

APPENDIX 4: Linen Quarter Summary of Responses Received by Theme and Summary of Proposed Changes to Finalised Document

Summary of Response by Theme	Officer Comments	Summary of Proposed Changes to Document
<p><i>Policy Context</i></p> <p>A number of respondents including DoE and DSD have requested that the finalised document more clearly cross-references the relevant Planning and Regeneration Policy context and that it clarifies its purpose with regard to how it will be used in Planning terms.</p>	<p>Accepted. Appropriate changes will be made to the finalised document.</p>	<p>Changes will clarify that the document will not have determinative weight in planning terms but rather that it supports and complements existing planning policies that apply to the city and help shape its future direction</p>
<p><i>Linen Quarter Boundaries</i></p> <p>There were queries about the boundaries chosen for the Vision document in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending it to match the Linen Conservation Area boundaries; • Extending to include the residential area on Alfred St around St Malachy’s Church; • Extending beyond Ormeau Avenue to Bankmore Street to include surface car parks. 	<p>Noted. Amendments proposed.</p> <p>It is not proposed to extend the boundary either to coincide with that of the Linen Conservation Area or to extend it beyond Alfred Street.</p> <p>The boundary chosen concurs with the majority of the of the Linen Quarter but there are certain differences that reflect the different focus for this document; its focus being on setting out a coherent business district for Belfast while also appreciating the heritage of the Linen Quarter.</p> <p>Alfred Street has been chosen as the eastern boundary because of the changes of scale and nature of the buildings to the east, towards the Markets.</p>	<p>Although it is not proposed to change the boundary other than at its southern edge, the importance of improving connectivity with neighbouring communities in the Donegall Pass, the Markets and Sandy Row will be recognised in the finalised version of the document.</p> <p>The southern boundary will be extended to include the Ormeau Baths and Fermanagh House on the corner of Ormeau Avenue and Aspley Street given their age, and in the case of the Baths, the importance of framing views south along Linenhall Street. This proposed extension also incorporates the northern sections of Maryville Street and Aspley Street and recognises the important connections they provide to the neighbouring community in Donegall Pass.</p>

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<p><i>Vision Objective 1: Enhance the Arrival Experience – Great Victoria Street</i></p> <p>The proposal was well-received though it was recognised that a significant amount of further technical work would be required to develop detailed proposals.</p> <p>There was one objection from a private individual to any attempt to close Amelia Street or move taxis from the rank there.</p> <p>Transport NI (TNI) commented that any changes to the public road network need to be carefully considered and where appropriate, traffic flows may have to be modelled, to ensure the overall efficiency of the city’s transportation network is not unduly compromised. While supportive in principle of the upgrade the pedestrian crossing facilities on Great Victoria Street, including the provision of a “super crossing”, at an appropriate location, they wish to see the identified crossing point removed from the indicative layout plan shown on page 53 of the document.</p>	<p>Noted. Amendments proposed.</p> <p>Not accepted. The aspiration expressed to remove vehicular traffic from Amelia Street and Blackstaff Square other than for servicing will be retained in the finalised Vision document.</p> <p>Noted. Amendments proposed. It is proposed to retain the identified crossing point shown in the indicative layout plan on page 53 of the document as it best reflects the Council’s aspiration for the relationship between the proposed Transport Hub and the Linen Quarter so that it is better connected, will enhance the arrival experience in the city and will maximise the opportunity for regeneration on both sides of this part of Great Victoria Street and east through the Linen Quarter to the city centre.</p>	<p>The document will be amended as appropriate to cross-reference the need for traffic modelling and the importance of the relationship with the Transport Hub as detailed proposals are developed.</p> <p>The final document will be amended as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on page 53, the illustrative layout will be amended to clarify that visual used shows an illustrative scenario; • on page 53, the illustrative layout will be amended to clarify that the provision of a proposed super-crossing at this location would only be possible if Amelia Street is closed to through traffic; • also on page 53, the last bullet on initial proposals will be amended to add “Any changes to the existing layout of Great Victoria Street would require further detailed analysis and be subject to financial support and alignment with Transport NI and other transportation plans. The illustrative scenario does not seek to provide the definitive solution”.

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<p><i>Vision Objective 1: Enhance the Arrival Experience – Great Victoria Street (continued)</i></p> <p>Translink noted the importance of aligning any detailed proposals for this area with the preferred option for the Transport Hub as it emerges and were generally supportive of the proposal as illustrated. They would like to be involved in developing the vision into the detail for the Linen Quarter and the interfaces with surrounding areas</p>	<p>Noted. Amendments proposed. More detailed design proposals will be the subject of the necessary statutory planning consents and Traffic Regulation Orders. This will require further detailed public consultation as proposals emerge.</p>	<p>The document will be amended as appropriate to cross-reference the need for traffic modelling, statutory consents and the importance of the relationship with the Transport Hub as detailed proposals are developed.</p>
<p><i>Vision Objective 2: Develop new Street Typologies</i></p> <p>This Objective attracted most comment and the most significant divergence of opinion between respondents ranging from those who wished so see most, if not all traffic and parking removed, to others who did not wish to lose any on-street parking and would like to see the number of disabled parking bays increased.</p> <p>TNI commented that the street hierarchy proposed is in keeping with the principles set out in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) and is therefore acceptable in principle.</p>	<p>Noted: The Vision document seeks to improve public realm, part of which is to make it more attractive to pedestrian footfall which includes reusing space currently utilised by cars. This issue is not unique to this area and follows the direction set by both central government as well as broader opinion.</p> <p>Vision Objective 2 seeks to bring a balanced approach to the street hierarchy in this area in the form of gradual change to reduce the levels of on-street parking and create a more pedestrian-friendly environment. The Council’s Car Parking Strategy, which is currently being developed, will be used to inform decision-</p>	

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<p><i>Vision Objective 2: Develop new Street Typologies (continued)</i></p> <p>Some S75 groups who responded argue that the proposal to create “shared surfaces” would only work effectively and safely if vehicles are restricted other than for servicing. RNIB and Guide Dogs representatives objected in the strongest terms to the “shared surface” proposals arguing that people who have experienced sight loss and those using guide dogs are placed at significant risk by proposals which remove kerbs which define the edge of carriageway from pavement.</p>	<p>making alongside advice from TNI when considering any future public realm proposals being developed for Linen Quarter.</p> <p>Accepted. Amendments proposed. Shared space has a variety of applications depending on the specific needs and requirements of individual streets and is not a “one size fits all” concept.</p>	<p>The final document will be amended to better explain the concept of shared space, to remove references to continuous wall-to-wall paving and to clarify that detailed proposals will be developed in consultation with local users.</p> <p>It will cross reference with DRD’s Director of Engineering Memorandum (DEM 154/15): Kerb Heights in Public Realm Schemes which requires minimum kerb height of 60mm in public realm proposals.</p>
<p><i>Vision Objective 3: Create New Focal Spaces</i></p> <p>Proposals for improvements to the public realm in and around Blackstaff Square were widely supported.</p> <p>There were some concerns expressed around the difficulties associated with re-locating the taxi rank and, ultimately, the proposed closure of Amelia Street to traffic other than for servicing premises (see p2 above).</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Not accepted. The aspiration expressed to remove vehicular traffic from Amelia Street and Blackstaff Square other than for servicing will be retained in the finalised Vision document.</p>	<p>The document will be amended as appropriate to cross-reference the need for traffic modelling, statutory consents and the importance of the relationship with the Transport Hub as detailed proposals are developed for Blackstaff Square. Amendments will be made to the design concept illustrations on page 65 and 66 to clarify that the proposals for Blackstaff Square will require the closure of Amelia Street if they are to work safely alongside the delivery of a proposed super-crossing at the location proposed on Great Victoria Street</p>

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<p><i>Vision Objective 3: Create New Focal Spaces (continued)</i></p> <p>Many of the other comments received related to management, for example, with regard to the storage of commercial waste bins and their presentation for collection.</p> <p>The proposal to create a new public square at Linenhall Street West when the BBC relocates, received more qualified support because it would result in the loss of on-street parking spaces. The BBC commented that they would like to be appraised of detailed designs for the new square as they are developed.</p>	<p>The design of Blackstaff Square focuses on establishing a cohesive space to be designed around the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. Whilst vehicles would not be removed from the square in their entirety it is hoped that this could be restricted for example, for servicing and emergency vehicles. This enables the creation of a square that can positively address all surrounding uses, encouraging spill and dwell whilst also creating a flexible central space that could be used for cultural events.</p> <p>Noted: Beyond the scope of this document.</p> <p>Noted: The Council will work closely with neighbouring landowners, in particular the BBC, on the future development of any proposals to develop a new, Linenhall Square. Any such proposals will need to follow the same process and engagement with statutory partners, neighbouring businesses and members of the public as that identified for Blackstaff Square.</p>	<p>It is proposed that rather than the central garden previously suggested, the square will be predominantly hard surfaced for flexibility of use and durability with the introduction of new street trees, feature seating and lighting. This would align with the design narrative being developed in other squares in the city centre through DSD's Streets Ahead programme.</p> <p>Further consultation/engagement with stakeholders will be undertaken as detailed proposals are developed.</p> <p>Although beyond the scope of this document, consideration will be given to the issues relating to commercial waste storage and servicing requirements as detailed proposals for Blackstaff Square and its environs are developed.</p>

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<p><i>Vision Objective 4: Make the Most of the Unique Building Stock</i></p> <p><i>Vision Objective 5: Provide a Framework for New Buildings</i></p> <p>Comments received were generally supportive.</p> <p>Some issues raised were beyond the scope of the document for example, with respect to the suggested introduction of new uses such as residential properties and craft-related businesses.</p> <p>Some respondents also stated that the document should not be the sole source of guidance on new buildings or development beyond the public realm, and that the finalised document should clarify the extent to which it might be used in assessing the quality of design when determining planning applications in the area.</p> <p>With regard to the suggestion that the Council should establish a City Design Review, while welcomed, some respondents recommended that it link with the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) on</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted. Where the issues raised are beyond the scope of the document, it is not intended to amend the finalised version.</p> <p>Accepted. The proposed amendments referred to on page 1 (Policy Context) will ensure that the document clearly cross-references the relevant Planning and Regeneration Policy context and that it clarifies its purpose with regard to how it will be used in planning terms. This will also clarify the weight to be given to the document in planning decisions.</p> <p>Noted: Further consideration will be given to the membership of a City Design Review in the event that it is established.</p>	<p>Changes will clarify that the document will not have determinative weight in planning terms but rather that it supports and complements existing planning policies that apply to the city and help shape its future direction</p>

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the Built Environment to avoid duplication.		
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<p><i>Connections with Neighbouring Communities and Key Arrival Points</i></p> <p>Responses from community groups have asked that the Vision considers the desire lines, connections and future linkages to surrounding communities to the south and east and acknowledges them in the document. Various respondents have also noted that there are additional key arrival points to the Quarter other than those shown at Great Victoria Street/Amelia Street and Bedford Street/ Donegall Square South.</p>	<p>Accepted. Amendments proposed. Note: in addition to the preparation of this guidance for the Lined Quarter, a project is being undertaken by council officers to map physical development throughout the city. A key purpose of this project is to identify developments which may act as catalysts to create employment for persons most removed from the labour market. Physical developments may also create conditions for skills development and deliver wider social value impacts such as supply chain development. Recent local case-studies of social regeneration outputs elsewhere are the University of Ulster North Belfast Campus and Innovation Factory in West Belfast.</p>	<p>The document will be amended to reflect the need to incorporate the principle of good connectivity with neighbouring communities. More specifically, the importance of improving linkages with the communities in Donegall Pass, the Markets and Sandy Row, designated by OFMDFM through its Urban Villages Initiative, will be recognised and incorporated.</p>
<p><i>Animation of Spaces and Streets</i></p> <p>Some responses emphasised considering how the Linen Quarter might be used for the wider benefit of those who live and work in the city and emphasised that a physical, public realm programme plays only a small part in achieving this.</p>	<p>Noted: Beyond the scope of this document. However, these comments will be referred to the Council departments most directly involved in developing relevant programmes, for example, Tourism, Culture and Arts, who are involved in animating the city and bringing activity to the high quality, people-friendly streets and squares</p>	

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	which the Linen Quarter Vision seeks to create.	
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