

# Library Square, Belfast Public Realm Scheme

Within the decorative setting of historic buildings, a striking and surprising new piece of public realm linking residential communities with the city centre, building on the unique history of printing, newspapers, books and words.



# Library Square Scheme Introduction

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The Department for Social Development (DSD) is seeking comments from the public on its proposals for 'Library Square', a new landmark public space proposed for Belfast city centre's Northside.

## The Vision

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The 'Library Square' site is located at the junction of Little Donegall Street, Library Street and Royal Avenue and is currently an under utilised environment, which detracts from the rich architectural heritage that surrounds it. Enhancing this space is a key priority for DSD, as set out within its Northside Urban Village Regeneration Framework, published in May 2009.

DSD's vision for Library Square encapsulates the following core priorities:

- The creation of an animated shared space with active ground floor uses;
- Create a high quality pause point in the North Belfast Cultural Corridor;
- A high quality environment in line with the Belfast: Streets Ahead public realm programme;
- An accessible leisure destination, for both residents and visitors to the city; and,
- A catalyst to help promote the regeneration of the wider Northside.



# Design Process

DSD appointed a design team, which comprised public realm and masterplanning experts from Benoy and Peter Brett Associates and was project managed by Drivers Jonas Deloitte.

The design team spent over 6 months working with key stakeholders, including the Belfast Telegraph, Belfast Central Library, the Northern Irish Tourist Board, Planning Service and DRD Road Service, in developing a proposal which is both deliverable and responsive to DSD's strategic vision for the regeneration of the city centre. Delivery of the project is subject to approval for the business case, available funding and obtaining statutory planning permission. The estimated build cost for this project is £3m.

The design concept has drawn on public realm best practice from around Europe and proposes a palette of materials which have been selected for their durability, local relevance and high quality. The proposals have been developed to reflect a communications and learning theme, given

the site location bounded by the Central Library and situated close to the University of Ulster. The proposed significant increase in student numbers in this part of the city by 2018 will greatly increase the level of footfall through the area. The Library Square proposals aim to promote the use of media and social connectivity, by

- Providing a communications connectivity hotspot, facilitating the use of public access to wireless networks;
- Providing for interactive media in the Square, potentially through the installation of a media wall/screen.

Library Square is envisaged as being more than just a piece of public realm. It will be a further shared space in Belfast city centre providing a flexible environment, serving as an iconic meeting place, a gateway and a space to relax in. Careful consideration has been given to how Library Square interacts with its surroundings, with scope for it to accommodate food, beverage and cultural activities.



# Programme

A public exhibition will be held in Belfast Central Library (21st - 25th January 2013) and the University of Ulster's York Street Campus (28th January - 1st February 2013). DSD invites comments on the proposed new square.

Following the public consultation, consideration of comments received and equality screening exercise, DSD intends to take the design concept forward as a planning application.

Details available online at: <http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/consultations.htm>

Written comments should be submitted to:

Business Support Unit

Belfast City Centre Regeneration Directorate  
Department for Social Development  
4th Floor Oxford House  
49-55 Chichester Street  
Belfast  
BT1 4HL

Email: [librarysquare@dsdni.gov.uk](mailto:librarysquare@dsdni.gov.uk)

The closing date for comments is 22nd February 2013 at 12 noon

For further details please contact Jenny McGuigan on 028 9027 7 653.

