

CLOONEY REGENERATION MASTERPLAN



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FOREWORD

This regeneration masterplan for Clooney establishes a framework of purpose built educational and sporting facilities together with high quality residential accommodation. These are all set within high quality public parkland that will be attractive and accessible to all, with pedestrian and cycle links throughout.

The masterplan reflects the aspirations of local people and has been developed in partnership with a range of key stakeholders. These include Derry City Council and the urban regeneration company, Ilex, who are simultaneously publishing masterplans for St Columb's Park and Ebrington, respectively.

Collectively, the three sites involved cover some 150 acres. This presents the city with redevelopment opportunities on an unprecedented scale. The co-ordinated approach that has been adopted will ensure the development of the sites is undertaken in an integrated manner that will maximise the regeneration impact.

The Clooney Lands have posed significant challenges in terms of securing new and complementary uses and forms that will deliver such benefits to the city.

Nonetheless, this masterplan sets out uses that blend with the surrounding urban environment, are sustainable, achievable and will transform currently underused lands into an important new asset for the city.

The consensus within Government is that, subject to formal appraisal and statutory approvals, Foyle and Londonderry College and Ebrington Primary School should be co-located at Clooney, ensuring that the ongoing regeneration momentum will be maintained. Indeed, when placed within the broader context of the proposals now unveiled for Ebrington and St Columb's Park, there is no doubt that the redevelopment of Clooney is critical to the wider regeneration of the city.

David Hanson MP

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In February 2004, the Ministry of Defence announced its decision to vacate the Clooney military base in Londonderry. The Department for Social Development's North West Development Office (NWDO) acquired the base and associated playing fields in 2005 in order to reinforce and support the wider efforts to help regenerate the city.

A discussion paper, 'Clooney - A Catalyst for Change' was published by the Department for Social Development (DSD) in February 2005. This set out preliminary proposals which centred on the possible co-location of both Ebrington Primary School and Foyle & Londonderry College (F&LC) on part of the combined military base and playing fields at Clooney. The earmarking of the land currently occupied by F&LC, as a preferred site for the possible future expansion of the Magee campus of the University of Ulster, was also proposed.

A subsequent consultation exercise undertaken by DSD and the Department of Education demonstrated political and civic support for the proposed relocation of the two schools and the use of existing F&LC land for the possible future expansion of the Magee campus.

In December 2005 the Secretary of State announced that approximately £20million would be allocated from the Schools Capital Programme to facilitate the relocation of Foyle & Londonderry College and Ebrington Primary School onto the Clooney Lands.

At the same time, DSD's North West Development Office (NWDO) appointed The Paul Hogarth Company (Masterplanners, Urban Designers and Landscape Architects), in association with McAdam Design (Civil and Structural Engineers), Faber Maunsell (Transportation Consultants) and Manogue Architects (Conservation Architects) to prepare a masterplan for the former military site and adjacent lands at Clooney.

This regeneration masterplan will guide the development of the Clooney Lands in a way that maximises the regeneration benefits to both the Waterside area and the city as a whole.

DSD'S POLICY OBJECTIVES, STATUTORY AUTHORITY AND REGENERATION REMIT

DSD's policy objective for regeneration, in pursuance of its statutory authority, is to promote and implement a comprehensive approach to tackling social, economic and physical regeneration and to redress disadvantage in towns and cities across Northern Ireland.

The Department's statutory regeneration authority derives primarily from: Part VII of the Planning (NI) Order 1991 (as amended by the Planning (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, Article 31), which provides the legislative basis for a number of 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 undertaking environmental improvement schemes.

All of DSD's urban regeneration activity is directed at supporting both people and the places where they live, work and socialise. It therefore includes a wide range of physical, community, social and economic initiatives.

REGENERATION OBJECTIVES FOR CLOONEY

The Clooney Lands are situated within the north-eastern quadrant of the city in the northern part of the Waterside. At their nearest point they lie approximately 100 metres north-east of the Central Area Boundary of the city, as defined in the Derry Area Plan 2011 and three kilometres from the nearest point of the commercial core of the city at Spencer Road. Craigavon Bridge lies some 3.5 kilometres to the south-west of the site. The junction with the main Belfast Road is 700 metres to the south-west and the Foyle Bridge is approximately 500 metres to the north-east.

The Clooney Lands have clear strategic implications and significant potential to further the efforts to regenerate the North-West region. They are close to the Ebrington site which is being developed by the urban regeneration company, Ilex, and to St Columb's Park, which is a key development site for Derry City Council.

DSD has worked closely with both organisations to manage development timescales, bringing about coherence in public and private sector development and ensure the appropriate mix of uses within a controlled process. The development of the Clooney Lands will, therefore, complement that of other key sites within the city.

In undertaking the regeneration of the Clooney Lands, DSD's intention is to:

- bring back into productive use a vacant site located on an arterial route into the city;
- improve the immediate area's physical and built environment;
- create economic, social, community, infrastructural and environmental benefits for the surrounding area and its inhabitants; and
- stimulate wider investment and regeneration in the area and help lever further inward investment to the city as a whole.

POLICY CONTEXT

The planning policy context for the site is informed by the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 (RDS) and the Derry Area Plan (2011).

The RDS highlights the regional importance of the city and sets out, as a key objective, the need to 'strengthen the role of Londonderry as the regional city and hub for the North West'. This objective is mirrored within the National Spatial Strategy (the equivalent planning document for the Republic of Ireland).

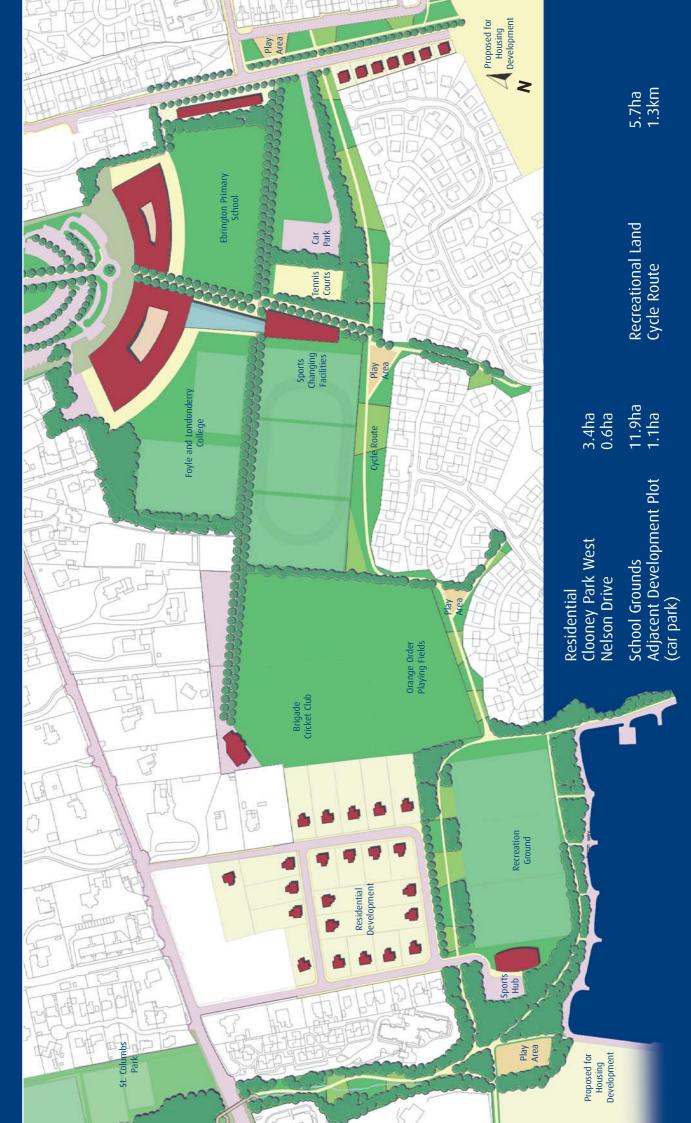
Government fully recognises the strategic importance of Derry as the regional capital of the North-West of the island of Ireland and the need for a co-ordinated approach to the development of the North-West region as a whole.

At a more detailed level, Clooney Barracks has no specific status within the current Derry Area Plan, as it was in military use at the time of publication. In this respect, specific policies do not directly relate to it. There are a number of policies however that will have a bearing on any proposed development. These include the fact that Clooney is outside the Core Business Area and as such Class 1 Retail and office uses will not be permitted.

Brigade Cricket Club and the Orange Order Playing Fields are zoned as Recreation and Open Space. To the north-east is land zoned for housing development (H29) and the adjacent Kilfennan Valley Park, which is zoned for Recreation and Open Space. Land to the south-west, which includes Ebrington Primary School, is zoned for Civic and Education Use.

CLOONEY MASTERPLAN

Site Breakdown



THE CLOONEY LANDS BY ZONE AN OVERVIEW OF THEIR CURRENT USAGE

The series of land ownerships, associated constraints, opportunities, and characteristics of the Clooney Lands have been identified as follows:

(i) Former Army Barracks

The main part of the site, to the northeast, including the area of 'inaccessible' vacant land to the west, was a military barracks. The property has been vacated, though buildings, 'street' network, hard-standings and landscape infrastructure remain. The quality of what exists is therefore poor and there is little or no merit in retaining any part of it.

The barracks part of the site is predominantly flat. Views into and out of the site are limited and of greatest significance in this respect is the high profile frontage to Limavady Road.

The land was transferred into the ownership of DSD's North West Development Office in 2004.

Development of the land is constrained by the ability to establish viable points of access. The existing access is to Limavady Road. The future vision is likely to be orientated around an access in this vicinity, however it is unlikely that a second major point of access along this frontage would be acceptable, due to their relative proximity. To the north-eastern boundary links to Nelson Drive/Broomhilll Avenue could be facilitated, but would cross land which is currently vacant and which is owned by the Western Education & Library Board.

To the south there is no viable point of vehicular access, though pedestrian/cycle access to the adjacent residential

neighbourhoods could be established. The Orange Order-owned football pitches to the west preclude any form of access on that side of the site.

(ii) Western Education & Library Board Land

A parcel of land was purchased by the Education & Library Board to the south of Nelson Drive, for the purposes of relocating Ebrington Primary School. As outlined later in this document, the Board has considered a number of options for the location of the school and is not committed to developing the land originally purchased for that purpose.

The land is relatively flat and a number of former military residential blocks and associated road and landscape infrastructure remain on the site. These, however, are of little merit and do not warrant retention.

Access to/from Nelson Drive can be readily accommodated.

(iii) Orange Order Playing Fields

This land is owned by the Orange Order and is the subject of a lease to Churchill United Football Club.

The parking area to the north is accessed from the private lane that is shared with Brigade Cricket Club.

The two pitches on the site are in regular use with the northerly one being a high quality prunty pitch.

The Orange Order continues to use the land as 'the field' for 12 July gatherings.

Through early discussions with the Orange Order it was highlighted that it may be prepared to relocate, but that such an initiative would require it to be relocated without cost, in the immediate locality and with access retained from the existing private lane.

(iv) Brigade Cricket Ground

Brigade is a long established cricket club approaching its centenary celebrations. The pitch is of a high standard and is used for representative level matches.

Access to the ground and its parking area is along the private lane that is shared with the Orange Order. The Club owns the ground and pavilion.

The Cricket Club has an established commitment of engaging with the adjacent neighbourhoods and schools.

Similar to the Orange Order, early discussions with the Cricket Club had highlighted that whilst the Club may be prepared to relocate, it would require to be relocated without cost to the Club, in the immediate locality, and with a pitch and pavilion established and ready for use prior to it vacating its existing premises. The only location that the Club considered to be viable in this respect is immediately to the west of the existing ground.

(v) Community Playing Field (Inaccessible)

This former military land is now owned by the North West Development Office.

The land known locally as the 'polo pitches' is recreational land which was formerly part of the military base. Access could be facilitated from Clooney Park West and Clooney Park East though with both, accommodating sightlines to Limavady Road is likely to be a significant challenge.

(vi) Used Playing Fields

This land, with its single football pitch, is currently maintained by Derry City Council. The public uses the pitch extensively. Pedestrian access from the residential neighbourhood to the south-east is facilitated.

(vii) Derelict Housing

This former area of military accommodation at the head of Clooney Park West, on predominantly flat land, is now in a state of dereliction. The land was sold by the Ministry of Defence to a private developer, who has since also sold the land. A planning application has been submitted for housing in this location.

It is understood from the Department for Regional Development's Roads Service that sightlines at the junction of Clooney Park West with Limavady Road are relatively poor. If development of the site did not exceed the number of dwellings currently present, it is likely that this would be considered acceptable. If however numbers increased, it is anticipated that there would be a requirement to improve sightlines which, given adjacent private ownerships, may be challenging.

(viii) Existing Ebrington Primary School Site

Beyond the scope of this masterplan, it is important to highlight the relevance of this site which is in the ownership of the Western Education & Library Board.

When the primary school vacates the site it is anticipated that the Board will seek to dispose of it. In the context of the emerging vision for Clooney it will be important that the development brief should set the context within which the site can contribute significantly to the wider integration of Clooney with its surrounding neighbourhoods.

(ix) St. Columb's Park

St. Columb's Park to the north-west of Limavady Road is owned by Derry City Council and is a major asset to the east side of the river and to the city as a whole.

Derry City Council has prepared a masterplan for St. Columb's Park.

The Council's objective is to develop St. Columb's Park Sports Campus as an exemplar of sports development provision that;

- Creates a shared, safe and inclusive space offering elite training and international competition facilities and services. This will be underpinned by neighbourhood sports development provision for the community that ensures an increase in participation;
- Contributes to the social and economic regeneration of the city and the North-West region;

- Promotes the city as the regional capital of the North-West and as a training, holding camp and international event venue for London 2012 and beyond;
- Enhances the image and self-esteem of the city, North-West region and the country;
- Promotes innovative and accountable procurement, provision and service delivery to ensure sustainability;
- Provides a lasting human, physical and cultural legacy.

The linking of the existing playing fields at Clooney with new sporting facilities at St Columb's Park will encourage greater participation in a range of sports and increase interest in sport, fitness and health.

(x) Kilfennan Valley Park and Housing Zoned Land (H29)

There is currently extensive open space to the north-east of Clooney. Part is zoned for retention as recreational open space connecting to Crescent Link, and part is owned by the Housing Executive. This is zoned for housing development (H29).

Whilst the Housing Executive has no immediate plans to develop H29, it will be important for the masterplan for Clooney to be cognisant of this zoning and ensure that it does not become 'land locked'.

Strategically important pedestrian and cycle connections link through the Kilfennan Valley Park. Within the context of developing Clooney these should be integrated with existing and proposed

routes through St. Columb's Park to/along the River Foyle and across the proposed new bridge to the heart of the City.

(xi) Nelson Drive

To the north-east of Clooney is the Nelson Drive neighbourhood.

(xii) Residential Neighbourhood to the south-east of Clooney

The series of neighbourhoods to the south-east are relatively stable and self-contained. They currently lack linkage to Limavady Road, St. Columb's Park and the river/city beyond. Access to these areas currently requires a significant journey that is unlikely to be made by foot or cycle.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CLOONEY LANDS

The distinctiveness of the site is defined by a combination of factors, some of which are attributable to the site itself, but in the case of Clooney more is related to its wider setting.

(i) Landmarks on Site

A number of elements are noted as being of visual importance. These include:

- Linkages with the Kilfennan Valley Park;
- Linkages with St. Columb's Park and the river/city beyond;
- Gateway location to the city centre, when approaching from Limavady;
- Concentration of adjacent residential neighbourhoods;
- High profile frontage to Limavady Road.

(ii) Access and Transportation

Key to the successful development of the Clooney site as a vibrant part of the city will be its accessibility.

It is fundamental that visitors to the Clooney Lands can move freely throughout the site, thereby creating an attractive and accessible environment that can be enjoyed by all.

Pedestrian Connectivity

It is proposed that the site should be developed with a connecting network of routes and spaces for pedestrians.

Cycle Connectivity

There are also plans for cycle route provision in the city that includes routes along the east bank of the Foyle, with bridge connections linking to the west bank. Routes exist to the north-east in Kilfennan Valley Park. It is proposed that through the development of Clooney and Ebrington Barracks, as well as St.Columb's Park to the west of Limavady Road, that high quality connections should be established.

Public Transport Connections

The existing rail network is located on the east bank of the river. The station is currently located approximately 1.5km to the south of the site. Proposals are being developed that would include the relocation of this facility northwards, to a position adjacent to Ebrington Barracks, approximately 1km from the site. It is advocated that through the Clooney development, linkages through Ebrington to the proposed facility should be established.

The existing bus station for the city is located at Foyle Street on the west bank of the river, approximately 1.4km to the south-west. The proposed introduction of a bridge between Ebrington and the city centre will facilitate this linkage, which otherwise entails a journey of almost 3km via the Craigavon Bridge. Limavady Road, which bounds the site to the north, is one of the city's primary bus corridors with regular service bus connections to outlying areas and the city centre.

Private/Commercial Vehicle Connections

The existing network of roads in the vicinity of Clooney comprises principally Limavady Road to the north. This road is a key part of the strategic highway infrastructure of the city.

Development of the Clooney site is likely to be organised around a series of access points onto Limavady Road, with little or no potential for vehicle access points to the west or south. Access to Nelson Drive may be appropriately integrated.

(iii) Ground Conditions and Service Infrastructure Capacity

Desk-top studies and consultations have been undertaken. These have indicated that there are no ground conditions, including contamination of any significance, which would impose constraints on the development proposals.

Existing service infrastructure capacity has been reviewed. The wider networks for water, sewage, power and communications has sufficient capacity to facilitate the proposed development. As would be anticipated for a project of this scale, local distribution into and around the site will require comprehensive renewal to suit the proposed distribution of uses.

THE CONCEPT PLAN FOR CLOONEY LANDS, BY ZONE

(i) Educational Campus

A key parameter to the development of the site is the proposed relocation of Foyle and Londonderry College and Ebrington Primary School to the Clooney Lands. In the context that the schools wished to be co-located on a single site, combined with the principle that the schools should have a high profile frontage to Limavady Road, the preferred location for the schools is on the site of the former Barracks.

The schools would have a high profile frontage to Limavady Road with a single point of access for parking and buses.

Ongoing discussions with the college have highlighted the opportunity for both schools, but particularly the college, to become a focus for the adjacent communities. For this to become a reality the college will require to be integrated within its urban setting, with good linkages for pedestrians and cyclists. It will however be important that college facilities are made available to the public outside of school hours and that the community should recognise that the college is of use/value to them. In this context it is proposed that the educational campus be designed to allow access to the sports facilities out of school hours, whilst the remainder of the site can be secured. To facilitate this it is proposed to establish parking and access to/from Nelson Drive for the purposes of community use.

The college has an aspiration to develop a swimming pool in the future.

As part of the concept of developing a collection of sporting centres of excellence, it is proposed that the College's existing prowess in fencing should be promoted.

Within the concept of establishing an educational campus, it is noted that the existing Oakgrove Integrated Primary School to the west of the site, is a key component of the wider educational environment. Proposals for Clooney should therefore secure this school's integration within its wider context.

(ii) Orange Order Playing Fields and Brigade Cricket Club

As previously stated, early discussions with the owners of these areas of land had highlighted that they may be prepared to consider relocation. Through the course of the masterplan process it has become clear that there is insufficient benefit, relative to the high capital cost of undertaking such a move, to warrant this being pursued.

If either party indicate at some point in the future that they were proposing to move, for their own reasons, discussions should take place in order to maximise the benefits from such a move. If however they do not initiate a move, it is proposed that both facilities and linkages to each should be promoted, along with the sporting quality and the commitment to the neighbouring communities. Enhanced facilities including parking, changing rooms and pavilion would clearly be beneficial.

(iii) Recreational Facilities

It is proposed to develop three full size grass football pitches and associated changing facilities. These would complement the proposed provision at St. Columb's Park and underpin the bid to secure an Irish Football Association (IFA) Centre of Excellence.

Opportunities to create a 'hub' for the sporting facilities should be pursued. This would include changing rooms but may also include indoor cricket nets and communal space. Development of high quality indoor cricket nets would complement the facilities provided by both Brigade and Glendermott Cricket Clubs and collectively could secure regional/national status.

(iv) Residential Development at Clooney Park

It is proposed to develop an area of high value housing between Clooney Park West and Clooney Park East. This will improve the structure of the site and create frontages onto the recreational land.

The principle of establishing housing in this area is important as it should be used, in part, to offset the proposed loss of housing at the site of the derelict accommodation at the head of Clooney Park West. The removal of development from the head of Clooney Park West would significantly improve the ability to create effective high quality connections between Clooney and St. Columb's Park.

The quantum of housing that is proposed and the proposed balance of capacity between Clooney Park East and West is likely to avoid concerns in relation to sightlines to Limavady Road.

(v) Ebrington Primary School Site

The site currently occupied by Ebrington Primary School will become surplus to requirements if the co-location with the college is completed successfully. It is proposed that the brief for redevelopment of the site should be considered in the context of this masterplan in order to facilitate the establishment of high quality parkland, also known as a linear park, as well as the creation of a pedestrian/cycle linkage to the west.

(vi) Nelson Drive

It is proposed to rationalise the alignment of Nelson Drive to create an improved relationship between the established residential neighbourhood and the proposed educational campus. This will include the establishment of a linear park and play provision. It will also include residential housing on the west side of the realigned road that will provide definition to the layout of the street.

(vii) Linear Park

The linear park is the public parkland upon which the the various elements of the concept plan will be situated. It will have access routes throughout the site and act as a link for the local community between all amenities within the Cloonev Lands. The linear park will include pedestrian and cycle route provision. The cycle route will provide a linkage with routes in Kilfennan Valley Park and St. Columb's Park/the riverside. In the context of the educational campus, the linear park will provide safe routes to school by foot and by bike. This is particularly important in relation to the neighbourhoods to the south, which would otherwise have long journeys to school by road.

The proposed linkage of sporting facilities at Clooney with St. Columb's Park should be complemented by the provision of an iconic bridge over Limavady Road. This will raise the profile of the development and create a key gateway to the city centre.

An underpinning principle of the linear park is that the areas will be safe and accessible to all.

In the context of work being pioneered by the Derry Children's Commission it is proposed that the linear park will be designed as an environment to be enjoyed throughout by children, rather than having an isolated area of structured play.

This approach would also be extended through St. Columb's Park and along the banks of the Foyle. The Children's Commission is proposing that 'play facilitators' be employed to promote positive use of the spaces and to counter anti-social behaviour.

SUMMARY OF THE CONCEPT PLAN

Based on the policy and physical context that has been outlined in this document, and following extensive consultation with all stakeholders and interested parties, a comprehensive concept for the site and its setting has been developed. The key elements may be summarised as follows:

- The creation of a purpose built, high profile and high quality educational campus that will include the relocated Foyle & Londonderry College and Ebrington Primary School on a co-located single site. This facility will be developed in such a way that it becomes a central part of the east bank neighbourhoods;
- The development of sporting/ recreational facilities of excellence that complement those proposed for St. Columb's Park and which together will provide a focus for sport which is of regional/national significance;
- In association with the above, the active promotion of sporting activities at Brigade Cricket Club, the Orange Order Playing Fields and the sports facilities of the Foyle & Londonderry College, together with the adjacent Glendermott Cricket Club to reinforce sporting centres of excellence;
- The creation of a linear park that facilitates linkage by foot or by bike between the various elements of the site and with the adjacent neighbourhoods and beyond. This will include linkage between Kilfennan Valley Park and St. Columb's Park. Throughout the open space provision safe and accessible areas for play will be established;

- The construction of a high quality foot and cycle bridge above the Limavady Road, creating a safe link between Clooney and St Columb's Park; and
- The promotion of residential development that is sensitive to the existing character of the area.

NEXT STEPS

A series of complex statutory and legal processes will require completion before work can begin on the implementation of the masterplan proposals.

The Department for Social Development has however already been in discussion with the relevant authorities for some time and this engagement will continue.

It has been previously announced by the Secretary of State that approximately £20million will be allocated from the Schools Capital Programme to facilitate the relocation of Foyle & Londonderry College and Ebrington Primary School onto the Clooney Lands. The procedures and appraisals relevant to this are now underway within the Department of Education.

The development of Clooney is a critical component of a wider regeneration process. Government is, therefore, committed to development of a calibre that will deliver high quality urban design, enhance the quality of life for local people and will be sustainable in social, economic and environmental terms.

It is proposed therefore that the development of Clooney will be progressed on the basis of an infrastructure-led approach, which will deliver a high quality environment of routes and public open space. This will provide the context for development by public and private sector operators.

Individual or collections of plots will be released for development, including the site for the co-located schools.

The proposals for Clooney are ambitious but achievable. As the process of implementation begins, the Clooney Lands will become an attractive and well designed public space that helps accelerate the process of urban renewal within the Waterside and across the wider city.

Further information on service infrastructure including land quality and geotechnical assessments is available on request from DSD's North West Development Office.

North West Development Office Orchard House 40 Foyle Street Londonderry BT48 6AT

Phone: 028 7131 9784 Fax: 028 7131 9700

E-mail:

northwest.development@dsdni.gov.uk

The Department for Social Development's North West Development Office has developed the Clooney Regeneration Masterplan in association with:

The Paul Hogarth Company

Masterplanners, Urban Designers and Landscape Architects

McAdam Design

Civil and Structural Engineers

Faber Maunsell

Transportation Consultants

Manague Architects

Conservation Architects



