



DfC

Department
for Communities

www.communities-ni.gov.uk



Land at Alliance Crescent, Belfast

The Department for Communities invites proposals for the development of land at Alliance Crescent, Belfast

September 2019

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1. Introduction and Strategic Context

- 1.1 The Department for Communities (the Department) invites proposals for the development of lands at Alliance Crescent, Belfast. Proposals should be submitted no later than **12 noon on Thursday 7th November 2019**.
- 1.2 The overall objective of the competition is to promote sustainable urban regeneration by selecting a high quality development proposal that also meets the Department's regeneration objectives for the local area. In seeking to work in partnership with the private sector, the Department recognises the contribution that this sector can make to urban regeneration in terms of innovative, high quality design, professional expertise and financing.
- 1.3 The Department plays the lead role in promoting and co ordinating the implementation of urban regeneration programmes and schemes in towns and city centres throughout Northern Ireland. Belfast Regeneration Directorate carries out this role throughout Belfast.
- 1.4 The Department's statutory regeneration authority derives from:
- The Planning (NI) Order 1991 which provides the legislative basis for comprehensive development schemes, land acquisition and disposal of land and the extinguishment of public rights of way, and
 - The Social Need (NI) Order 1986 which provides the statutory basis for granting financial assistance to projects in areas of special social need and the undertaking of environmental improvement schemes

2. The Mixed Use Site

2.1 This vacant site, measuring approximately c.0.8323 acres, occupies a prominent position within a densely populated area along the Alliance Peace Wall within the Crumlin/Ardoyne Neighbourhood Renewal Area in North Belfast.

A Preliminary Risk Assessment (PRA) of the site was carried out in September 2018 to assess any levels of contamination within the site.

Following completion of the Desktop Study and PRA the risk associated with the proposed development is considered low to moderate due to the presence of potential made ground deposits and potential for a range of organic/inorganic contaminants to be present including asbestos containing materials and PCBs. Potential developers should be prepared to take appropriate remedial action if necessary.



2.2 The following Belfast Planning Service and DfI Roads considerations should be noted:

The site is located within the urban area of Belfast. The adopted Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP) has been quashed as a result of a judgement in the Court of Appeal delivered on 18th May 2017. As a consequence of this, the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 (BUAP) is now the statutory development plan for the area with draft BMAP (dBMAP) remaining a material consideration. The weight to be afforded is a matter of judgement for the decision maker.

The site is located within the development limits of Belfast in accordance with the BUAP and dBMAP. The site is located within a 'Housing Renewal Area' as designated in the BUAP. Appendix 4 of the BUAP states that proposals for redevelopment areas and housing action areas are contained within the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's District housing plans for districts within the Belfast urban Area. The site is unzoned white land within dBMAP.

2.3 The site encompasses an area of open space to the south of Alliance Crescent and to the north of an existing peace wall. Any proposals on this site will have to comply with the tests of Policy OS 1 of PPS 8. This policy states that development

will not be permitted that would result in the loss of existing open space. However, an exception will be permitted where it is clearly shown that redevelopment will bring substantial community benefits that decisively outweigh the loss of the open space. An exception will also be permitted where it is demonstrated that the loss of open space will have no significant detrimental impact on the amenity, character or biodiversity of an area and where alternative provision is made by the developer which is at least as accessible to current users and at least equivalent in terms of size, usefulness, attractiveness, safety and quality.

2.4 The site partially lies within the 1 in 100 year floodplain therefore any development proposals will have to comply with the tests of Policy FLD 1 of PPS 15. Development will not be permitted within the 1 in 100 year fluvial flood plain unless the applicant can demonstrate that the proposal constitutes an exception to the policy. Where the principle of development is accepted by the planning authority through meeting the 'Exceptions Test', the applicant is required to submit a Flood Risk Assessment that identifies all sources of flood risk to and from the proposed development and provides adequate measures to manage and mitigate any increase in flood risk arising from the development.

2.5 The layout and design of new development and consideration of the amenity impacts are a fundamental part of the development management process. Therefore the layout, siting design and external appearance of the buildings are material considerations. Building height and massing should be appropriate to the scale of the street. A number of material considerations are relevant: Established character; Density, plot size, amenity space; Loss of amenity, overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing, loss of light, dominance; Design, materials, finishes; Built form, scale, massing; Environmental factors (noise, smell, fumes, other sources of pollution).

2.6 A Transport Assessment Form (TAF) will be required at planning application stage to demonstrate how the development will function in transportation terms. Until the scale and type of proposed development is confirmed, it is not possible to confirm whether a detailed Transport Assessment/Traffic Statement will be necessary.

Any vehicular access to the site must satisfy Policy AMP2 of Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) and Development Control Advice Note 15 (DCAN 15) — Vehicular Access Standards. Proposed access onto minor roads is preferable. There are currently no lowered kerb vehicular accesses from Alliance

Crescent to the Development site. A vehicular access off Alliance Crescent to an existing electricity sub-station is located in the centre of the site.

The required level of parking provision will depend on the proposed land use. If the level of proposed in curtilage parking falls below the amount of spaces required by DFI Roads, a parking survey will have to be undertaken and submitted in support of the proposed development.

2.7 The comments of consultees are a key part of the development management process as they provide expert advice on a range of matters. In addition to DfI Roads, Environmental Health, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Rivers Agency and NI Water will provide guidance on general amenity issues, contaminated land, flooding, drainage, surface water and provision of sewerage infrastructure. In the absence of a formal PAD, consultation with these consultees is not possible, and therefore we cannot confirm the level of environmental information that would be required to accompany any future planning application at this location. Given part of the site lies within the floodplain, it is likely that a Flood Risk Assessment will be required for the reasons outlined above. A Noise Assessment and Air Quality Assessment may also be required if the proposed land use so requires.

- 2.8 Car parking and servicing for the development must satisfy: Quality Residential Environment – Policy QD1 of PPS7, non-residential development – Policy AMP7 of PPS3 & associated ‘Parking Standards’. Any reductions in the level of car parking must be fully justified (residential in accordance with DCAN 8: Housing in Existing Urban Areas). Parking could be considered on the basis of in-curtilage provision, in lay-bys / on-street (subject to capacity and availability), or any combination thereof. The proposed development site lies outside of the Belfast City Fringe Area of Parking Restraint. Parking Policy is set out in Policy TRAN1 in Part 3, Volume 1 of BMAP.
- 2.9 Alliance Crescent which runs through a predominantly residential area adjacent to northern site boundary is an adopted DfI road network. Traffic calming measures are currently in operation on Alliance Crescent to reduce speed (19mph) and the volume of local and through traffic. Further information on traffic calming can be found at the following link: www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/traffic-calming-information-leaflet
- 2.10 There are currently no plans to extend the Belfast Rapid Transit Scheme beyond the east / west route through Belfast City Centre. DfI Roads Belfast Rapid Transit Glider Team – Transport Projects and Business Services Division should be contacted if further details are required.
- 2.11 Belfast LDP, BMAP & BMTP do not include any significant transport proposals likely to impact on the future development of this site.
- 2.12 No parking restrictions in the form of urban clearways or waiting restrictions currently exist on Alliance Crescent along the frontage of the site.
- 2.13 There are a number of street lighting poles located at the back of the footway on Alliance Crescent adjacent to northern site boundary.

3. Vision Statement

- 3.1 The Department is seeking a development proposal for this site which, as well as addressing a specific pocket of dereliction, will contribute to the wider regeneration of the Alliance area as a key residential area in North Belfast. The winning proposal will be a sustainable development which enhances the existing streetscape for the benefit of those living in the immediate area and those travelling through it. As far as possible, it will also seek to contribute to the social, community and economic renewal of the local area.
- 3.2 The Regional Development Strategy “Building a Better Future” is a strategic and long term perspective on the future development of Northern Ireland up to the year 2035. It has been prepared in close consultation with the community and aims to take account of the economic ambitions and needs of the Region and put in place spatial planning, transport and housing priorities that will support and enable the aspirations of the Region to be met. It will influence the future distribution of activities throughout the Region. It is not limited to land use planning but recognises that policies for physical development and use of space have an important bearing on other matters such as developing a strong spatially based economy, a healthy living environment and an inclusive society which tackles inequalities relating to health, education and living standards. The promotion of sustainable development allied to social and economic cohesion is an integral part of the drive to provide a strategic and long-term perspective for the development of the region up to the year 2035. “Building a Better Future” is available online at the following address: www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/rds2035.pdf
- 3.3 It has been confirmed by the Housing Executive that there is no social housing need in the area.
- 3.4 The site is listed as unzoned whiteland in the dBMAP.
- 3.5 It is advisable that any proposal is discussed with the Planning Service of Belfast City Council prior to the submission of a planning application. This would take the form of a Pre Application Discussion which would be requested formally in writing.

4. Design Brief

4.1 Following consultation with relevant statutory bodies, the Department has identified the following objectives for the development.

<p>PLANNING AND DESIGN</p>	<p>Objective 1: To secure a development that complements and enhances the existing Alliance Crescent streetscape in terms of both design and use.</p>
<p>Further information on planning policy statements and guidance is available from:</p> <p>Belfast Planning Service Belfast City Council Cecil Ward Building 4–10 Linenhall Street Belfast BT2 8BP</p> <p>www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy.htm</p>	<p>General Design Considerations</p> <p>In general, the proposed development should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be designed to comply with the Northern Ireland Building Regulations (NI) 2012; • as far as possible, be in scale with other buildings in the area; • be compatible with buildings in the vicinity, in terms of design and choice of materials. • any development should be designed to deter crime. • Applicants should have regard to the content of ‘Living Places: an Urban Design Guide for Northern Ireland’ (September 2014). In particular applicants should be asked to indicate how each of the ‘10 Qualities’ identified have been considered and addressed. • Advice on Design and Access Statements, can be found, under ‘Advice’ on the Planning Portal at www.planningni.gov.uk/index/advice/practice-notes/dm_practice_note_12_das_complete-3.pdf. • In addition to the source noted, information on consideration of “Environmental Sustainability” is also contained within the SPPS and the annexes to the DMPN on Design & Access Statements noted above.

<p>PLANNING AND DESIGN</p>	<p>Objective 1: To secure a development that complements and enhances the existing Alliance Crescent streetscape in terms of both design and use.</p>
	<p>General Design Considerations</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this case a Design and Access Statement is not required for a development proposal on this site. • PPS1 has, since September 2015, been superceded by the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS). <p>Layout, Design and Amenity Matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The layout and design of any new development along with consideration for the resulting amenity impacts are a fundamental part of the development management process. Therefore, the layout, siting, design and external appearance of the buildings are material considerations. The external site characteristics including the established character and nature of the surrounding area, existing land uses, and environmental quality are also material in this respect. • Within this general area there are a number of material considerations that are relevant and are largely dealt in current published planning policy such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established character, any designations; • Density, plot sizes, private amenity space; • Loss of amenity, overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing, loss of light, over dominance; • Design, materials, finishes; • Built form, size, scale and massing; • Prejudice to comprehensive development;

<p>PLANNING AND DESIGN</p>	<p>Objective 1: To secure a development that complements and enhances the existing Alliance Crescent streetscape in terms of both design and use.</p>
	<p>Specific Design Consideration</p> <p>More specifically, following a review of relevant strategic documents and consultation with the relevant statutory bodies and key stakeholders the following should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on the scale of the proposed development, further information may be required in the form of a Detailed Transport Assessment, based on the guidelines contained in the Transport Assessment – Guidelines for Development Proposals in Northern Ireland, to ensure that any adverse traffic and transport impacts can be migrated effectively and minimize the overall effect on the surrounding network and encourage sustainable means of travel. • The levels of development beyond which a Detailed Transport Assessment would be required are given at paragraph 3.5 of the Transport Assessment document – ‘Guidelines for Development Proposals in Northern Ireland’ published in 2006 (A–Z Index under ‘T’). www.planningni.gov.uk
	<p>Please note that the preferred developer will be required to obtain planning permission and all other necessary approvals and to liaise with the Statutory Authorities in the design process. The Developer should also discuss their proposals with Transport NI at an early stage to determine whether a traffic impact assessment is necessary along with the provision of sufficient parking for the development.</p>

<p>REGENERATION IMPACTS</p>	<p>Objective 2: To secure a development that will have positive regeneration impacts on the local community.</p>
	<p>Submissions should identify potential positive regeneration impacts of the proposed development. These could include: improvement to quality of local environment; contribution to local economy; job creation; provision of services/facilities to local community; addressing housing need etc.</p>
<p>ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY</p>	<p>Objective 3: To secure a development that promotes economic sustainability.</p>
<p>Further information on sustainable development is available from The Executive Office.</p> <p>www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/resources-support-sustainable-development</p>	<p>Submissions should demonstrate that proposals are sustainable (e.g. proposals for a retail led scheme should submit evidence regarding retail capacity and any likely displacement).</p>
<p>ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY</p>	<p>Objective 4: To secure a development that promotes environmental sustainability.</p>
<p>Further information on sustainable development is available from The Executive Office.</p>	<p>The Department is also keen to promote environmental sustainability through, for example, the use of sustainable materials, energy efficiency measures, and renewable energy products etc and welcomes proposals which support this agenda.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within this general area there are a number of material considerations that are relevant and are largely dealt in current published planning policy such as: • Environmental factors (noise, smells, fumes, other forms of pollution) • Provision and treatment of open space.

ACCESSIBILITY & EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY	Objective 5: To secure a development that is easily accessible to all members of the community and that, where possible, promotes equality of opportunity.
<p>Further information on equality issues is available from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.</p> <p>www.equalityni.org/site/default.asp?secid=home</p>	<p>Submissions should consider ease of access to and within the building for people with disabilities, in compliance with all regulations with regard to disability. The Department is also keen to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between and within the groups identified under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and welcomes proposals which support this agenda. This could include commitments to build ‘Lifetime’ homes; to equal opportunity employment; to creating neutral/shared space etc.</p> <p>The Department is keen to promote social clauses regarding employment opportunities for the long term unemployed, and the Department would encourage potential developers to take this approach on a voluntary basis.</p>

5. Conditions of Development and Disposal of Site

- 5.1 The development will be carried out under a development agreement, followed by the sale of the site in Fee Simple to the selected developer.
- 5.2 Prospective developers should make their own enquiries as to the existence of any physical encumbrances and to the suitability of the site for any particular purpose.
- 5.3 The developer will be required to produce all necessary plans and construction documents, obtain all necessary permissions and consents, erect and maintain all buildings, control building operations, abide by all by-laws and regulations, pay taxes, rates, fees and other outgoings including insurance.
- 5.4 A Development Agreement will be entered into before access to the site is permitted and the conveyance / transfer will be executed only on completion of the terms of the building agreement and all the works to the satisfaction of the Department.

6. Submission of Proposals

6.1 Prospective developers should submit **4 copies** of their proposal document (including supporting drawings) to the Department at the address below, no later than **12 noon on Thursday 7th November 2019**. Proposals should be submitted in a sealed envelope marked “Development Site at Alliance Crescent, Belfast – Commercial in Confidence.” Please note that proposals received after the closing date/time will not be considered and proof of postage will not be accepted as proof of delivery.

Physical Development Unit
Belfast Regeneration Directorate
Level 4
NINE Lanyon Place
Belfast
BT1 3LP

6.2 The proposal document should include the following:

- A clear statement of proposed uses for the site including the design philosophy, the rationale behind the uses of internal and external spaces and the relationship with the surrounding streetscape.

- A clear statement of how the proposal meets the Design Brief in terms of planning and design, regeneration impacts, sustainability and accessibility and equality of opportunity.
- Diagrammatical drawings illustrating the broad scope of the proposal including:
 - > a sketch layout of the site at 1:200 scale on an adequately surveyed base plan showing the position of the building, the type and means of access to the public road, proposed boundary treatment and landscape;
 - > sketch layout plans for the building on a 1:100 scale indicating the disposition of uses within the development;
 - > sketch elevations and sections at 1:100 scale in sufficient detail to indicate the conceptual architectural form including use of materials and standard of finishes; and,
 - > at least one perspective showing the relationship of the proposed development to surrounding buildings and features.

- The premium offered for the site on the basis of a Fee Simple Title and the percentage deposit offered (minimum 10%).
 - The estimated development costs (at current rates), including an allowance for the site acquisition costs, building costs, professional fees, financial costs and developer's profit.
 - The estimated rental and capital value of each unit on completion.
 - The estimated start and completion dates for the development.
 - Précis of the developer's relevant past experience and / or capability to undertake work and manage the property (to include 4 most relevant pieces of experience of working in similar projects in the past 3 years).
 - A copy of the company's latest accounts.
- Any other supporting information which the developer feels may commend them for further consideration.
- 6.3 Please note that costly design work should not be undertaken at the initial stage.
- 6.4 The submitted proposal documents will be treated as private and confidential between the developer and the Department, however, those submitting proposals should be aware that the Department is fully compliant with the Freedom of Information Act. Unless an exemption provided for under the Act is applicable, a public authority will be obliged to disclose requested information. Bidders are asked to consider if information supplied in the course of this competition should be withheld from disclosure because of commercial sensitivity and to note documents accordingly.

7. Selection of a Developer

- 7.2 Development proposals will be considered by an assessment panel comprising members appointed by the Department of appropriate standing and professional expertise. The assessment criteria for this development, including the relevant weighting, are included at **Appendix A** for information.
- 7.2 After the initial assessment, it may be necessary to shortlist proposals for further consideration.
- 7.3 Following the selection of a development proposal, a formal response will be made to all competitors, and work will then proceed on the legal formalities with the Department's preferred developer.
- 7.4 The Department is not bound to accept any proposal submitted and will only consider proposals which fully meet the objectives outlined above.

8. Development Grants

- 8.1 Urban Development Grant is a discretionary grant paid under the Provision of the Social Need (NI) Order 1986. Its objective is economic and physical regeneration of areas of need by stimulation of private enterprise and investment. For physical development projects, the amount of grant offered will be the minimum necessary to trigger a scheme. This will usually take the form of a cash grant to cover the funding gap or shortfall between the cost of the development and its value on completion.
- 8.2 All development proposals should indicate any requirement for Urban Development Grant assistance. However, it should be noted that there is currently a moratorium on UDG assistance and the Department is not at present in a position to offer any financial assistance.
- 8.3 For further information on Urban Development Grants please contact Belfast Regeneration Directorate: Physical Development Unit on 028 9082 9243.

9. Disclaimer

9.1 While every care has been taken in compiling the information contained in this document, the Department can give no guarantee as to the accuracy thereof. All information is given on the understanding that it will not be construed as part of a contract, conveyance or lease.

9.2 The site should be taken as found and no warranty or guarantee is given by the Department as to the suitability of the site for any particular purpose. Enquirers must satisfy themselves as to the descriptions and measurements. The identification and, if necessary, relocation of any services such as water, electricity, telephone, gas and sewage or any other encumbrances which may be located in, on, or over the site will be the sole responsibility of the developer and at the developer's own expense.

10. Further Queries

10.1 If you require any further clarification on this Development Brief, please contact Belfast Regeneration Directorate: Physical Development Unit on 028 9082 9070.

Appendix A: Assessment Criteria

CRITERIA	CONSIDERATIONS	WEIGHTING
PLANNING AND DESIGN	Considerations will include but may not be limited to: site layout, visual impact and enhancement to the area, compliance with general and specific design considerations identified in brief.	20
REGENERATION IMPACTS	Considerations will include but may not be limited to evidence of positive regeneration impacts (e.g. improvement to quality of local environment, contribution to local economy, job creation, provision of services/facilities to local community, addressing social need e.g. housing.)	15
VIABILITY OF SCHEME/ ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY	The viability of the entire scheme, taking into account the purchase price offered*, development costs identified, any requirement for UDG etc. projected rental and capital value.	5
TIMESCALE FOR DEVELOPMENT	Potential developers should demonstrate that development will be carried out within a reasonable timescale.	5
DEVELOPER EXPERIENCE	Has the developer provided evidence that other projects have been completed satisfactorily?	5
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	Considerations will include but may not be limited to: evidence of environmental sustainability.	5
ACCESSIBILITY & EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY	Considerations will include but may not be limited to: accessibility by all users, promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations between and within groups identified under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act.	5

* The Department is obliged under Managing Public Money (NI) to ensure that the consideration received for development land is the best that can reasonably be obtained.

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