Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	**Proposed Development at Visteon Site – Former Ford Car Plant**
Date:	15 January 2015
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Stephen Walker, Departmental Portfolio and Programme Manager

1.	**Relevant Background Information**
	The purpose of this report is to inform Members of preliminary discussions which have taken place between Fold Housing Association and Council Officers. By way of background, Members are reminded that the Visteon Site, the Former Ford Car Plant, in West Belfast, closed in 2009 with the loss of 200 jobs. Since that time the site has remained closed and unused. It has been acquired by Fold Housing Association who have plans to develop mixed housing (196 social and 48 private units); a community centre; open space; road infrastructure and set aside an area which could provide for 3500 square metres of future start up business units. The proposals have been controversial for a number of reasons. There is concern around the contamination on the site and there is a view among some people in the local area that the land should be used for commercial / industrial development as part of a job creation initiative. The proposals are currently subject to a planning application which is under consideration. The planning application was lodged in December 2013 and Fold Housing Association is optimistic that planning approval will be granted. Fold has approached the Council in relation to the future provision of open space in the area. The provision of the open space is a requirement of planning and it is proposed that approximately 15% (2.8 acres) of the 19 acre site will be developed as open space. This is likely to include a

playground and amenity space. Appendix A to this report provides a schematic overview of the proposal.

Fold has requested the opportunity to outline its proposals to the Council and to seek to initiate a conversation with the Council regarding future management options for the open space outlined in the proposal, should planning approval be consented.

Members are asked to note that a feasibility study was commissioned in 2014 by the Council through its Development Department. This study considered a series of options for the site in terms of sustainability. They looked at the balance between residential development and commercial / industrial development. The report concluded that the site was only sustainable with a significant level of residential development.

2.	Key Issues
	Fold Housing Association has requested at a meeting with officers the opportunity to outline its proposals to Members of Council with a view to looking at future management options for the development should planning consent be granted. Members are asked to consider whether they wish to agree to receive a presentation from Fold Housing Association. Should Members agree to the request, a briefing report will be provided to set out some of the issues, this would include consideration of the implications for the role of the Council in other proposed housing developments which contain open space. In view of these wider implications the Committee is asked to consider whether it would wish to advise all Members of Council of the presentation and that they be afforded the opportunity to attend the presentation.

3.	Resource Implications
	Financial Implications There are no financial implications at this time. **Resource Implications** There are no additional human resource implications at this time other than staff time from within existing resources.

4.	Equality Implications
	There are no equality implications at this time.

5.	Recommendations
	The Committee is asked to consider the request from Fold Housing

	Association to make a presentation regarding its proposals to develop the Visteon site.

6.	**Decision Tracking**
	A further report will be brought to Committee at a later date to outline progress.

7.	**Key to Abbreviations**
	None

8.	**Documents Attached**
	Appendix A – Site Map showing proposed development