



Derry City & Strabane
District Council
Comhairle
Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSratha Báin
Derry Citty & Strábane
Districk Council



4th April 2017 Stakeholder Event – Derry City Centre & Retailing Briefing Note

Derry City Centre Background:

Derry City has its own unique identity and it is important that these unique elements are retained and enhanced. Identifying what is special about Derry City centre and capitalising on it e.g. Conservation Areas and built heritage, will be a key marketing tool to encourage people to live in and use our city centre.

Retailing is also seen as a leisure activity – by encouraging mixed use into Derry City centre and making it the destination for shopping, food / drink and leisure, it will encourage people to spend more time here, thereby helping the economy – both day time and evening.

There is still a demand for ‘out of town centre’ shopping by developers, as the multiples are keen to occupy large spaces, with the possibility of lower rates and rents. While out of town developments are attractive to shoppers, developers and retailers, it is important to be mindful that these developments may cause a threat to city and town centres.

Regional Context

The **Regional Development Strategy (RDS)** states that **Derry should be the focus** for administration, shopping, commerce, specialised services, cultural amenities and tourism within the North West. It also states that Derry is well suited to provide a regional level of service to much of the western part of Northern Ireland and to a substantial part of Donegal. Cross-border retailing is important to Derry.

Derry is the largest centre in Northern Ireland outside of Belfast; it is however significantly smaller than Belfast which has a total retail floorspace of 341,070 sqm, whereas **Derry has a total retail floorspace of 137,800** which is more comparable with Ballymena (132,490 sqm) and Newry (132,710 sqm). (figures from GL Hearn 2014). When benchmarked against other retail locations in Northern Ireland, the city is ranked 3rd with Belfast and Ballymena securing first and second positions. (Colliers International market analysis)

There are also a number of **other retail centres in the North West** such as Omagh, Letterkenny, Strabane, Limavady and Coleraine. Derry needs to provide a significantly different retail offer to these areas, as well as developing its unique assets in relation to cultural, tourism and leisure.

Policy Context in relation to Derry

The **Derry-Londonderry Retail Study 2012** carried out by DOE that the city is the primary location for comparison retailing in the North-West, with 88% of respondents stating that they carried out this form of shopping in the city. The vast majority of respondents to the surveys stated that comparison shopping is carried out at Crescent link, Lisnagelvin and the Central Area. The study also observed that there appears to be an oversupply of retail warehousing floor space in the city. The Department prepared a statement of case in relation to a retail appeal in January 2016 and the following points in relation to capacity were made: There is a vast over-supply of retail floorspace in the Derry area (i.e. there is too much provision relative to the amount of expenditure being generated by consumers) and this means there is currently a negative quantitative need for additional retail floorspace. The statement of case also made the point that retailers in Derry are not trading at benchmark levels or anywhere near benchmark, since there is not enough spending power to go round. Given the constantly shifting nature of retail and the introduction of new factors such as Brexit, it is proposed that a further retail study is carried out for the city.

Derry Area Plan 2011 sets out the current extent of Derry ‘City Centre’. The current DAP 2011 defines the boundary of the city centre through 2 distinct designations:

- **The Commercial Core**
- **The Central Area**

The terminology used in the DAP 2011 differs somewhat from that used in other plans of that era. However during the plan period it has been taken that the 2 areas form the 'City Centre' of Derry. More specifically the commercial core could be viewed as the 'Primary Retail Area' centred on your primary shopping centres and streets. The Central Area could be viewed as the wider 'City Centre' and this large designation included areas with a mixture of uses such as retail, residential, office, open space and civic/education uses. Inclusion of these areas were seen to acknowledge the 'important role that a diverse and vibrant Central Area plays in the life of the city and district.' Outside these areas planning policy is to control the nature and range of convenience and comparative goods sold in order to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the viability and vitality of the 'City Centre'.

Derry has 4 District Centres, the primary role of which is the provision of locally accessible convenience goods. These are located at Lisnagelvin, Northside, Springtown and Rathmore. In addition to these there are significant comparison offers at Crescent Link, Lisnagelvin and to a lesser extent at Bunrana Road. There is also significant interest in relation to convenience retailing along the edge of the existing Central Area with a current application for retail at the former Arntz site and an extant approval for retail at the Niche Drinks site on Rosstown Road.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement 2015 (SPPS): The SPPS is the main policy and guidance in relation to retailing and town centres. It aims to support and sustain vibrant town centres across Northern Ireland, through the promotion of established town centres as the appropriate first choice location of retailing and other complementary functions, consistent with the RDS. A **town centre first approach** for the location of future retailing and other main town centre uses is the policy direction and it states that planning authorities must take a town first approach in their LDP. It sets out that in relation to retail decision making, that a **sequential approach** should be adopted in LDPs. It also encourages that a **range of diverse uses** should be protected and enhanced in the town centre such as leisure, cultural and community facilities, housing and business. **High quality design** should be promoted in town centres and accessibility should be maintained and improved to and within the town centre.

Key District Derry City Centre issues:

- **Regional role of city centre**
- **City centre retailing vs. out of centre retailing**
- **City as a location for living, working, shopping, socialising and visiting**
- **Regeneration-Key sites at Fort George, Ebrington, Queen's Quay etc**
- **Riverside strategy, principles of urbanism and good design**
- **Parking policy for city centre**
- **University expansion**

Possible Options

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Derry City Centre	Existing Central Area & Commercial Core etc. Cityside and Waterside	Existing Central Area plus Compact Cityside focus	Grow the overall central areas

What are your key issues? – Please add any LDP relevant issues to this list.

Questions

- What would be your vision for Derry City Centre?
- What is your opinion on the retail capacity of Derry-current and future?
- How can we further improve our city centre?
- Is the City Centre boundary for Derry, as currently defined in the Derry Area Plan adequate to meet the wider objectives as set out in the RDS and SPPS?
- Does the City Centre boundary for Derry, as currently defined in the Derry Area Plan accurately reflect modern shopping patterns and habits?
- What role/status should district and local centres have?
- In Planning terms, what are the most pertinent issues affecting your area of interest?
- Do you consider that the current planning policies are generally adequate – if not, how do you suggest we could improve them?
- What opportunities exist in and around the city centre for retail, offices, leisure etc?
- What opportunity areas exist in and around the city centre for wider regeneration and improvement?
- Is the City Centre well 'connected'? Globally, regionally and locally.