



<b>Subject:</b>	Draft East Bank Development Strategy - Update
<b>Date:</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> December 2017
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<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on responses received during the public consultation exercise on the draft East Bank Development Strategy and to advise of the intention to undertake a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) on the draft Strategy.
1.2	A summary of the consultation and engagement process undertaken is set out in <b>Appendix 1</b> . Organisations and individuals who responded are identified in <b>Appendix 2</b> . <b>Appendix 3</b> summarises responses from those who completed the consultation questionnaire on-line. <b>Appendix 4</b> summarised the comments of those who responded by e-mail or letter and includes detailed comments from respondents to the on-line

	questionnaire.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note comments received through the consultation exercise to date and note that a further report will be brought to committee addressing any comments to responses together with the SEA;</li> <li>• Note the intention to take forward a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment for the area;</li> <li>• Note the intention to report back to Committee on a finalised version of the Strategy for approval in late spring/early summer 2018.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>In June 2016 Committee approved the draft East Bank Development Strategy for consultation. The 12-week consultation period commenced on 7<sup>th</sup> July and ended on 29<sup>th</sup> September.</p>
3.2	<p>The process is summarised in Appendix 1. A total of 190 responses were received. Organisations and individuals who responded are identified in <b>Appendix 2</b>. There were 22 responses via citizenspace of which the majority are positive or very positive (see <b>Appendix 3</b>).</p>
3.3	<p><u>Statutory Agencies</u></p> <p>In terms of statutory agencies, almost all were supportive. DfI Transport Strategy Division's response was non-committal (Appendix 4, pages 5-8) subject to further traffic modelling being undertaken while DfI Rivers notes that the document needs to say more about how to address present-day flood risk to the proposed development as well as the impact of future climate change and in particular, potential sea level rise due to climate change (Appendix 4, pages 4-5).</p>
3.4	<p>In light of the comments relating to flood risk and others received relating to protected habitats and environmental considerations, the Council conducted an SEA Determination (a "screening" process) in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, Environment</p>

	<p>and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and has concluded that an SEA (Environmental Report) and HRA is required.</p>
3.5	<p>The responses from statutory agencies are summarised below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Department for Communities (DfC) is supportive and will use the document to inform its development brief for Queen’s Quay (Appendix 4, pages 3-4);</li> <li>2. DfI Rivers is critical of the document in terms of its lack of reference to assessment of flood risk (Appendix 4, pages 3-4);</li> <li>3. DfI Transport Strategy Division has provided qualified support, in that it emphasises the need for more traffic modelling in advance of major infrastructure changes (Appendix 4, pages 5-7);</li> <li>4. NIHE is also broadly supportive and would support a 20% affordable housing requirement across the Strategy area (Appendix 4, pages 12-13);</li> <li>5. Translink is also generally supportive but notes that further traffic modelling is required before agreeing to proposals to re-locate the TQ rail halt. (Appendix 4, pages 35-38).</li> </ol> <p><b><i>Community Groups and Members of the Public</i></b></p>
3.6	<p>Eastside Partnership responded positively, welcoming the inclusion of Sirocco, the ‘shatter zone’ and Odyssey Quays within one plan and supporting the four place-making themes identified as enabling the East Bank to become fully integrated with the city centre, bringing the centre ‘across the river’, and connecting Titanic Quarter to the city centre. The Partnership is keen, however, to retain the existing TQ rail halt and also offered suggestions for inclusion in the finalised document (Appendix 4, pages 8-10).</p>
3.7	<p>84 drawings and illustrations were received from an event described as the Youth Urban Almanac organised by the Eden Project and facilitated by Seed Head Arts which was attended by 60 young people aged 8 to mid 20s. Most of the ideas relate to public realm and use of the river and were innovative and original including permanent and temporary suggestions, for example bandstands for buskers, giant chess sets, concrete table tennis tables, open air swimming pools and boardwalks. (Appendix 4, page10).</p>
3.8	<p>Lagan Currachs support better access points to the Lagan and makes a number of suggestions for activities on the water as well as by the river, including houseboat infrastructure. They disagree with proposals to relocate the railway station on grounds of</p>

3.9	<p>cost. (Appendix 4, pages 10-11).</p> <p>Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) response, which is generally supportive, focuses on accessible transport, safe streets and accessible information. In particular, it emphasises the importance of barrier free access to the pedestrian environment and barrier free access to different modes of transport to support inclusive and independent living for people with sight loss. Of concern, are any proposals for “shared surfaces” in public realm schemes. RNIB does not support the use of flush surfaces and recommends that the memorandum guidance on kerb heights in public realm schemes produced by the Department for Regional Development (issued in May 2015) is adhered to. Within this guidance it states that: “For public realm schemes, and in line with best practice, it is recommended that a ‘standard’ kerb height of 125mm should be generally used.” This response reflects comments which RNIB submitted to the public consultation exercise which the Council undertook on the Linen Quarter Public Realm Vision and Guidance in 2015. (Appendix 4, pages 17-23).</p>
3.10	<p>Titanic Foundation generally agrees with the vision and reiterates the importance of the East Bank being fully woven into the fabric of the city centre to include Titanic Quarter. The Foundation believes it is important to look at the whole of the Lagan with a view to achieving an animated waterfront on the East Bank that continues to include TQ and beyond - as far as HMS Caroline and the Thompson Dock. The concept of a Maritime Mile between Donegal Quay and HMS Caroline has been developed as part of the TQ Destination Plan and Titanic Foundation will be progressing this as a theme which ultimately will link key tourism, heritage and employment hubs. The Foundation generally agrees with proposed interventions other than that to re-locate the rail halt. Further transport modelling is required before agreeing / disagreeing with this move. (Appendix 4, pages 33-35).</p>
3.11	<p>However, 74 letters of objection were received from Short Strand residents on grounds that a land allocation for affordable/social housing has not been identified within the Sirocco site. Two similar letters from St Matthew’s Housing Association and the Short Strand Partnership on the same grounds but also referring to the failure to identify the Translink bus garage on Mountpottinger Street as a development opportunity for housing and leisure uses. The bus garage is outside the Strategy area and the city centre strategy boundary. Both St Matthew’s and the Short Strand Partnership also referred to a deficit of leisure facilities for Short Strand residents and the need to address this in the East Bank Strategy. (Appendix 4, pages 25-29).</p>

3.12	<p><b>Major Landowners</b></p> <p>Responses were received from Turley Associates on behalf of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners and Titanic Quarter and Swinford (Sirocco). There were no major points of contention in the first two responses (Appendix 4, pages 1-2 and 14-16). However, Sirocco (Swinford) while supportive of the majority of the draft Strategy and the Sirocco design principles set out in Appendix 3 of the draft Strategy, view the “prescriptive way in which the Strategy moves beyond the high level conceptual diagrams on pages 18 and 19 and imposes the basis of a masterplan to interpret these principles” as “not acceptable, nor is the approach to phasing” (Appendix 4, pages 29-33).</p>
3.13	<p><b>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)</b></p> <p>The final strategy will be used as a framework for development across the East Bank and accordingly, there may be environmental issues given the previous use of the land. In light of some of the comments received during the public consultation exercise, it was decided to undertake an SEA Determination (a “screening” process) in consultation with DAERA to determine if an SEA (the Environmental Report) and HRA is required and the conclusion is that they are. Work has begun and it is anticipated that the Environmental Report will be available for public consultation by February 2018. The statutory consultation period is 12 weeks enabling a report to be brought back to Committee by June 2018 at the earliest. Any significant issues arising in the course of the SEA will be reported back to Committee and reviewed in the finalised Strategy. A verbal update on the process for dealing with comments to the consultation will be provided at committee.</p>
3.14	<p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>As part of the public consultation undertaken to date, engagement took place with those Section 75 groups listed on the Equalities Unit’s contacts database and the draft Strategy was circulated at the Equality Consultative Forum on 26<sup>th</sup> September. Further equality and good relations screening will be conducted in parallel with the proposed consultation processes described in paragraph 3.13.</p>
3.15	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The cost of the SEA and HRA is met from existing and projected budgets for 2017/18.</p>

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	<p><b>Appendix 1:</b> Summary of the consultation and engagement process</p> <p><b>Appendix 2:</b> Organisations and individuals who responded</p> <p><b>Appendix 3:</b> Summary of responses to the Citizen Space consultation</p> <p><b>Appendix 4:</b> Summary of comments received by e mail or letter and detailed comments from Citizen Space.</p>