



People & Place

Victoria Square Scheme – Community & Business Opportunity Plan



FOREWORD BY DAVID HANSON MP

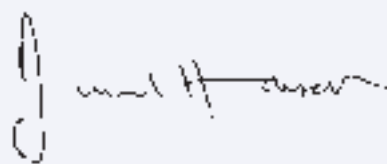
When the Department for Social Development embarked on the Victoria Square regeneration initiative our vision was to create a new, vibrant retail-led mixed-use scheme in Belfast City Centre to restore the City as the primary retail and leisure destination in Northern Ireland. We aimed to create a scheme that would deliver everything that makes city centre living vibrant and exciting: places to live, work, shop and to enjoy the best of Belfast close to the centre of business, entertainment, arts and culture.

I believe that the huge regeneration effort now underway at Victoria Square will succeed in transforming the face of Belfast because it has all the right ingredients: a developer with a proven international track record in retail-led development; committed civic leadership determined to make the Scheme work for Belfast; the support of Government; and, the investment of substantial private funds.

Delivering new shopping and investment is only part of the Victoria Square story. In just a few years, Victoria Square will provide a new dynamic gathering place for shopping and entertainment at the heart of the City. A place where citizens from across the community will come together to work and socialise. The Scheme therefore presents a real opportunity to further tackle social need and social exclusion in Belfast and across Northern Ireland. I am therefore delighted to introduce this Community & Business Opportunity Plan which sets out how Victoria Square will contribute to Government's New Targeting Social Need (New TSN) objectives for Northern Ireland. The Plan also contains proposals for utilising the Scheme to contribute to the development of local business and the tourism economy.

The employment opportunity presented by Victoria Square provides the bedrock of this Community & Business Opportunity Plan. It is estimated that 3,000 jobs will be available during the construction phase at Victoria Square and a further 3,000 permanent new jobs will be created in the retail and leisure sectors once the Scheme opens in 2008. We aim to ensure that as many of these jobs as possible become accessible to unemployed people living in disadvantaged areas across Northern Ireland.

Victoria Square demonstrates why we have every reason to feel confident about the future of Belfast City Centre. With construction of the Scheme underway the time is right to open this initiative to local business and the community by putting in place action plans to maximise the economic and social development opportunity presented by the Scheme.



David Hanson MP
Minister of State for Northern Ireland

FOREWORD BY PAUL SARGENT

Multi Development UK is delighted to co-sponsor this Community & Business Opportunity Plan with the Department for Social Development. Multi (formerly AM Development) aims to work with DSD and other partners to ensure that the benefits from the Victoria Square Scheme are shared across the community. We appreciate the significant employment potential offered by the Scheme and will encourage the construction firms and retail tenants to fully participate in the employment initiatives set out in this Plan.

The redevelopment of Victoria Square is an unparalleled regeneration effort in Belfast City Centre. Evidence of change has been visible since the demolition of Churchill House in November 2004. Belfast's version of the "big dig" swiftly changes appearance on a weekly basis, whilst all the time representing the renaissance of the City.

Multi recognises that Victoria Square presents a unique opportunity to kick-start the

regeneration of Belfast City Centre and to contribute to the development of the local economy through local sourcing of materials, goods and services, and tourism development. We are committed to playing our part in the collaborative relationship between public, private and community stakeholders to give the entire community access to the benefits deriving from Victoria Square.

As each phase of the Scheme is completed we shall see Belfast move forward towards achieving our aim of revitalising the City Centre and repositioning Belfast as the primary retail destination in Northern Ireland. That is a goal which all stakeholders in this initiative share and is a prize worth striving for.



Paul Sargent
Managing Director, Multi Development UK



VICTORIA SQUARE REGENERATION INITIATIVE COMMUNITY & BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY PLAN

Vision

The Victoria Square Regeneration Initiative, led by Multi Development UK and the Department for Social Development, is the largest redevelopment scheme in Belfast City Centre for decades. It confirms the commitment of Government to restore Belfast City Centre as the primary retail and leisure destination in Northern Ireland.

The overall aim of the initiative is to continue the renaissance of the City Centre by realising the vision of building a vital mixed-use retail-led development in the heart of the City at Victoria Square. The Scheme will connect the City Centre to the Belfast waterfront at Laganside and provide a bridge to the North and West of the City Centre.

Key Benefits

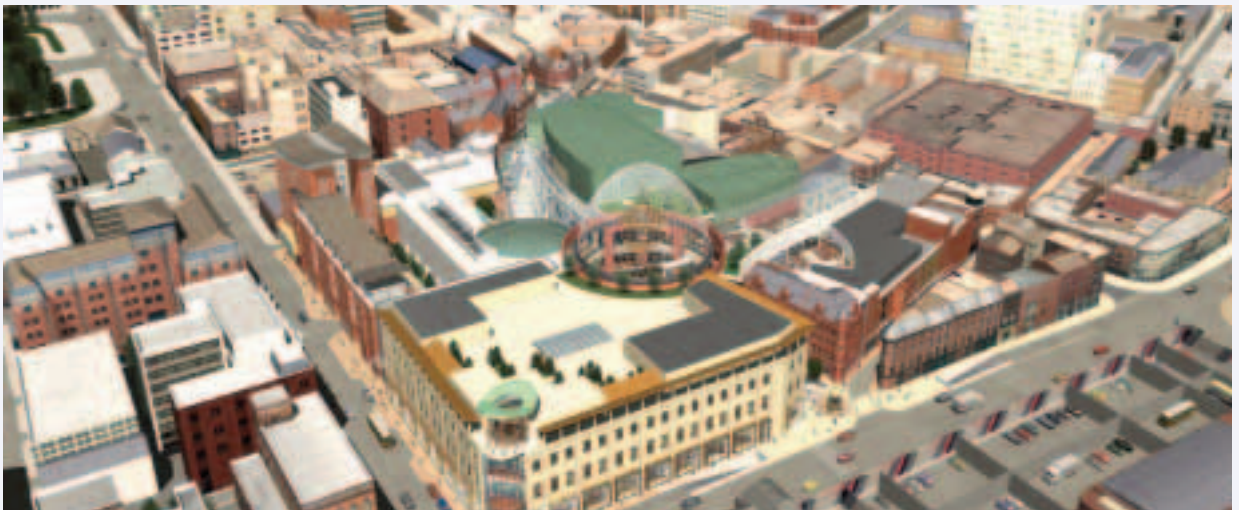
Victoria Square is a 75,000 sq m regeneration scheme. Chichester Street, Arthur Square, Anne Street and Victoria Street define the Scheme boundaries.

The key economic and social benefit for the community presented by the Victoria Square scheme will be:

- the estimated 3,000 jobs to be provided during the construction period to 2008; and,
- the estimated 3,000 permanent jobs in retailing and leisure to be provided when the scheme opens in 2008.

Additional significant benefits that will arise from Victoria Square are:

- over £320m private investment;
- 4.5 acres of redevelopment within the main shopping core of Belfast City Centre;
- in excess of 55,000 sq m of additional retail space in the City Centre;
- a flagship House of Fraser department store;
- residential apartments in the main shopping core;
- entertainment and leisure at a cinema, restaurants and bars.



Key Targets

Through the regeneration of Victoria Square, create a total of 3,000 construction jobs over the period 2004-2008.

Through the regeneration of Victoria Square, create a total of 3,000 jobs in the retail and leisure sectors from the opening of the Scheme in 2008.

Purpose

This Community & Business Opportunity Plan sets out how the Victoria Square Regeneration Initiative will contribute to business and tourism development, and Government's New Targeting Social Need (New TSN) objectives for Northern Ireland across a range of key activities set out below. Detailed actions, objectives and targets are set out in the Annex to this document.



Implementation Partners

The Department for Social Development (DSD) and Multi Development UK as the main public and private sector partners involved in the Victoria Square Scheme will jointly lead on the implementation of this Community & Business Opportunity Plan. DSD and Multi will be joined by the Department for Employment and Learning, Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Belfast City Council, Arts Council for Northern Ireland, Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau and Invest Northern Ireland in the implementation of the Plan.

Action Areas

The Implementation Partners will work together to realise the anticipated social and economic regeneration benefits from Victoria Square under six action areas.

Employment

Promote access to job opportunities at Victoria Square for unemployed people. This will be achieved through the widespread advertising of vacancies in the construction, retail and leisure sectors. Customised training initiatives focused on equipping unemployed people with the appropriate skills required for job opportunities at the Scheme will also be provided. Community groups from disadvantaged areas across Belfast will be invited to help shape the employment initiatives.

Community Involvement

Engage with the voluntary and community sector, employers and trade unions to promote job opportunities and other social and economic benefits arising from Victoria Square within disadvantaged communities. This will be achieved through the establishment of a Victoria Square Community Forum to assist communication and outreach within local

communities particularly in areas of disadvantage in the City. The Community Forum will have a particular role to play in helping to shape training and employment programmes designed to meet the needs of those most disadvantaged i.e. long-term unemployed who encounter multiple barriers to employability.

Shared Space

Encourage all citizens and sections of the community to use and enjoy Victoria Square as a shared City Centre space for employment, living and enjoying leisure time. The benefits and opportunities presented by the Scheme will be promoted through a Victoria Square Exhibition to tour Belfast and Northern Ireland. Special initiatives to inspire and stimulate the public's interest in the Scheme will be provided through competitions for schools, colleges and local communities to design public art for Victoria Square.

Access for Disabled People

Promote accessibility to Victoria Square for disabled people by working with representative groups and professional bodies to ensure best practice in accessibility in the design and build of Victoria Square.

Business – local sourcing of materials, goods and services

Promote economic development through the local sourcing in Northern Ireland of materials, goods and services required to construct and run Victoria Square. This will be achieved by providing information seminars for local companies on the range of business opportunities provided by the Scheme.

Tourism Development

Maximise the tourism development opportunities arising from Victoria Square which will enhance Belfast's attractiveness as a leading European regional destination for tourists and visitors. This will be achieved by implementing a specific Belfast tourism promotional campaign designed to coincide with the opening of Victoria Square aimed at local, national and international markets.

Equality Considerations

The Department for Social Development is fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good community relations, protecting human rights and ensuring that resources are targeted at those in greatest need.

Appraisal, Funding and Statutory Considerations

Implementation of this Community & Business Opportunity Plan is subject to economic appraisal, the availability of funding and adherence to relevant statutory requirements.



ANNEX

COMMUNITY & BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY PLAN

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	TARGETS
Employment		
1. To provide access to employment opportunities at Victoria Square for unemployed people.	a. Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) will work with an Employers Forum for Victoria Square retailers tailored to facilitate their employment recruitment and training needs.	DSD and Multi Development UK to set-up Employers Forum by September 2006.
	b. Vacancies in the construction, retail and leisure sectors related to Victoria Square will be advertised through the Department for Employment and Learning's (DEL) Jobs & Benefits Offices, Job Centres, and through DEL kiosks in the intermediary labour market providers.	DEL Recruitment Service will cater for Victoria Square employers via Jobcentre Online and Employer Online immediately on notification of vacancies.
	c. The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), through its Preparation for Work, Vocational and Pre-employment Programmes, will work with the Department for Social Development (DSD) and the Victoria Square employers to provide training for employment opportunities in areas such as the construction, retail and leisure sectors.	DEL will respond immediately to employers as their recruitment and training needs are identified. DEL and DSD will provide a pilot Construction Operatives training course for 32 participants during 2006. DEL and DSD will also provide a pilot retail and leisure sector employment training course by January 2007.
Community Involvement		
2. To involve the voluntary and community sector in promoting Victoria Square employment and other opportunities to people from disadvantaged areas.	a. The initiatives in this Plan will be implemented in partnership with voluntary and community sector organisations adjacent to Victoria Square.	DSD, Belfast City Council and Multi Development UK to set up a Victoria Square Forum for the voluntary and community sector by September 2006.

ANNEX

COMMUNITY & BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY PLAN (CONT'D)

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	TARGETS
Shared Space		
3. To encourage all citizens and sections of the community to use and enjoy Victoria Square.	a. A Victoria Square Exhibition will be provided by DSD and Multi Development UK in Belfast City Centre and an associated roadshow will travel throughout Northern Ireland.	The Victoria Square Exhibition and Roadshow will be ready for the opening of the Scheme in 2008.
	b. The Arts Council for Northern Ireland will advise DSD and Multi Development UK on the running of competitions for local communities and schools to design public art for Victoria Square.	The competitions will be launched in November 2006.
Access for Disabled People		
4. To promote accessibility to Victoria Square for disabled people by working with representative groups and professional bodies.	a. Ensure that best practice in accessibility is adhered to in the design and build of Victoria Square through a disability audit of plans and designs.	Multi Development UK, DSD and Office of the First Minister & Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) to seek views from disability representative organisations on design and access issues by September 2006.
Business – Local Sourcing		
5. To promote the local sourcing of materials, goods and services for Victoria Square.	a. Invest NI (INI) to work with Belfast City Council to provide information for local businesses, through the Council's existing information seminars for local businesses, on the range of materials, goods and services required to construct and run Victoria Square.	Belfast City Council to provide information seminar by June 2006.
Tourism Development		
6. To maximise the opportunities arising from Victoria Square to enhance Belfast as a tourism destination and venue for conferences.	a. DSD, Multi Development UK and Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau (BVCB) to develop a promotional campaign focused on Belfast City Centre to coincide with the opening of Victoria Square.	BVCB to implement promotional campaign during 2007/08.

Additional Copies

Additional copies of this document may be obtained from:

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**Alternatively the document is also available at:
www.dsdni.gov.uk**

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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