

# ••• The Department for Social Development



Belfast City Centre is undergoing regeneration on an unprecedented scale. The skyline dotted with construction cranes reflects the wealth of projects underway aimed at transforming the city into a high quality, attractive urban destination.

At the heart of DSD's vision is a sustainable and vibrant city centre

The Department for Social Development (DSD) is responsible for implementing Government's regeneration and renewal objectives for Belfast city centre; working with business, the community and government partners to regenerate and promote it as the premier regional centre for shopping, leisure and business in Northern Ireland. There has never been a more exciting time for the city. At the heart of DSD's vision is a sustainable and vibrant city centre – a high quality, safe, urban environment attractive to investors, employees, residents and tourists. The regeneration offers many jobs, investment and economic opportunities for both businesses and local communities. And there has been much progress in recent years.

The Government's Regeneration Policy for Belfast City Centre was published in April 2004 and set a vision for economic growth in the City Centre outlining a course to achieve that action. It promised a public realm strategy for the heart of the city and regeneration master-plans for the Castlecourt and Cathedral Way areas. The strategy's intention is that these efforts will, in time, bring more private investment in retail and office jobs, city centre living and help to kick-start economic activity in neighbourhoods adjacent to the shopping core, all designed to build on a decade of investment in Laganside and the £320 million flagship scheme underway at Victoria Square. This integrated approach to regeneration has provided a comprehensive route map and guide for investors. It emphasises the importance of consolidating the shopping core and maintaining a compact city centre.

Political developments too have affected business in the region and have brought stability in Northern Ireland that has boosted prosperity. The new Assembly has a clear economic focus and is intent on working closely with the business sector. The past two years have already seen a steady flow of investment come back to Northern Ireland and government stability will increase this trend.

