

Consultation

From Department For Infrastructure

Committee Meeting Date: 15th August 2017	Item Number:
Application ID: LA04/2017/0474/F	
Proposal: Re-development of Casement Park to provide a new Stadium (Capacity of 34578). Development comprises: demolition of the existing facilities; construction of new pitch, boundary wall and stands, incorporating bar/restaurant & ancillary kitchen areas, conference, training, community and cultural heritage and education facilities, ancillary offices, player accommodation and welfare facilities, press/media & broadcast facilities, replacement floodlighting, stadium/event management suite, ground support facilities including new arrangements for vehicles and pedestrians, electronic display installations, storage, surface and undercroft car parking, hard and soft landscaping, new landscaped pedestrian access from Mooreland Park to Stockman's Lane. Use of the stadium for up to three outdoor music concerts in any calendar year	Location: Lands at 88 - 104 Andersonstown Road and between 36 - 42 Mooreland Park and 202 - 206 Stockman's Lane
Notification and Call In: <p>Belfast City Council has been notified of the above planning application. This application is being dealt with by the Department for Infrastructure as a result of it being classified as 'Regionally Significant' under Section 26 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011. The Department will be responsible for determining the application. After consideration of the application the Department will present a recommendation to the Minister for consideration.</p> <p>Section 26 (6) of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 empowers the Department to cause a public local inquiry to be held by the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) or a person appointed by the Department. It is not mandatory to have a Public Inquiry and the Department will consider if such an inquiry is necessary when reaching its recommendation to the Minister.</p> <p>Where an inquiry is not held, and before a final determination is made, Section 29 (7) requires a notice in writing to be served on the applicant and Belfast City Council indicating the decision it proposes to make. The notice must specify that within a timeframe of not less than 28 days, the applicant or Belfast City Council can request the opportunity to be heard by the PAC or a person appointed by the Department. In such circumstances the Department on receipt of a request will write to the PAC asking them to convene a hearing.</p> <p>If an inquiry or hearing is held then the Department must take into account any report submitted to it by either the PAC or appointed person before making a determination. The Department will issue a decision notice to the applicant and inform the relevant council and third parties of the decision that has been made.</p> <p>The decision of the Department is final and there is no right of appeal. It is open to an individual to</p>	

apply for judicial review in the Courts if they do not agree with the decision of the Department. Judicial review is limited to legal or procedural aspects of the decision only.

Recommendation:

1. Members are requested to note the content of this briefing and advise if they wish to make any comment on this planning application to DFI at this stage.

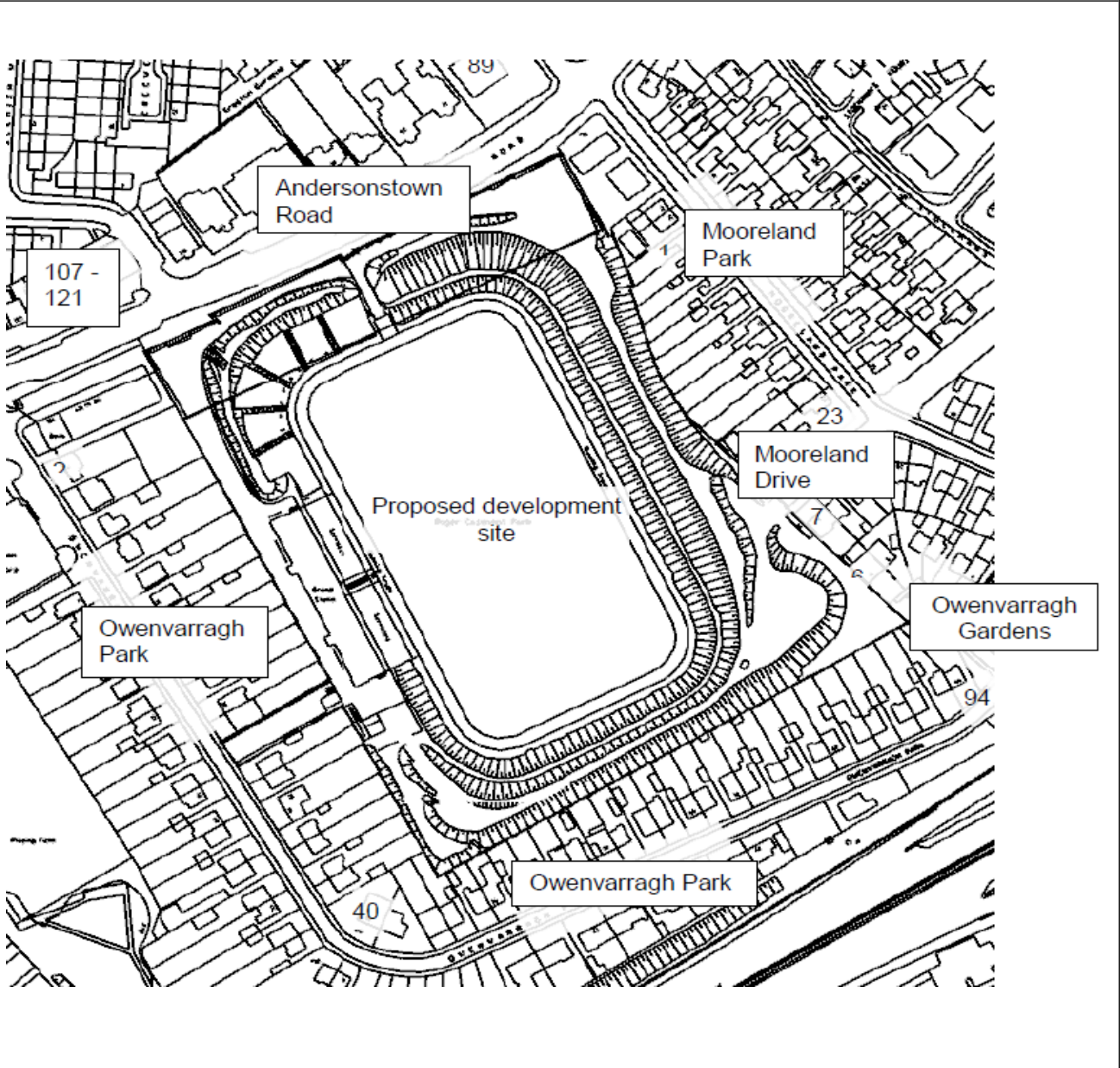
Applicant Name and Address:

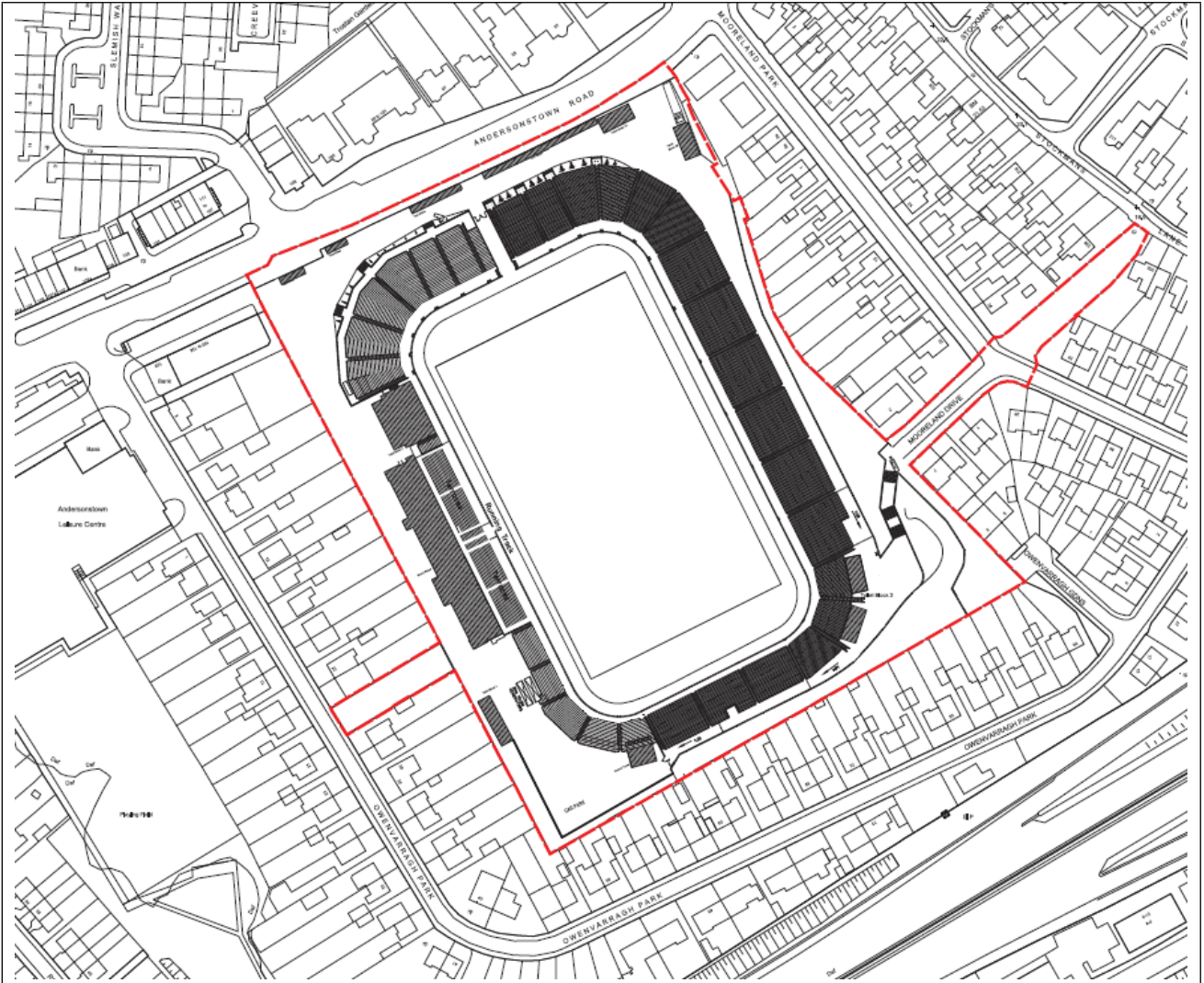
Ulster GAA
8-10 Market Street
Armagh
BT61 7BX

Agent Name and Address:

RPS
Elmwood House
74 Boucher Road
Belfast
BT12 6RZ

Site Location Plan

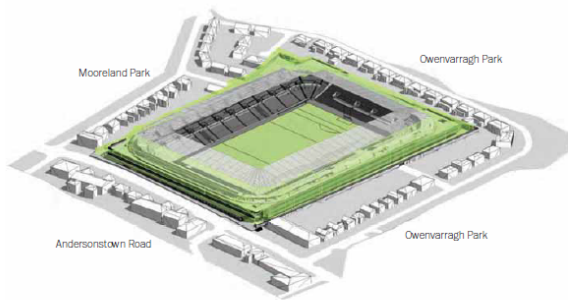




Andersonstown Road Facade looking east



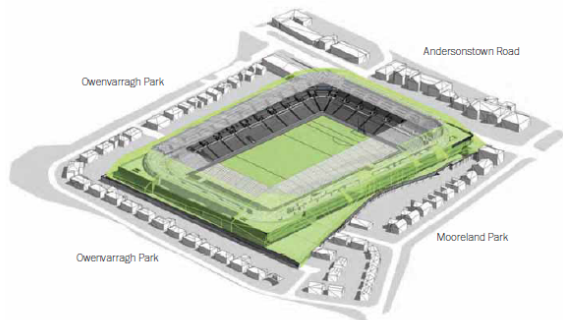
View to the stadium from the South East from the M1



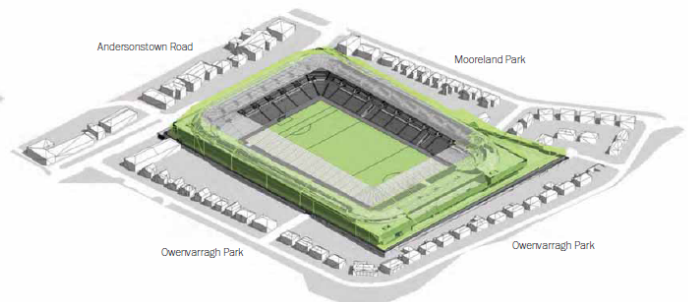
View from the North West



View from the North East



View from the South East



View from the South West

Pre-Application Community Consultation:

In accordance with the requirements of Section 27 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011, the applicant served a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) on Belfast City Council on 27 April 2016. Belfast City Council responded on 18 May 2016 confirming that the PAN and associated approach to pre-application consultation met the requirements of Section 27 of the Planning Act and also provided information on a number of community groups that should be included in the consultation exercise.

The Pre-Application Community Consultation (PACC) Strategy was based on a programme of engagement with the local community over a 30 week period.

A Pre-Application Community Consultation Report has been produced to comply with the statutory requirement laid out in Section 28 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and is available to view on the Planning Portal - <http://epicpublic.planningni.gov.uk>

Background:

The planning application was received by Belfast City Council on 3rd March 2017 and is accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

On 8 March 2017, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), in exercise of the powers conferred on it by Section 29 (1) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and all of the other powers enabling it in that behalf, directed Belfast City Council to refer the application to DfI for determination under the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. The Department gave this direction in view of the project is considered to be of regional significance.

Description of Proposal:

The existing stadium complex is on a site of approximately 4.8 hectares within a predominantly residential area on the south-western side of the city, approximately 4.3km from the Belfast City Centre.

Residential properties in Owenvarragh Park, Mooreland Park, Mooreland Drive and Owenvarragh Gardens surround the stadium site on three sides. On the north-western side its boundary abuts the public highway on the Andersonstown Road.

The existing Casement Park Stadium comprises the playing pitch for GAA games, spectator viewing accommodation, a small car park and ancillary facilities. A Main Stand is located to the West side of the pitch, passing into concrete terracing around the remainder of the west side and the other three sides of the ground. The Main Stand is 15m wide by 76m long and approximately 13m high and contains the main amenity provision of the stadium. Open concrete stands (bleachers) are located alongside the east, north west, and south west sides.

The highest elements of the existing stadium are the four corner flood lights mounted on masts up to 42m in height, served by generators. These floodlights can be seen from a considerable distance.

Casement Park is built on a sloping site with the land falling down from north west to south east. The existing pitch is approximately one storey below the Andersonstown Road level. To the east and south the raised seating terraces have banks sloping steeply down to the surrounding residential properties. The banks are grassed with pockets of ornamental shrubs and trees. Areas of Japanese Knotweed have been identified along the eastern side and have been subject to treatment since 2012.

The existing main vehicular access to the site is from the Andersonstown Road in the north west corner of the ground, to a small car park adjacent to the main stand. A gate in the north east corner facilitates access for a small number of coaches and cars. Access is also available from Owenvarragh Park to the rear of the stand and at Mooreland Drive in the south east corner of the stadium for pedestrians and vehicles.

Casement Park has not been used for hosting sporting events since 2013.

The proposed development comprises the demolition and subsequent redevelopment of Casement Park to create a new provincial GAA stadium. It will include:

- Demolition of all existing structures and their removal from the site;
- Construction of a stadium bowl where all spectator facilities will be covered and one which is capable and suitable for hosting Ulster Senior Football Championship (USFC) Finals & Semi-finals, All Ireland Qualifiers etc, comprising:
 - Corporate hospitality areas;
 - Conference facilities;
 - Community, cultural heritage and educational facilities;
 - Players' changing room/warm up areas;
 - Medical and safety provision;
 - Crowd control centre;
 - Event Management Suite;
 - Media, press broadcast facilities;
 - Extensive flexible space for community facilities;
- Disabled spectator accommodation will be provided in accordance with Regional/National and European standards;
- Social Club facilities;
- Two Handball Alleys and ancillary spectator accommodation;
- Turnstiles and improved access facilities;
- The pitch will be constructed and laid out to established GAA standards;
- The provision of floodlighting and stadium lighting to facilitate high-definition media, for evening matches, training and other events;
- On-site car parking;
- Construction of a new boundary wall;
- The main vehicular access to the site is proposed from Andersonstown Road, with use of existing vehicular access points at Owenvarragh Park and Mooreland Drive, primarily for service vehicles.
- Pedestrian access/egress is proposed via Owenvarragh Park, Owenvarragh Gardens, Mooreland Drive and Andersonstown Road
- A further pedestrian connection is provided between Mooreland Park and Stockman's Lane which will be secured by 2.2 m high fencing and gates when not in use.
- The stadium is designed and will be constructed to a standard that will enable the hosting of 3 music concerts in a calendar year, subject to appropriate licensing and availability with regard to the primary use of the stadium for GAA fixtures and other sporting events.

It is proposed that the redevelopment of Casement Park will provide a 34,578 (gross) capacity stadium which includes 200 seats for players and officials and 192 seats for press. The net spectator capacity of the stadium will therefore be 34,186 of which approximately 8,175 will be provided as standing terracing.

Modes of Operation:

The proposed redevelopment of Casement Park seeks to deliver a provincial GAA stadium capable of hosting the major events in the Ulster GAA calendar namely the Ulster Senior Football Championship final and semi-finals. It is proposed that the venue will serve the community throughout the week by encouraging community use of the facilities on a daily basis. The Environmental Statement (ES) assesses the use of the stadium in the following modes of operation:

- Daily Operations:
Daily community use of the community café and the flexible community space for classes and other community uses;
Casement Social Club;
Antrim GAA Offices;
Conference facilities;
Heritage Centre;
Schools use (Educational); and
Handball Courts.
- Sporting Events:
County Training: 12 – 24 sessions annually, generally in evenings;
School Matches: 8-12 matches annually with an attendance range of 200 – 2500 in afternoons and some evenings;
Club Matches: c25 matches annually with attendance ranging from 500 – 3500 on evenings and at weekends;
County Matches: 20-30 matches annually with attendances ranging from 50 – 5000 with some evening matches but generally at weekends;
Ulster Senior Football Championship Preliminary Match and/or Quarter Finals involving 1-2 matches per year;
Ulster Senior and Minor Hurling Finals – 1 weekend event with attendance 2000 – 5000;
All Ireland Qualifiers: 2-5 matches with attendance range 3000 – 15000 at weekends;
Ulster Championship Semi-Finals: 2 matches with attendances c20000 at weekends; and,
Ulster Championship Final: 1 match with anticipated capacity attendance 34578 on Sunday afternoon.
- Major Non-Sporting Events comprising:
Up to a maximum 3 outdoor music concerts in a calendar year. For the purposes of the ES assessment the 3 events are assumed to be capacity concert events (34186 in attendance) and to involve 1 day setting up the concert equipment, 1 day for the event and a further day for disassembling of equipment and its removal from the site.

Proposed New Stands and Facilities:

The proposed redevelopment of Casement Park consists of a 34,578 capacity stadium arranged around a 144 m X 88 m pitch.

The architecture of the stadium and the stands in particular is driven by the need to satisfy the target capacity as well as minimising the impacts on surrounding neighbours.

The built form occupies the centre of the site in order to position itself away from the neighbouring buildings. There are no external compounds as all service spaces are incorporated within the footprint of the building. A new boundary wall will be constructed 2m inside the existing site boundary and will be a precast concrete panel 3m high from stadium side. The new boundary wall will be clad in timber on the façade facing onto adjoining residential properties. The space between the existing boundary and the new boundary wall will be landscaped.

The proposed redevelopment will provide covered spectator accommodation on all four sides of the ground.

The stadium building is split into three parts. A base undercroft allowing the building to adapt to the varying levels across the site (metal, mesh), a pre-cast concrete plinth (solid and dark) which responds to the surrounding building proportions and a upper storey canopy of translucent polycarbonate which seeks to diminish the scale of the building through its patterning. The plinth

generally matches the scale and height of the surrounding residential properties. A band of high level windows and louvres are proposed in the plinth to provide ventilation and daylight. On the Andersonstown Road the plinth is elevated one storey and creates a covered plaza. The elevated plinth is of similar height of the retail block to the west and the residential and offices to the east.

The proposed canopy covering the spectators is light in colour. The material is a translucent polycarbonate interlocking cladding sheets, knitted to a lightweight steel framing structure. The eaves of the canopy sit on average approximately 8.6m above the top of the plinth. In response to the local context the polycarbonate skin is stepped back and angled to mitigate the visual impact of the upper sections of the stadium.

The highest part of the stadium is the inner rim of the roof canopy furthest away from the adjoining properties.

At the Andersonstown Road interface the plinth is typically 8.5 m above the level of the public highway. The eaves of the canopy are approximately 17.5m above road level and the inner rim of the stand is typically 22m high at that point.

At the southern end of the stadium the design incorporates an undercroft area. In that area the typical height of the plinth above the undercroft floor is 8.2m, while the eaves of the canopy are typically 17m above the ground and inner rim of the canopy is 25.5m high.

Along the eastern side of the stadium the levels change from the high point at the Andersonstown Road to the southeast corner. At the centre of that flank the height of the plinth is typically 13m above adjoining ground levels. The eave of the canopy is typically 21m high and the inner rim of the canopy is typically 25.5m high from adjoining ground levels.

Along the western side of the stadium centrally the height of the plinth is typically 13m above adjoining ground levels. The eaves of the canopy is typically 21m high and the inner rim of the canopy is typically 25.5m high.

It is the intention that the canopy's translucency will let light into the spaces behind but will also prevent views out.

The main design implications centres around the visual impact of the stadium in particular the siting, height and form of the stands, especially where it borders existing residential properties and gardens, namely Owenvarragh Park, Owenvarragh Gardens, Mooreland Park and Mooreland Drive. The proposed stand provide a continuous covered structure around the whole of the pitch which is consistent with other modern day 21st century stadium facilities. This contrasts with the existing stadium which has a single covered stand on the western side of the pitch. In an effort to minimise the visual impact of the proposal, the structures have been sited so as to maximise the distance from nearby houses. The proximity of surrounding properties range from between 13m (86 Andersonstown Road) to 46m (2 Owenvarragh Park) from the stadium structure. Further detailed cross sections through the entire site and surrounding properties as a whole is recommended. It is accepted that the structure has been designed so that they are angled away from the surrounding properties and finished in a light coloured material. In terms of wider visual effect, it is recommended that further images are required to demonstrate the impact on the skyline and on key views, both near and distant.

The primary use of the re-developed Casement Park will be as a provincial sports stadium. However, the stadium is designed and will be constructed to a standard that will enable the hosting of a number of music concerts – up to 3 per calendar year. This will be subject to a separate licencing regime.

The capacity in concert mode is up to 34,186; of those spectators, up to 15,343 people will be

accommodate on the field of play as not all of the seating in the stands will be available for concert use.

Car Parking and Access:

A total of 211 on site car parking spaces and 74 cycle parking hoops are proposed in lower level undercroft parking within the stadium. On full capacity match days it is proposed that available car parking will be reduced to 95 spaces as the remainder of the space is proposed to provide a spectator circulation zone around the perimeter of the stadium (south eastern section of the site).

The main access for motor vehicles is via the access point in the north-east corner of the site. Further vehicular accesses are provided at Owenarragh Park to the rear of the west stand and on Mooreland Drive to the rear of the east stand.

Pedestrian access to the site is to be provided from Andersonstown Road frontage, Owenarragh Park, Owenarragh Gardens and from Mooreland Park.

The GAA has secured control over a strip of land between Mooreland Park and Stockman's Lane which will be utilised for access and egress on designated match days (likely to be events exceeding 15,000 attendance) and in emergency situations.

The planning application is supported by a number of Technical Reports addressing Traffic and Transportation. The Sustainable Travel Plan submitted aims to discourage / minimise the number of private cars used by people attending matches and events at the stadium. A number of travel options are proposed by the applicant to offer a viable alternative to the private car for spectators and visitors to the stadium.

The options put forward by the applicant include:

Increased GAA Supporter Coach Travel

This option proposes to utilise the extensive network of GAA clubs through Ulster, linked to a ticketing strategy that encourages clubs to organise coach transport for their members. It is proposed that larger clubs will act as hubs and pick up points for supporters within their hinterland and those of neighbouring clubs together with the network of DfI Park & Rides sites to maximise the numbers of travelling by coach rather than private car.

Dedicated Park & Ride Sites at Maze Long Kesh and Titanic Quarter

This option offers the potential to provide Park & Ride with bus shuttle services along the hard shoulder of the M1 and through good public transport connections from Titanic Quarter.

Belfast City Centre Hub

This option proposes using under-utilised car parking provision on Sunday afternoons and on Saturday evenings when higher capacity events will occur. It is proposed that these spaces could be connected to the application site by dedicated bus lanes and by the forthcoming Belfast Rapid Transit.

Local Access Management

This option involves park and walk where spectators with pre-booked tickets will be able to avail of proposed parking in the Boucher Road playing fields than 1 mile from the stadium. It is proposed that a pre-booked shuttle bus will also transport those with mobility issues to the ground. In addition a partnership with the PSNI, GAA Stewards and the local community will manage parking activity in the vicinity of the stadium closely linked to a ticketing and communications strategy to discourage spectators bringing their car into the Andersonstown Area.

Coach drop off and lay by areas

This option has have been identified at Blackstaff Way, at Monagh Bypass, at St Teresa's Primary School, Glen Road, at St Genevieve's High School, Stewartstown Road, at Woodlands playing fields on Finaghy Road North , at Black's Road Park & Ride site, and at Lamh Dhearg GAC, Hannahstown Hill.

It is proposed that the specific measures required to service any given effect will reflects the nature of the event and the crowd demographic.

Landscaping and Public Realm:

The redevelopment proposals include an improved Andersonstown Road streetscape including enhanced public realm provision to the rear of the public footpath. The new frontage is being set back some 10m from its current position facilitating the creation of the North Plaza, situated at the back of the public footpath. The plaza of public realm is level with the Andersonstown Road at the eastern end but as the public road slopes down to the west, the plaza is approximately 1.7m higher than the street in the west. The western end of the plaza has steps to make up this level change and a 1.1m high crowd loaded barrier on the front edge.

It is intended that the plaza will provide shelter to people as they access the stadium via Andersonstown Road. The ticket office is also directly off the plaza. It will therefore also act as a gathering and meeting place for spectators before they head to the appropriate site entrance.

On a non match day it is proposed that the covered plaza could be used for public functions, displays, presentations, markets or used as an outside space for the proposed GAA café which is proposed to be sited centrally in the Andersonstown Road façade. A precast slatted front wall to the plaza, with handrail behind will provide a base for the stadium signage.

The proposed design also includes the construction of a new perimeter wall set back on average by 2m from the existing boundary wall. The space between the new wall and the existing site boundary will facilitate the landscape planting of trees and appropriate ground cover along the western, southern and eastern boundaries to increase screening value, biodiversity and create habitats for native fauna and flora.

Planning Considerations:

The Environmental Statement submitted covers the following chapters:

1. Introduction;
2. Project Description;
3. Alternatives;
4. Scoping & Consultation;
5. Transport;
6. Noise & Vibration;
7. Soils & Geology (including Contaminated Land);
8. Water Drainage;
9. Ecology;
10. Townscape & Visual;
11. Air Quality, Odour & Climate;
12. Overshadowing, Daylight & Sunlight;
13. Artificial Lighting;
14. Waste Management;
15. Socio-Economic;
16. Cultural Heritage;
17. Telecommunications & TV Reception;
18. Interactions;
19. Cumulative Effects.

DFI have consulted the council on the details of the application and have undertaken consultation with the following organisations:

Consultations:

Environmental Health – Belfast City Council – No response to date
Northern Ireland Water Ltd – No objection
DAERA – No response to date
Rivers Agency – No objection
Transport NI – No response to date
PSNI – Road Policing Unit – No response to date
Historic Environment Division – No objection
Ofcom Northern Ireland – No response to date

Representations:

At the time of writing a total of 594 No representations have been received from third parties raising 108 letters of objection and 483 letters support for the proposal.

Objection

Principle of stadium at this location ;Capacity of stadium is too high
Proximity to residential dwellings and gardens and impact on amenity
Concerts at this location and anti-social behaviour
Traffic and crowd movement

Support

General support recorded

The full details of the planning application (drawings, reports and the Environmental Statement) can be accessed of the planning portal at <http://epicpublic.planningni.gov.uk>

Recommendation:

Further detailed cross sections through the entire site and surrounding properties as a whole is recommended. In addition, in terms of wider visual effect, it is recommended that further images are required to demonstrate the impact on the skyline and on key views, both near and distant. Greater certainty around travel, transport and traffic should also be provided at this stage.

Members are requested to note the content of this briefing and advise if they wish to make any comment on this planning application to DFI at this stage.