

2nd Draft



Crumlin Road Gaol/Girdwood Park Draft Masterplan

Draft Equality Impact Assessment

Public Consultation

The Department for Social Development asks respondents to the public consultation on the Draft Equality Impact Assessment of the Crumlin Road Gaol/Girdwood Park Draft Masterplan to address two matters –

- Consideration of any adverse policy impacts on any of the Section 75 groups, and
- Identification of any affected Section 75 groups and the nature of any adverse affect.

North Belfast Partnership submits the following comments on the Draft Equality Impact Assessment. These reflect the views of the majority of those members who attended a Board workshop that was held to consider the Draft Assessment. There were a number of issues were some of those present had serious reservations about the Draft Assessment, the Partnership expects that these members and others throughout the community will make their individual submissions to the Department.

1 The Broad Regeneration Context

The Partnership concluded that it was important to recognise the wider geographical context and to develop a comprehensive plan for this wider area. The Gaol / Girdwood site would be part of this overall plan for the regeneration of the area, such an approach would integrate the Masterplans for adjacent areas and other development proposals by Big Picture Development Ltd (owners of the former Court House), NIHE, BCHSST and St Malachy's College.

The Partnership recognises that development would have to be programmed and phased. It nevertheless believes that an integrated approach would significantly enhance the prospects of success. By committing to the redevelopment of the Lower Oldpark and Lower

Shankill it would help ally fear in these communities. It does not believe that this detracts from the plans for the subject site. An integrated approach would also be demonstrated by demonstrating the connection with the proposed redevelopment of the North West Quarter would be demonstrated by demonstrating a strong connection overcome the perceived isolation of the location and for commercial / civic type uses and assist the marketing of the site.

2 Housing

The Draft Assessment refers to the level and nature of housing need in the adjacent areas. Some of those present at the workshop suggested that there were different point thresholds across North Belfast for securing a priority listing. They suggested that the Department should investigate and take this into account in the Equality Impact Assessment.

It was stated at the meeting that a firm commitment to the redevelopment of the Lower Oldpark and Lower Shankill would help to mitigate some of the PUL concerns.

3 Ethnic Minorities and New Populations

Insufficient attention is given to both ethnic minority and new population communities in the draft Masterplan – either in consideration of the consequences for both communities from proposed plans – or in anticipation of both communities' respective and combined contributions to the overall regeneration planning for the Gaol and Girdwood Park.

An integrated approach would make this easier to achieve.

4 Sector 75 Groupings

Focus to date has largely been upon "religious belief" and/or "political opinion" – with caveats on the nature and mechanisms for accessing fully "representative" views from and on either category. However, scant attention has been given to the seven other Sector 75 groupings – to the detriment of both consideration on impacts (positive or adverse) but also contributions from such groupings to the overall regeneration plans.

5 Economic Climate

The draft Masterplan was drawn up in a significantly different economic climate than currently pertains. Accordingly, all regeneration plans need to be reviewed in the context of such a

dramatically changed – and significantly less promising – economic context.

It is important, given the high levels of expectation for early development, to present any development proposals within a phased and realistic time scale. This will undoubtedly cause concern that the aspirations of some communities will be met whilst others are being ignored. It will be very important to establish firm development principles in order to provide a measure of reassurance. It will be important to establish a review mechanism for continuing the engagement with the local communities to allow for changing need and development opportunities.

6 Civic and Political Leadership

The development of the Goal / Girdwood site is both the most significant and challenging opportunity for leaders throughout North Belfast. Those in leadership will face a new challenge, they will be stretched as they work together to achieve success.

The Partnership sees the need for an investment in a leadership development programme.

20 January, 2008