



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Royal Exchange Regeneration Project – Deramore Property Group
Date:	15 September 2010
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
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Relevant Background Information

Members will recall the Special Development Committee of 21 June 2010 where representatives of the Deramore Property Group gave a presentation on their plans for 41-51 Royal Avenue. Deramore have submitted a planning application to Planning Service to redevelop their premises. The application is currently going through the consultation process. The Planning application is to provide 20,000sqft of retail floor space over ground and three upper floors. The intention is to provide accommodation for a single multiple operator similar to the New Look operation in Donegall Place where a completely new shop was built behind the original front façade. The Deramore property has a double frontage on Royal Avenue and Rosemary Street and has been planned to compliment any future Royal Exchange Scheme.

Deramore Property group advised Members that they were seeking to deliver local investment in Belfast City Centre by obtaining support for the removal of 41-51 Royal Avenue from the Royal Exchange Masterplan. The Department for Social Development would not at this stage confirm whether or not the premises would be excluded from the overall Royal Exchange Development Scheme. Deramore's view is that the Royal Exchange Scheme will prevent other developments going forward due to the uncertainty as to when the scheme will be delivered and this is further evidenced by the high level of vacant properties in the area.

Key Issues

Following the presentation and discussion with Deramore Property Group on the 21 June 2010, Members agreed to;

1. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman (or their nominees) together with one representative from each of the party groupings in the Council, facilitate a

meeting between representatives of Royal Exchange (Belfast) limited, the consortium which would be undertaking the Royal Exchange Regeneration Project, and the Deramore Property Group in order to ascertain whether a solution could be aimed at which would facilitate all parties.

Since Committee on 21 June 2010 Deramore Property Group have had separate meetings with both Jackie Johnston, Director of Belfast Regeneration Office and Nick Reid of Ewarts part of the development consortium for the Royal Exchange Scheme. Neither meeting has resulted in Deramore securing their premises exclusion from the Royal Exchange Scheme. The Royal Exchange Scheme planning application is due for submission by 31 October 2010 at which point the development boundary will be in the public domain.

2. A further letter being forwarded to the Minister for Social Development requesting that he meet with an All-party deputation from the Council to discuss the Royal Exchange Scheme. A meeting has been arranged with the Minister for Social Development on 30 September 2010. This meeting affords Members the opportunity to raise with the Minister, Deramore's concerns regarding their own premises in particular and also how the development agreement between DSD and Royal Exchange (Belfast) Limited is impacting on other businesses in this part of the city centre.

Resource Implications

Financial - High levels of vacancy result in a reduction in rates income.

Recommendations

Members note this report as an update on the actions for the Committee meeting of 21 June 2010. The All Party deputation attend the meeting on 30 September 2010 with the Minister for Social Development.

Decision Tracking

A further report is brought to Committee after the meeting with the Minister for Social Development and the lodging of the planning application for the Royal Exchange Scheme.

Timeline: December 2010

Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

Key Abbreviations

DSD – Department for Social Development