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294-296 Crumlin Road Development Brief

The Department for Communities invites proposals for the development of 294-296 Crumlin Road, Belfast.

February 2024

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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 294-296 Crumlin Road, Belfast. Proposals should be submitted not later than 12 noon on 25 April 2024.
- 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's Comprehensive Development Section carries out this role in areas of Belfast outside the City Centre.
- 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, and the extinguishment of public rights of way.
 - 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 Site

2.1 This vacant site (see map below) occupies a prominent corner location at the junction of the Crumlin Road and Tennent Street, Belfast. The vacant land is approximately 0.06 hectares in size and is situated in a densely populated area with established businesses trading nearby. The Crumlin Road is an arterial route into Belfast City Centre and the prominent location of the site makes it an important development opportunity.

2.2 A Tier 1 Contamination Assessment of the site in January 2018 stated that there were potential sources of contamination in the lands surrounding the site and recommended that a Phase 2, Generic Quantitative Risk Assessment (GQRA) is carried out to identify any ground contamination on the actual site itself. Potential developers should be prepared to take appropriate remedial action if contamination is identified.



- 2.3 The site is un-zoned for a specific use in the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2015 and adjacent to the Crumlin Road Arterial Route. NIHE has stated there is a low Social Housing requirement at this location. The site would be suited to commercial or retail, or commercial with private residential accommodation above, although the Department will consider any development proposal that is consistent with the Regional Development Strategy: https://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/dev_plans/devplans_az/bmap_2015.htm
- 2.4 A Transport Assessment Form (TAF) will be required at application stage to demonstrate how the development is to function in transportation terms. It is not possible to confirm whether a detailed Transport Assessment/Traffic Statement will be necessary, until the scale of the proposed development is confirmed.
- 2.5 Any vehicular access to the site must satisfy Policy Access Movement and Parking (AMP2) of the Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) and Development Control Advice Note 15 (DCAN15) – Vehicular Access Standards. Proposed access onto minor roads is preferable.
- 2.6 Car Parking and servicing for the development must satisfy: Quality Residential Environment – Policy QD1 of PPS7, non-residential development – Policy AMP7 of PPS3 and associated “Parking Standards”. Any reductions in the level of car parking must be 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.
- 2.7 The following Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Roads considerations should be noted:
- There is an existing bus stop on the Crumlin Road adjacent to the northern boundary of the site.
 - There are two existing pedestrian crossings on the Crumlin Road and Tennent Street is located adjacent to the north-eastern boundary of the site.
 - A street tree is sited on the footway adjacent to the northern site boundary.

2.8 Belfast Planning Office advice noted that:

- The BMAP Plan proposes Quality Walking Routes of a consistently high standard of provision linking key locations in and around the center of the urban areas. The Crumlin Road has been identified as such a route.
- BMAP and BMTP do not include any significant proposals likely to impact on any future development of this site.

- An existing cycle lane runs along the Crumlin Road adjacent to the northern boundary of the site.

2.9 Competitors may visit the site during the period when development proposals are being prepared. To access the site, arrangements should be made through the Belfast Regeneration Directorate by telephoning 028 90829070.

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 Crumlin Road as a key arterial route into Belfast City Centre. The winning proposal will be a sustainable development of high-quality design and finish, 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 frontage of the Crumlin Road is dominated by commercial, retail and residential development. The desired usage, with regard to the frontage of this site, would therefore be ground floor retail, commercial or light industrial with private residential or office accommodation above, however, the Department will consider any development proposal that is consistent with the Regional Development Strategy.

- 3.3 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: **[Regional Development Strategy 2035 | Department for Infrastructure \(infrastructure-ni.gov.uk\)](#)**.
- 3.4 It has been confirmed by the NI Housing Executive that there is a low requirement for additional social housing in this location.
- 3.5 The site would be best suited to commercial, light industrial, retail, or commercial with private residential accommodation above. The presumption would therefore be in favour of a development subject to all planning considerations detailed in the following design brief section.
- 3.6 It is advisable that any proposal is discussed with the Belfast City Council Planning Section prior to the submission of a planning application. This would take the form of a Pre-Application Discussion which should be requested formally in writing.
- 3.7 Belfast City Council Planning Section has advised that any proposed development should consider the Planning Policy Statement (PPS)8 on Open Space, Sports, and Recreation. The immediate area surrounding the site is characterised by residential, community or commercial uses and this would be appropriate for future development.

Layout, Design and Amenity Matters

- 3.8 The layout and design of any new development along with consideration of 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.
- 3.9 Within this general area there are a number of material considerations that are relevant and are dealt with in current published planning policy such as:
- 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;
 - Provision and treatment of open space;
 - Environmental factors (noise, smells, fumes, other forms of pollution)

Please note in the design of any future development at this site – active ground floor frontage will be a key consideration.

Consultation at Planning Application Stage

- 3.10 The comments of consultees are a key part of the development management process as they provide expert advice on a range of matters. This site is within an area of constraint for a Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) and consultation with the Health and Safety Executive will be necessary at application stage. In addition, Environmental Health, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Rivers Agency, Northern Ireland Water and DfI Roads will provide guidance on general amenity issues, contaminated land, drainage, surface water and provision of sewerage infrastructure. In the absence of formal consultation with the above consultees apart from DfI Roads it is not possible to confirm the level of environmental information that would be required to accompany any future planning application at this location.

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>Further information on planning policy statements and guidance is available from the :</p> <p>Belfast Planning Service Belfast City Council Cecil Ward Building 4-10 Linenhall Street Belfast BT2 8BP</p> <p>Further information on policy statements and guidance is available on the Northern Ireland Planning Service website.</p> <p>http://www.Planningni.gov.uk/index/policy.htm</p>	<p>Objective 1: To secure a development that complements and enhances the existing Crumlin Road/Tennent Street streetscape in terms of both design and use.</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. • In addition to the source noted, information on consideration of “Environmental Sustainability” is also contained within the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) and the annexes to the DMPN on Design and Access Statements noted above. • In this case a Design and Access Statement is not required for a development proposal on this site. • PPS1 has, since September 2015, been superseded by the (SPPS).
<p>Specific Design Considerations</p> <p>More specifically, following a review of relevant strategic documents and consultation with the relevant statutory bodies and key stakeholders it is felt that the development of ground floor retail with office space above would be the preferred option. However, it will remain the responsibility of the developer to obtain all necessary planning permission required for the development and to liaise with the appropriate statutory authorities in the design process.</p> <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 note that there is no parking space available due to the site being on the corner of a main junction with pedestrian crossings across both roads, a bus stop and a cycle lane adjacent to the site.</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 the potential positive regeneration impacts of their proposed development. These could include improvement to quality of local environment; contribution to local economy; job creation; provision of services/facilities to local community etc.</p>
<p>ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p>Further information on sustainable development is available from the Executive Office.</p> <p>https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/sustainable-development</p>	<p>Objective 3: To secure a development that promotes economic sustainability.</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>Further information on sustainable development is available from the Executive Office.</p>	<p>Objective 4: To secure a development that promotes environmental sustainability.</p> <p>The Department is also keen to promote environmental sustainability through, for example, the use of sustainable materials, energy efficiency measures, renewable energy products etc. and welcomes proposals which support this agenda.</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental factors (noise, smells, fumes, other forms of pollution). • Provision and treatment of open space.
<p>ACCESSIBILITY AND EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY</p> <p>Further information on equality issues is available from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.</p> <p>http://www.equalityni.org/site/default.asp?secid=home</p>	<p>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> <p>Submissions should consider ease of access to and within the buildings 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.
- 5.5 The Department may at any time before a legally binding contract is entered into withdraw from this selection process and will not be responsible to bidders for any expense or loss incurred.

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 by not later than 12 noon on 25 April 2024. Proposals should be submitted in a sealed envelope marked “Development Site at 294-296 Crumlin Road – 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, 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 buildings 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%).
- A clear statement of any requirement for Urban Development Grant (UDG) assistance. **It should be noted that there is currently a moratorium on UDG and the Department is not at present in a position to offer any financial assistance (see Section 8 for further details).**
- 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

- 7.1 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 Urban Development Grant

- 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) 90829265 or 028 90829213.

APPENDIX A: Assessment Criteria

CRITERIA	CONSIDERATIONS	Marks out of
PLANNING AND DESIGN	Considerations will include but may not be limited to site layout, visual impact, enhancement to the area and 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 AND 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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