

£65m office project will draw world's top firms to Belfast, says developer

EXCLUSIVE

BY JOHN MULGREW

A MULTI-million pound office development in Belfast will create up to 600 jobs during construction.

Plans are now under way to knock down the Movie House cinema on Dublin Road and build a £65m 12-storey office scheme with a capacity for 3,000 staff.

One Bankmore Square goes out to public consultation next month and the developers say it will be the largest office building in Northern Ireland.

Richland Group, headed by Gary McCausland, is behind the development.

"We believe that Belfast needs a world-class grade A office development of this scale, a scheme that has the potential to attract

and keep the biggest and most successful companies on the planet," Mr McCausland said.

"We have assembled a brilliant home-grown professional team to deliver this exciting project with Farrans joining us as delivery partners.

"One Bankmore Square will inject tens of millions of pounds into the local economy, create thousands of jobs, rejuvenate a very important part of Belfast city centre and add incredible value to people that live and work in Belfast and, indeed, Northern Ireland."

The development would also see the transformation of Bankmore Square, with plans to include an outdoor cinema and public art exhibitions.

The building will be mostly

made up of grade A office space, with some retail on the lower floors.

Richland Group recently completed a new apartment building just metres away. The Gallery development on Dublin Road is worth more than £8m.

Simon McEvoy, head of office agency at Savills, said: "The delivery of One Bankmore Square is exactly what Belfast needs to continue the positive steps the city has made in the last few years as a location for international business.

"While the business community is very cognisant of Brexit and other political events, the occupational market remains very healthy because the fundamentals that make Belfast an attractive city to locate and expand

your business remain unchanged – quality of staff, affordable accommodation, connectivity to multiple markets, pro-business city council, stable market.”

David Algie of Arup, which is working on the development, said the company was working alongside Farrans and Todd Architects.

“We have drawn lessons from the recent experiences of Arup Group colleagues, who have led the engineering of many of the most celebrated commercial property projects in London and beyond in order to ensure that new approaches to building services design, sustainability and technology have been implemented in this exciting project,” he said.

The Richland Group's new proposed office building follows plans to expand top-end grade A office space elsewhere in the city centre.

The largest project already given the green light by planners is developer Paddy Kearney's £55m Lanyon Central office building beside Translink's Central Station in Belfast.



