

Draft Development Strategy for the Crumlin Road Gaol

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1. Previous and planned investment as well as current development plans for exploiting the Crumlin Road Gaol are at a pivotal stage when a clear strategy and criteria for guiding the future uses of this important public asset is required. This Strategy builds on the previous and current analysis of the restoration and development potential of the Crumlin Road Gaol and sets it in an updated context. It does not preclude either a single development purpose for the Gaol or having a number of diverse functions on the Site.

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2. All future development plans for the Gaol estate will include detailed analysis of how they comply with the Programme for Government and support the development objectives in this Strategy.
3. While it will be important to exploit the regenerative potential of the Gaol through lease, partnership and other arrangements, the buildings and grounds of the Crumlin Road Gaol will remain in public ownership subject to any future decision by the Northern Ireland Executive,

Rationale

4. The legislative authority for restoring and developing the Gaol comes from "The Strategic Investment and Regeneration of Sites (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 which allows through 'the reinvestment and reform initiative' for "the development or redevelopment of land including conversion or demolition of existing buildings " .
5. The development of the Crumlin Road Gaol had been an integral part of the Draft Crumlin Road Gaol and Girdwood Barracks Master Plan (July 2007) which while leaving options open for any potential development on the gaol site; focussed on tourism and hospitality as the preferred development theme within the wider regeneration plan for Girdwood. The draft Master Plan however did not enjoy community or political consensus; as a result of which it was agreed at both a

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local political and community level that development of the Gaol site should be progressed despite the Girdwood hiatus. The Crumlin Road Gaol and Girdwood Barracks draft Master plan has been superseded by a DSD review of its implementation and a subsequent Ministerial announcement which did not include the Crumlin Road Gaol.

6. The Buro Hoppold Study of 2005 on the of the Crumlin Road Gaol, a predecessor to the Crumlin Road Gaol and Girdwood Barracks Master Plan, made some analysis of the development potential of the Gaol site without recommending any specific use. It did however recognise that the full potential of the Gaol needed further analysis but could not be realised without access to additional land.
7. Programme for Government 2011 – 2015 has a number of commitments which will be potentially supported by the development of the Gaol for new uses; they include contributing to rising levels of employment, including social clauses in public procurement contracts, increasing visitor numbers and tourist revenue, and supporting projects through the Creative Industries Fund.
8. The physical restoration of the Gaol buildings and any new buildings will be taken forward through a planned programme of new development projects and maintenance. A programme for this work as well as associated research studies and land

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acquisition is currently under consideration with an expectation that Business Cases will be subsequently developed for projects. A strategy for developing the Gaol will ensure that any new works have an appropriate focus and direction.

Background

9. The Crumlin Road Gaol is located at a central position on the lower Crumlin Road approximately 2 miles from the City Centre. Since 2006 capital investments of around £7m have re-established this iconic building as a highly significant public asset for Belfast and Northern Ireland. Layout drawings are attached at Annex1.
10. While more investment will be needed to continue the rehabilitation of this Grade A listed building, plans are already underway to exploit its potential as a regenerative tool in North Belfast. The Belfast Distillery Company has been chosen as the preferred developer for A Wing and Belfast City Tours have succeeded in the competition for an operator for the visitor attraction and conference centre ('C' Wing).
11. These initiatives are a first phase in creating new uses for the Gaol. It is anticipated that there will be job opportunities created both through new businesses being established and visitors coming to the area.
12. The rehabilitation of the Gaol building has positively affected the aesthetic look of the lower Crumlin Road and will generally improve the esteem of the area as well as helping to unlock and support the potential of other regeneration assets in the vicinity. OFMDFM are working with DSD on how the Crumlin Road Gaol can support a strategic approach to regeneration of

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the neighbourhoods in the Gaol proximity. Discussions are ongoing on a number of issues including the Court House, a planned DSD environmental scheme for the Crumlin Rd and the exploitation of the Girdwood site.

Vision

13. The vision for the Crumlin Road Gaol which has been derived from the commitments in the Programme for Government is:

***“To rehabilitate Crumlin Road Gaol as a public asset which helps transform North Belfast’s physical appearance, and contributes to that part of the City and wider Northern Ireland in terms of economic prosperity , improved social conditions and community confidence and cohesion; while balancing the historical and architectural importance of the site with current and future society needs.*”**

Development Objectives

14. The development objectives for the Crumlin Road Gaol will form the criteria against which potential developments will be considered. Development of the Gaol will seek to fully or significantly:

- I. Contribute to meeting the regeneration needs of North Belfast in terms of employment, prosperity, physical improvement and community reconciliation.

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- II. Support the commitments in the Programme for Government including contributing to a rise in employment, increasing tourism numbers and integrating social clauses into procurement contracts and lease agreements.
- III. Recognise the unique nature of the Gaol and build on the historical and built heritage potential of the Lower Crumlin Road area and contribute to the development of a 'Historic Quarter' for Belfast.
- IV. Encourage community cohesion and help to raise the esteem in the neighbourhoods in proximity to the Gaol.
- V. Complement current and planned development within the Gaol and its environs and comply with infrastructure and utility arrangements for the Gaol.
- VI. Demonstrate a long term commitment to the regeneration of the Gaol; e.g. through investment in development and accepting longer term leases where this appropriate.
- VII. Protect the architectural and historic integrity of the Gaol.
- VIII. Contribute to the establishment of the Gaol as a public asset of regional significance.
- IX. Act as catalyst for regeneration projects in the Lower Crumlin Road area.
- X. Have the support of other public sector bodies with regeneration remits.
- XI. Be consistent with all planning and environmental policies as well as any other relevant legal requirements including equality legislation.

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- XII. Remain sustainable in terms of financial stability, local environments, health and well-being, ecology, waste management, transport and mobility and security and crime prevention.
- XIII. Ensure that development costs including any appropriate site preparation or fit-out costs are borne by the prospective developer.
- XIV. Build on the previous restoration and maintenance investment at the Gaol.

Processes and Governance

- 15. There are two routes through which development ideas for the Gaol can be progressed: (i) where a prospective developer approaches OFMDFM or a developer is approached by the CRGRT (Annex 2) or (ii) where a competition is run to attract interest in developing a specific section/s of the Site (Annex 3).
- 16. The process for assessing development proposals is set within the OFMDFM Governance structure for managing the strategic investment and regeneration of sites and consistent with DFP policies on procurement and evidenced decision making.
- 17. Any consideration of development of the Gaol or its grounds will be subject to the appropriate OFMDFM and NICS internal approval processes and attainment of the necessary legal and other permissions / approvals.
- 18. Any prospective developer will have to validate their proposal with evidence that clearly demonstrates how they address the Development Objectives above.

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Restoration, Repair and Maintenance

19. The ongoing programme of restoration, repair and maintenance will safeguard the Gaol building in line with the Department's statutory duties to maintain the fabric of the historic, Grade A listed buildings, protect previous investment and facilitate future development opportunities.

20. All work at the Gaol will seek to be in line with NIEA guidance and complementary to current and planned developments.

Costs

21. Other than repair or restoration works it is not anticipated that any development of the Gaol estate will result in a cost to the Northern Ireland Executive. Any potential developer will need to show evidence that they have the necessary finance to complete any proposed development and subsequently sustain their business over the longer term (e.g. 25 years plus).

Infrastructure

22. While OFMDFM will be responsible for the infrastructure and utilities of the Gaol Estate any potential developer will be expected to pay an appropriate proportion of this cost and comply with any arrangement in terms of service delivery or charging.

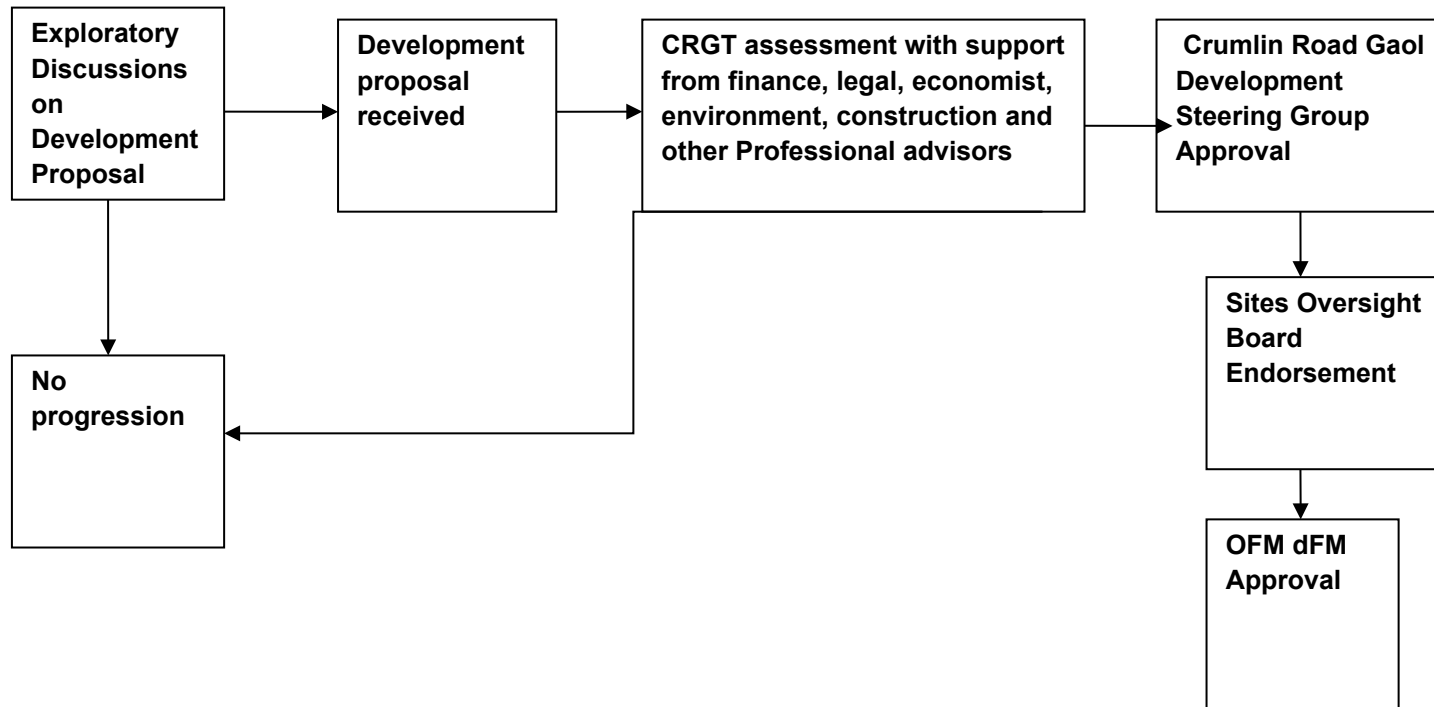
Consultation

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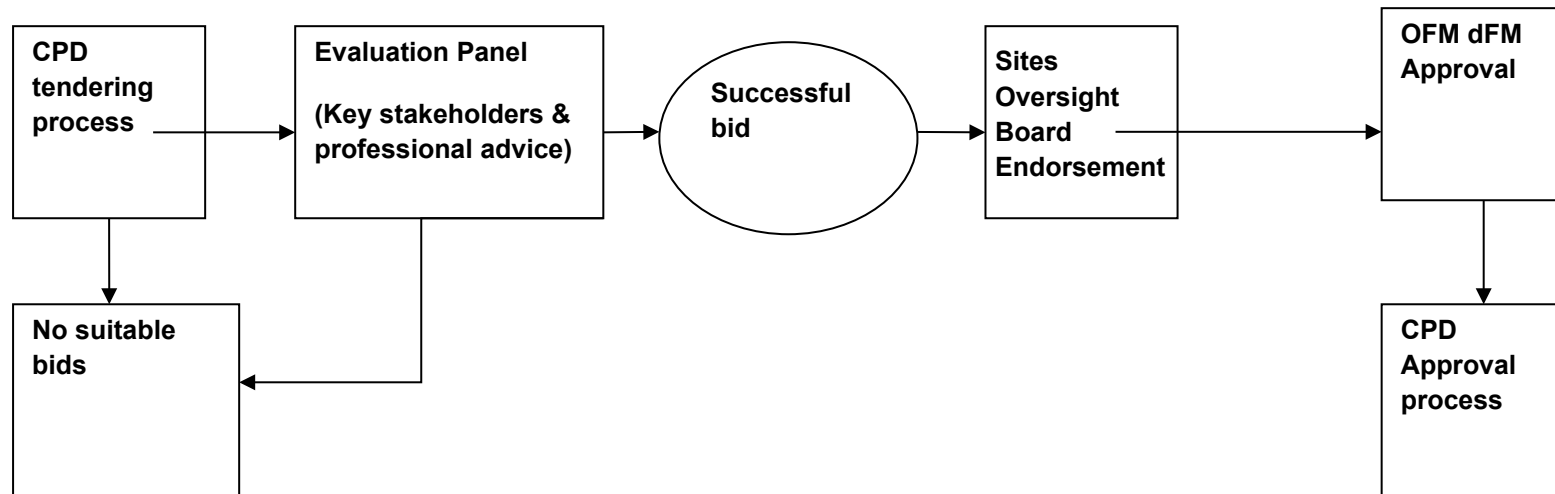
23. The development strategy has been equality screened and found to have no detrimental impacts on the categories in section 75

24. This Strategy has been shared with stakeholders including the Crumlin Road Gaol Community Engagement Group [DN due to occur February] which provides a forum for the exchange of information on plans to exploit the Gaol as a public asset and other regeneration agencies. A list of stakeholder organisations is included at Annex 4.

DEVELOPMENT IDEA INITIATED BY PROSPECTIVE DEVELOPER OR OFMDFM



DEVELOPER COMPETITION



Stakeholder Organisations

- i. Sites Oversight Board
- ii. Belfast City Council
- iii. SIB
- iv. DSD (BCCRD & BRO)
- v. DOJ
- vi. Northern Ireland Prison Service
- vii. NIEA
- viii. CPD
- ix. Crumlin Road Gaol Community Engagement Group
- x. Belfast Distillery Company
- xi. Belfast Tours Ltd
- xii. St Malachy's College
- xiii. Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
- xiv. DRD Roads Service
- xv. Other interested parties