a tool to promote the regeneration of the area subject to the clarification and comments detailed in Appendix II to this report.

Council would promote community involvement as the additional factor in all aspects of the regeneration process. Recognition of the community interests of the existing small number of residents together with the business interests of landowners and business tenants at an early stage ensures ownership and acceptance of initiatives.

Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – Preferred Concept Masterplan Drawing
Appendix 2 – Belfast City Council Response to Belfast City Centre West Side Regeneration District Draft Regeneration Plan

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