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5 September 2012

Committee for Social Development
Northern Ireland Assembly
Room 412, Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
BELFAST BT4 3XX

Dear Sir/Madam


BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS BILL – PRIMARY LEGISLATION

Armagh City and District Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the above consultation document and would make the following comments:

1. The Council very much welcomes the introduction of legislation for Business Improvement Districts (BIDS) at this time, bringing Northern Ireland into line with legislation already in place in the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain. There are many examples of best practice in the operation of BIDS and we would encourage the Department to benefit from lessons learned elsewhere in the development of Secondary Legislation and future guidance in relation to BIDS.
2. The Council welcomes the changes made to the legislation in response to the Department's consultation held in 2011. In particular, we are pleased that Land and Property Services will take on a responsibility in the administration of the BID Levy, and we look forward to scrutinising the relevant details in future secondary legislation and guidance from the Department.
3. The Council would ask that the Department ensures that any secondary legislation and guidance is mindful of the difference in size and scale of urban centres across Northern Ireland and that flexibility is built in to allow all towns and cities the opportunity to progress a BID should they so desire. We would also request that town and/or city partnerships who choose not to introduce a BID continue to be supported by the Department in their endeavours without penalty, where locally it is felt creating a BID is not a suitable option at that time.

The Council wishes to be kept informed of developments. It would be helpful if your response could be e-mailed to jennifer.mcaneney@armagh.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully



John Briggs
Clerk and Chief Executive