

Greater Clarendon (Sailortown) Masterplan – Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Report

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Greater Clarendon Masterplan was commissioned by the Department for Communities (Belfast Regeneration Directorate) and the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) for the area of Greater Clarendon, known locally as ‘Sailortown’, and was prepared jointly by Bilfinger GVA and AECOM. It was created to provide an overarching framework for the future development of Sailortown - an exciting future destination adjacent to City Quays north of Belfast City Centre.
- 1.2 A Section 75 screening exercise concluded that the Masterplan presented the possibility of a minor adverse impact on good relations between those of differing political opinion and religious belief, and that further consultation should take place through an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) to obtain the views of the general public and interested parties as to whether there would indeed be an impact, and if so, to mitigate the adverse impact as appropriate. The outcome of this Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is the subject of this report.
- 1.3 This report concludes, following the evidence gathered through the public consultation, that the proposals contained within the Greater Clarendon (Sailortown) Masterplan present no adverse impact on good relations. The Greater Clarendon Masterplan aims to complement the existing suite of statutory plans and policies such as the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP) as the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy. If any concerns arise in the future in relation to good relations from specific proposed developments in the Greater Clarendon Masterplan area these will be considered during the planning process.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Masterplan was commissioned by the Department for Communities (Belfast Regeneration Directorate) and the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) for the area of Greater Clarendon, known locally as ‘Sailortown’, and has been prepared jointly by Bilfinger GVA and AECOM.
- 2.2 The Masterplan was originally commissioned in 2008, to provide an overarching framework for the development of the area. An initial draft of the Masterplan was prepared in 2009 but this has now undergone a series of updates to incorporate the ongoing transport engineering and environmental work that has been undertaken in relation to the York Street Interchange. This is a proposed highway improvement scheme that will have a significant impact on the area, and is considered to be the largest infrastructural investment in Belfast within the coming years.
- 2.3 In addition to the York Street Interchange proposals, the updated Masterplan has taken into consideration the new developments and planning proposals which have

come forward in the area. Account has also been taken of a number of wider strategic and policy documents which are relevant to the area. This includes the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2015 which was adopted in September 2014, and provides Plan Proposals for each Council area including Belfast.

- 2.4 Annex A identifies the Masterplan area. The area covers a total of 22.34 hectares, and is bounded by the A2 (Great Patrick Street/Dunbar Link/Albert Square), Donegall Quay, Dock Street, Corporation Street, York Street and the River Lagan. Although the areas identified within Figure 1 define the extent of the Draft Masterplan area, the study has not limited its analysis to the confines of the red line boundary and considers the wider setting of Sailortown within Greater Clarendon and neighbouring districts of the city.
- 2.5 The City Quays area, which is located directly adjacent to the River Lagan and immediately next to the existing community in the Sailortown area, is also given consideration. Guidance is also provided for further regeneration which is already well underway in parts of the area, which has addressed decades of under-investment which has put Sailortown back on the map as an area with a strong future which can respond positively to its relationship with the surrounding areas.
- 2.6 The draft Masterplan was subject to public consultation, starting on 29 March 2016 and concluding on 30 June 2016 lasting a total of 14 weeks. The Final Masterplan is accessible on the Department for Communities' website.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Greater Clarendon (Sailortown) area is situated within the northern portion of Belfast city centre. It is a historically significant area which has, in the past, been intrinsically linked to the economy of the city and its trade.
- 3.2 Despite its rich heritage the wider area has witnessed significant decline over the past 50 years with the reduction in population and employment opportunities. For almost 40 years the motorway has effectively "cut off" the city centre from the Dock. Land cleared around the motorway flyovers has remained in use as surface car parking, depots and vacant sites and only a few fragments of the area's heritage remain.
- 3.3 One of the Department's regeneration objectives for the City Centre is to create a sustainable and vibrant city centre which supports a quality lifestyle attractive to inward investors and potential future residents and to promote mixed-use sustainable development in order to contribute to the viability and vitality of the City Centre and sustainable communities. The Department recognises the need to secure maximum integration between the physical development and economic growth.
- 3.4 In relation to the Laganside designated area, the vision to create a waterfront in Belfast city centre was set out in the Laganside Concept Plan completed in 1987. Laganside Corporation was established in 1989 to make this concept a reality. The statutory objective of the Corporation was to secure the regeneration of the

designated area which in 1989, was characterised by vacant, derelict and under-utilised land contributing little to the economic and social life of the City alongside a river whose tidal range resulted in exposed unsightly and fetid mudflats.

- 3.5 Today the waterfront area has been transformed into a desirable place to live and work and a recognised destination for leisure and recreational activity. The Lagan Weir which became operational in 1994 was the major catalyst for the transformation of the River Lagan and its surrounding environs. Other key regeneration developments near to the Greater Clarendon area include the establishment of the Cathedral Quarter as the City's arts and cultural quarter, the development of the Titanic Quarter, the ongoing development of the Ulster University's Belfast campus, as well as extensive upgrades to the city centre's public realm through the Belfast Streets Ahead scheme.
- 3.6 The Laganside Corporation restored Clarendon Dock and facilitated a process of waterside regeneration in the late twentieth century which has led to many businesses being established in the area. Individual housing developments have also started to appear and a fledgling population is forming.
- 3.7 However, despite these successes, the area remains disconnected from the city centre and lacks a coherent strategy to guide investment in the future. The Department is of the view that it is now appropriate, given the progress made as detailed above, to examine in detail the regeneration needs of the Greater Clarendon (Sailortown) Area. The Masterplan approach provides an appropriate framework within which to review the regeneration needs of the area, creating a new future for the area and breathing new life into an integral part of Belfast.

4. Policy Aim

- 4.1 The following presents the key aims of the Masterplan:
- i. Provide an overarching framework for the development of the area;
 - ii. Incorporate the on-going transport engineering and environmental work that has been undertaken in relation to the York Street Interchange;
 - iii. Promote improved pedestrian and cycle links with the city centre and the Laganside area, by addressing poor physical connectivity;
 - iv. Facilitate social and economic connections through the design of the environment and the improvement of key routes;
 - v. Encourage active ground floor uses to bring life and activity to key streets and spaces within the area;
 - vi. Promote a scale and form of development that protects and strengthens the heritage and urban form within the area, with potential for statement buildings at the intersections, creating sense of place and assisting orientation within the area;
 - vii. Promote new employment opportunities;
 - viii. Promote the provision of new housing development; and

- ix. Provide a co-ordinated approach to regeneration which takes into account proposed accessibility and transport arrangements, including proposals for the development and improvement of the public transport network.

5. Section 75 Screening

5.1 Consideration was given to any potential impact on equality of opportunity and good relations during the Section 75 screening exercise. The screening concluded that the draft Masterplan presented no adverse impact in terms of equality of opportunity for any of the categories. However it did conclude that there may be a potential minor adverse impact on good relations between those of differing political opinion and religious belief, and that further consultation should take place through an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) to determine the views of the general public and interested parties as to whether there could be an impact, and if so to mitigate adverse impact as appropriate. Therefore this EqIA report focuses on answering the question ‘Does the Masterplan present any potential negative impact on good relations between those of differing religious belief and/or political opinion?’ and not on other equality matters.

6. Data Collection and Consultation

6.1 Data on religious belief and political opinion was obtained from the 2011 Census data and from voting patterns from the 2015 General Election and 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly Election.

Section 75 Category	Details of Evidence/Information
Religious Belief	<p>The 2011 Northern Ireland Census recorded the following statistics with regard to religious belief in the Belfast North parliamentary constituency:</p> <p>46.94% Catholic 45.67% Protestant (or other Christian) 1.04% Other 6.36% None</p> <p>Sinclair Seamen’s Presbyterian Church and St Joseph’s Roman Catholic Church are situated in the Draft Masterplan area.</p> <p>The Draft Masterplan area is entirely located within the Duncairn ward, which has a majority protestant and British population (64%/60%) according to the 2011 census data. However the area for development is situated much closer to the New Lodge residential area than to those housing areas within the Duncairn ward, and a small section of the ‘study area’ falls into this ward. The majority of the immediate local</p>

Section 75 Category	Details of Evidence/Information
	<p>residents in the adjoining New Lodge ward identify as being from the Nationalist and Roman Catholic community (2011 census, 89% identify as 'Roman Catholic' and 57% as 'Irish'). Annex B shows the Masterplan area and study area in relation to electoral wards.</p>
Political Opinion	<p>The 2011 Northern Ireland Census recorded the following statistics with regard to national identity in the Belfast North parliamentary constituency:</p> <p>48.66% British 29.88% Irish 27.28% Northern Irish 4.35% Other</p> <p>During the 2015 General Election 40,593 votes were cast in Belfast North. These were distributed as follows:</p> <p>DUP, 47.0% Sinn Fein, 33.9% SDLP, 8.2% Alliance, 7.3% Other candidates, 3.6%</p> <p>During the 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly Election 36,594 valid votes were cast in Belfast North. The first preference votes were distributed as follows:</p> <p>DUP, 35.0% Sinn Fein, 26.6% SDLP, 10.6% UUP, 5.4% Alliance, 7.0% Other candidates, 15.4%</p>

6.2 From the available data above it can be concluded that there is a slightly higher proportion of 'Unionists' (and therefore Protestants) than 'Nationalists' (and therefore Roman Catholics) in the North Belfast constituency. However this varies greatly within individual areas?, with a high proportion of Nationalists/Roman Catholics in the New Lodge ward and a majority of Unionists/Protestants in the Duncairn ward.

6.3 The decision was taken to align the consultation on the EqIA with the consultation on the Masterplan itself. The draft Masterplan, section 75 screening document and questionnaire were published together on the Department's website and the public consultation commenced on 29th March 2016. It was decided that, although the typical consultation timeframe is 12 weeks, that a 14 week consultation period should be scheduled due to the Easter holiday week occurring and assembly election taking place during the consultation period.

6.4 The proposals were also on public display at the below times in Belfast Central Library, where Departmental officials were on site to discuss and answer questions. Hard copies of the Masterplan, screening document and questionnaire were available for the public to take away.

Monday 18th April (1.00pm – 4.00pm)
Thursday 21st April (4.00pm - 7.00pm)
Monday 25th April (1.00pm – 4.00pm)
Thursday 28th April (4.00pm – 7.00pm)

6.5 An advert was placed in the local press (Belfast Telegraph, Irish News and Newsletter) which alerted the general public to the consultation and publicised the sessions outlined above. It also provided contact details for officials should any queries arise and explained how and where the documentation could be accessed. The consultation documents were placed online and were made available in other formats upon request.

6.6 Hard copies of the consultation documents were sent by post to 30 different organisations, and by email to another 6. These are listed in Annex C. Elected representatives including all MLAs, MPs, MEPs and Belfast City Councillors were advised by written correspondence that the consultation period had opened and were invited to respond and offer comments. Other groups and individuals were informed by email including:

- a. Local stakeholders such as Carrick Hill Residents Association and Sailortown Regeneration Group,
- b. Many community and voluntary groups across NI,
- c. Other political parties without elected representation,
- d. Local councils and other government agencies.

7. Summary of Responses

7.1 In total, 6 consultation responses to the Masterplan and EqIA were received. The responses were largely positive, with key stakeholders expressing support for the principles established in the Masterplan. A summary of responses to the consultation and comments from the Department are outlined in section 9 of the Greater Clarendon (Sailortown) Masterplan.

- 7.2 Clanmil Housing Group's response was the only one which made reference to equality matters. They indicated that they did not agree with the overall outcome of the screening exercise – namely that there may be a minor impact on good relations. However, although they believe that the Masterplan's proposals present no negative impact on good relations, they suggest that it is important to provide more social housing in the area, and that any social housing could be branded as "Shared Housing" so that the entire community would be welcomed, with good relations being considered when developing such plans. The final Masterplan, as was the case with the draft, identifies potential areas as suitable for residential purposes but does not specifically identify locations for social housing.
- 7.3 The public information sessions held at Belfast Central Library allowed for informal conversations with local residents, many of whom took away copies of the Masterplan and screening documents. Comments from members of the public were universally positive, with many residents welcoming the proposals to promote the development of the Greater Clarendon (Sailortown) area and to encourage more housing in the area. No concerns regarding equality of opportunity or good relations were raised.

8. Analysis

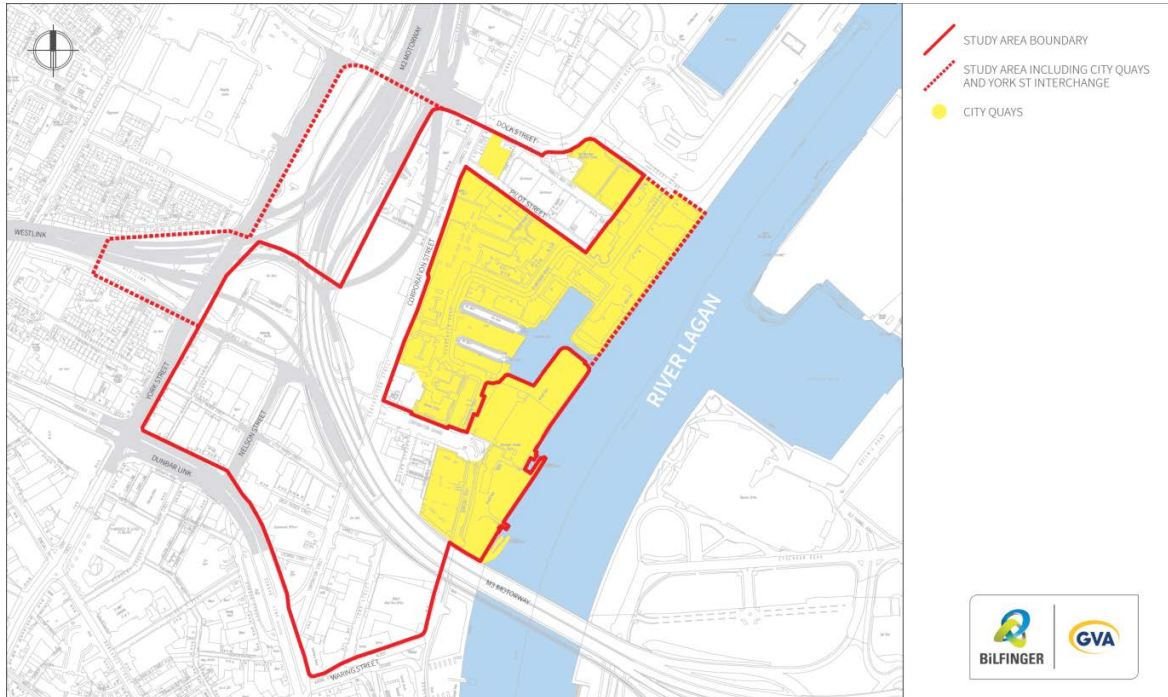
- 8.1 As explained in section 5, this EqIA report specifically focuses on answering the question 'Does the Masterplan present any potential negative impact on good relations between those of differing religious belief and/or political opinion?'
- 8.2 No responses were received from elected representatives (over 200 were consulted) and other political parties. Similarly no comments or responses were received from churches, other religious organisations or community groups, with the exception of Sailortown Regeneration Group whose response was largely positive and made no reference to equality concerns.
- 8.3 Clanmil Housing Group's response was the only one which made reference to equality matters. They indicated that they did not agree with the overall outcome of the screening exercise – namely that there may be a minor impact on good relations. However in arguing that it is important to provide more social housing in the area they suggest that this could be branded as "Shared Housing". The final Masterplan identifies potential areas as suitable for residential purposes but does not specifically identify locations for social housing and therefore does not adopt this branding.
- 8.4 Furthermore no concerns regarding equality of opportunity or good relations were raised during the conversations with members of the public at the four information sessions at Belfast Central Library.
- 8.5 All of the evidence gathered in relation to the consultation on EqIA suggests that the proposals outlined in the Greater Clarendon Masterplan will have no negative impact on good relations between those of differing religious belief or political opinion. In addition, whilst the EqIA consultation did not focus on the issue, none of the evidence obtained calls into question the outcome of the screening exercise in relation to

equality of opportunity and the Department remains satisfied that the Masterplan presents no negative impact amongst different Section 75 categories in this regard.

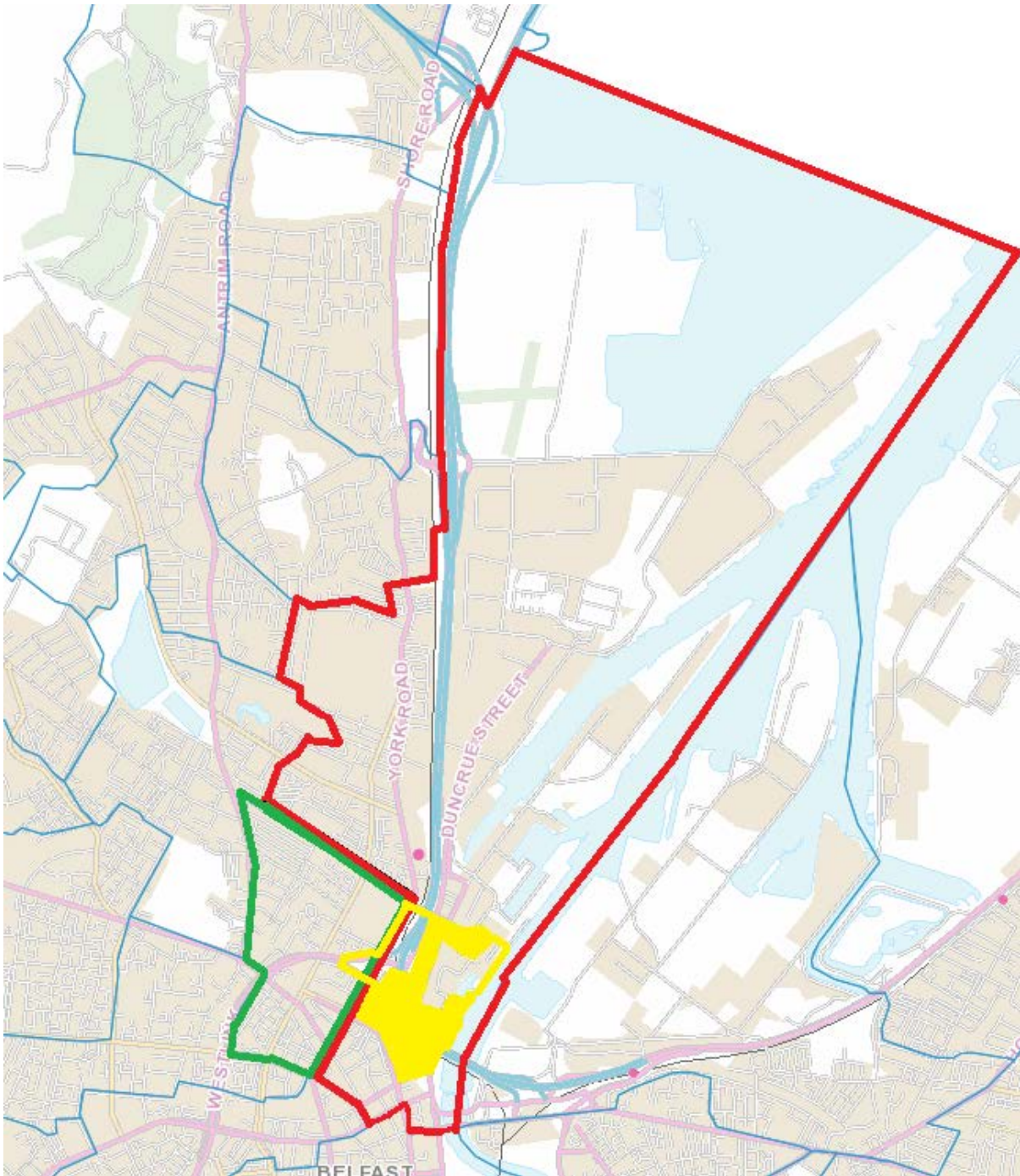
9. Conclusions

- 9.1 The evidence gathered through the public consultation, which has been outlined and analysed in the earlier sections, leads the Department to conclude that the proposals contained within the Greater Clarendon (Sailortown) Masterplan present no adverse impact on good relations.
- 9.2 The Greater Clarendon Masterplan aims to complement the existing suite of statutory plans and policies such as the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP) as the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy. If any concerns arise in relation to good relations from specific proposed developments in the Greater Clarendon Masterplan area these will be considered during the planning process. As such no monitoring arrangements need to be put in place in addition to the normal planning process.

Map outlining the Masterplan study area



Boundaries of electoral wards in relation to the Masterplan area



Key

- Red bounded area – Ducairn Electoral Ward
- Green bounded area – New Lodge Electoral Ward
- Yellow Bounded area – Masterplan study area
- Yellow Shaded area – Masterplan area

Organisations who received hard copies of the consultation documents

The Executive Council of the Inn of Court of NI
Belfast Solicitors Association
The Law Society of NI
The Queen's University of Belfast School of Law
University of Ulster School of Law
Northern Ireland Court Service
Courts & Tribunal Service
Royal Courts of Justice
The Board of Deputies of British Jews
Civil Law Reform Division (Department of Finance and Personnel)
Law Centre (NI)
Equality Commission for NI
District Judge (Magistrates Court)
Human Rights Commission
Northern Ireland Ombudsman
Confederation of British Industry
General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland
Federation of Small Businesses
NI Association of Citizens Advice Bureau
Food Standards Agency (NI)
NI Chamber of Commerce & Industry
NIC/ICTU
NI Council for Voluntary Action
The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)
NI Judicial Appointments Commission
Community Relations Council
Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO)
Participation & the Practice of Rights Project
Disability Action

Organisations who received consultation documents by email

Information Commissioner's Office
Catholic Bishops of NI
HM Revenue & Customs
Lord Chief Justice Office
NI Association for Mental Health (NIAMH)
Northern Ireland Law Commission