

CLOONEY

A Catalyst for Change

A Conceptual Framework for the development of lands at Clooney and Northland Road

In February 2005 the Department for Social Development published a consultation document, 'Clooney – A Catalyst for Change' on behalf of the Northern Ireland Administration.

The proposals set out in the document centred on the possible co-location of both Ebrington Primary School and Foyle & Londonderry College (F&LC) on part of the combined military base and playing fields at Clooney.

Following careful consideration of the views expressed during the consultation process and after extensive liaison between Government Departments, there is now a consensus within Government that, subject to the usual statutory approvals and feasibility studies, Foyle & Londonderry College and Ebrington Primary School should be co-located at Clooney.

This report summarises the key points from the consultation process and sets out the next steps in the redevelopment of the Clooney lands.

Consultation Report

February 2006

1.0 The Proposals

- 1.1 The Clooney lands consist of the former military base totalling 32 acres and the Clooney Playing Fields comprising 16 acres. Both sites, whilst separated by other lands, lie within half a mile of each other on the eastern side of the Limavady Road.
- 1.2 In addition to the Clooney proposals, comments were invited on the proposed ringfencing of the 50 acre land-bank at Northland Road, currently occupied by F&LC, as a preferred site for the possible future expansion of the Magee campus of the University of Ulster.
- 1.3 The public were also encouraged to offer their views on how the remaining lands at Clooney (approximately 25 acres) might be developed, taking account of potential restrictions in respect of future uses for lands currently in recreational use.
- 1.4 Speaking at the launch of the consultation document the then Education Minister Barry Gardiner MP encouraged local people to consider the proposals and help shape the next stage in the process by making their views known to Government.



2.0 Raising Awareness

- 2.1 Following the launch, DSD's North West Development Office distributed copies of the consultation document and held a series of workshops and public exhibitions across the city to facilitate debate and feedback on the development proposals. Officials from the North West Development Office and the Department of Education were available at these events to discuss the proposals with local people.
- 2.2 The one-month consultation process began on 16 February 2005. To raise awareness of

the consultation, advertisements / editorials were placed in local newspapers. Further coverage was generated by the Ministerial launch, resulting in interviews in local and regional television, radio and print media.

- 2.3 Some 900 copies of the consultation document 'Clooney – A Catalyst for Change' were distributed across the voluntary and community sector, business organisations, Government Departments, the education sector and elected representatives. Households adjacent to Clooney were covered by a targeted mail shot. The document was also available on the DSD website, which included an online feedback facility.

3.0 Engagement and Discussions

- 3.1 The consultation process was designed to engage with the widest possible range of individuals and groups within the city. This took the form of presenting the proposals and holding discussions at a number of workshops, targeted at residents in the Clooney area and with community groups from across the city.
- 3.2 In partnership with Londonderry Chamber of Commerce, DSD held a workshop with local business leaders. The Derry Children's Commission was also invited to deliver a workshop for children and young people from the city.
- 3.3 Public exhibitions were held in Foyleside Shopping Centre and Lisnagelvin Shopping Centre.
- 3.4 The proposals were also presented and debated at a specially convened meeting of Derry City Council, while both Foyle & Londonderry College and Ebrington Primary School carried out consultations with parents and School Governors.

4.0 Response to Proposals

- 4.1 A total of 672 written submissions were received in response to the consultation process. In the context of the number of consultation documents issued, this equates to a response rate of 74%, well above average for such an exercise.
- 4.2 With regards to the suggested educational developments, all written responses strongly endorsed the proposals and no objections were received. A strong consensus in favour of the relocation of both schools to Clooney and the proposed expansion of the UU at Magee also emerged from the workshops. Cross political party support was received from elected representatives on Derry City

Council and formal endorsement was also received from:

- ILEX URC
- University of Ulster
- Londonderry Chamber of Commerce
- Foyle & Londonderry College
- Ebrington Primary School
- Derry City Council

4.3 Some concern was expressed about the possibility of F&LC moving onto another split site – a reference to one appraisal option.

4.4 With regards to the request for specific views on how additional Clooney lands might be developed, the written responses included:

- 44 responses in favour of pre-school educational facilities to complement the two schools
- 340 responses in favour of sporting/leisure facilities
- 16 responses in favour of commercial development
- 7 responses in favour of additional housing

4.5 The most often expressed and most strongly endorsed aspirations emerging from the workshops and the written submissions may be summarised as follows:

- Retention of Clooney Playing Fields for recreational use
- Creation of a Centre of Sporting Excellence for the North West
- Creation of a Centre of Excellence for pre-school education
- Avoidance of a split site for Foyle & Londonderry
- Ensuring Clooney development complements that of Ebrington and Fort George

- Agreement on timescale for action to secure early progress

5.0 NEXT STEPS

5.1 Subject to the usual statutory approvals and the consideration of relevant business case requirements there is now a consensus within Government that Foyle & Londonderry College and Ebrington Primary School should be co-located at Clooney.

6.0 SITE PREPARATION

6.1 The North West Development Office has initiated a geotechnical analysis of the former military base and carried out a series of site surveys. The Department of Education will ensure that all necessary remediation work is completed as part of the site preparation required in advance of redevelopment.

7.0 CLOONEY MASTERPLANNING

7.1 In December 2005 the Secretary of State announced that approximately £20million will be allocated from the Schools Capital Programme to facilitate the relocation of Foyle & Londonderry College and Ebrington Primary School onto the Clooney lands.

7.2 At the same time DSD's North West Development Office appointed urban design consultants to produce an outline masterplan for the wider Clooney lands. This masterplan will guide the development of the wider Clooney lands in a way that maximises the regeneration benefits to both the Waterside area and the city as a whole.

7.3 The masterplan will, therefore, consider land use options, including the optimal location of the two schools, urban design principles and the most appropriate form of associated development on the remaining land at Clooney. It will take account of the development needs and recreational land requirements of the new schools within the context of other key considerations.

7.4 The Clooney masterplan will be completed by early March 2006 and will not, therefore, impact on any timetable for the relocation of Foyle & Londonderry College or Ebrington Primary School.

7.5 The proposals within the masterplan will however ensure informed decisions are taken on the next phase of developing the Clooney lands in line with the corporate approach agreed at the outset of the process and in liaison with key stakeholders and interested parties.



Support and endorsement - March 2005

"We now have the opportunity to unlock the enormous potential of lands on a main arterial route into the city, end the uncertainty as to the future location of Foyle & Londonderry College and, at the same time, facilitate the possible future expansion of the University of Ulster's Magee Campus."

Education Minister Barry Gardiner MP

"I welcome the fact that the Clooney lands are now in public ownership and I support the proposals to locate Ebrington PS and Foyle & Londonderry College on the former Clooney base. These proposals have the support of the local community in the Waterside."

William Hay MLA

"I had pressed Government over a period of time to use Clooney as the new location for Foyle & Londonderry College thereby affording expansion opportunities to the Magee campus. While this step may be overdue it is still very welcome."

Mark Durkan MLA

"Government's commitment to the regeneration of Derry and its practical demonstration of this by using former military sites to deliver benefits to local people is welcomed"

Gearóid Ó hEára, Mayor, Derry City Council

"Growth in size and quality at UU Magee are vital to the economic development of the NW region. The expansion of the UU onto the Foyle & Londonderry sites would facilitate the higher student numbers which will inevitably follow"

Richard Sterling, President, Londonderry Chamber of Commerce

"The proposed relocation of Foyle and Londonderry College sets the necessary precondition for the University to expand its provision and help sustain its growth in the twenty-first century"

Richard Barnett, Acting Vice Chancellor, University of Ulster