



Subject:	Request for Member briefing/site visit and pre-determination hearing for planning application LA04/2017/2341/O – lands bounded by Royal Avenue, York Street, Church Street, North Street, Rosemary Street, High Street and Donegall Street (former Royal Exchange).
Date:	12 November 2019
Reporting Officer:	Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management)
Contact Officer:	Ursula Caddell, Senior Planning Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The Council is currently considering an application for outline planning permission for lands bounded by Royal Avenue, York Street, Church Street, North Street, Rosemary Street, High Street and Donegall Street (former Royal Exchange) (LA04/2017/2341/O). The proposals are for mixed use development including retail, office, café/restaurant, residential, hotel, cultural/community space, public realm and landscaping.
1.2	The application is for Major development and this is a regeneration scheme of significant importance to the city. Members are asked to agree a Committee briefing and site visit. Officers also advise that a pre-determination hearing should be held so that the Planning Committee can consider the views of consultees and third parties in advance of its full consideration of the planning application at a separate meeting.

2.0	Recommendations																				
2.1	<p>The Planning Committee is asked to agree the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member briefing and site visit – Friday 06 December, 12pm to 3pm • Pre-determination hearing – Monday 16 December, 5pm 																				
3.0	Main Report																				
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>In October 2017, the Council received a planning application in respect of land bounded by Royal Avenue, York Street, Church Street, North Street, Rosemary Street, High Street and Donegall Street (former Royal Exchange) (LA04/2017/2341/O). The application has been subject to amendments and seeks outline planning permission for the following:</p> <p><i>‘Outline planning permission for demolition, redevelopment and part change of use to create a mixed use development comprising retail, offices, cafe/restaurant, residential, hotel, cultural/community space, parking, servicing, access and circulation arrangements, the creation of new streets, the configuration of Writers Square, public realm works, landscaping and associated site and road works. The proposal includes works to alter listed buildings, restoration of retained listed buildings and facades, and partial demolition of North Street Arcade, retaining its facades. Details of the retained elements of the Listed Braddells building, Former Assembly Rooms and North Street Arcade facades are provided along with the layout of the new Arcade.’</i></p>																				
3.2	<p>The mix and quantum of development is shown in the table below.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Proposed Uses</th> <th>Floorspace (sqm)/No. of Units</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Retail</td> <td>Max. 10,000sqm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Café/Restaurant</td> <td>(5,000sqm retail and 5,000sqm restaurant/café)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Office</td> <td>Max. 45,000sqm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Residential</td> <td>Max. 36,000sqm/367 units</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hotel</td> <td>Max. 6,000sqm/54 beds</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cultural/Community</td> <td>Max. 695sqm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Car parking</td> <td>25 disabled spaces/6 car club spaces</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Services/Plant</td> <td>4,000sqm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total sqm</td> <td>101,695 sqm</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Proposed Uses	Floorspace (sqm)/No. of Units	Retail	Max. 10,000sqm	Café/Restaurant	(5,000sqm retail and 5,000sqm restaurant/café)	Office	Max. 45,000sqm	Residential	Max. 36,000sqm/367 units	Hotel	Max. 6,000sqm/54 beds	Cultural/Community	Max. 695sqm	Car parking	25 disabled spaces/6 car club spaces	Services/Plant	4,000sqm	Total sqm	101,695 sqm
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3.3	<p>The application site is within a Conservation Area. It includes proposals that affect a number of listed buildings, full demolition of buildings and partial demolition of buildings with façade retentions as part of the proposed development. These aspects are the subject of separate listed building and conservation area consent applications.</p>																				
3.4	<p>Significant amendments were made to the application in August 2019 following lengthy negotiations with officers and engagement with consultees and communities. The amended application has been subject to re-consultation. It is expected to be brought before the Planning Committee for determination in January 2020.</p>																				
3.5	<p>17 representations were received in 2017/2018 to the application as originally submitted. These comprised 16 objections and 1 letter of support. During that same period, 85 related objections were received in response to the associated application for Phase 1B of the wider development (LA04/2017/2126/F). Those objections raised issues relating to the outline planning application and have been transferred for consideration under the current planning application.</p>																				

3.6	<p><u>Member briefing and site visit</u></p> <p>Given the scale, complexity and strategic importance of the application, the Planning Committee is asked to agree a Member briefing and site visit. It is proposed that this takes place at 12pm on Friday 06 December 2019.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Pre-determination hearing</u></p> <p>In view of the number of representations to the application as originally submitted, together with the complexity of the issues that the application raises, officers advises that a non-mandatory pre-determination hearing should be held in accordance with Section 30(4) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. A pre-determination hearing gives opportunity for the Planning Committee to consider the views of consultees and third parties in advance of the Planning Committee meeting at which the planning application will be considered and determined.</p>
3.8	<p>Paragraph 3.6 of the Department for Infrastructure's <i>Development Practice Guidance Note 17: Pre-determination Hearings</i>, states:</p> <p><i>'In non-mandatory cases, it would be for an individual council to judge when a significant body of relevant planning objections was a sufficient material consideration to warrant a pre-determination hearing, taking account of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>the relevance of the objections in planning terms;</i> ● <i>the extent to which relevant objections are representative of the community, particularly in the context of pre-application community consultation; and</i> ● <i>the numbers of representations against the proposal in relation to where the proposal is and the number of people likely to be affected by the proposal.'</i>
3.9	<p>These provisions are replicated in the Committee's Operating Protocol. It goes on to state that representations at a pre-determination hearing should be dealt with in the same way as those at a regular Committee meeting, i.e. speakers only have 5 minutes to address the Committee.</p>
3.10	<p>The process of pre-determination hearings is designed to deal with highly complex issues, large numbers of objections or to allow interested parties, including members of the public, to address members directly.</p>
3.11	<p>In this particular case, there are a range of complex issues to be considered in the assessment of this strategic application including the planning history, regeneration, vitality of the city centre, job creation, housing, impact on listed buildings and heritage assets, urban design considerations including proposals for taller buildings, traffic generation and parking.</p>
3.12	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The organisation of a Member briefing, site visit and pre-determination hearing will have a minor impact on resources.</p>
3.13	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None identified at this stage.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None