

NORTH FORESHORE MEMBERS' STEERING GROUP

(To which Members of the Strategic Policy and Resources and City Growth and Regeneration Committees were invited to attend)

Minutes of Meeting of 13th June, 2018

Members Present: Alderman Convery (Chairperson);
Aldermen Browne, Copeland, L. Patterson and Spence; and
Councillors Hutchinson and Murphy.

Also Attended: Alderman Kingston and
Councillors Hussey, Kingston and Johnston

In Attendance: Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects,
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Estates Manager; and
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

Election of Chairperson

The Steering Group sought nominations to fill the vacant position of Chairperson and it was:

Moved by Alderman Spence
Seconded by Alderman L. Patterson

Resolved - that Alderman Convery be appointed to the position of Chairperson for the period ended on the date of the Local Government Elections in May, 2019.

(Alderman Convery in the Chair)

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor M.E. Campbell.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 15th May, 2018 were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

Alderman Copeland declared that she was a member of the Board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners, who had been selected to provide the Steering Group with a presentation on their development proposals in respect of the Giant's Park.

Noted.

Update on North Foreshore

The Director of Property and Projects provided the Steering Group with the undernoted report providing an update on the conclusion of the marketing process in respect of lands at the Giant's Park for a proposed commercial leisure led and mixed use development. He provided the Members with an overview in respect of the shortlisting process which had been undertaken, prior to the developers being invited to submit their

development proposals to the Steering Group. He reminded the Members that the Expression of Interest Development Brief marketing particulars had sought development proposals from developers with the experience and ability to acquire a site and build and manage a commercial leisure led and mixed use development but with no prescriptive uses identified. He reminded the Members also that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee was responsible for the approval of the preferred developer following completion of the evaluation process in accordance with the assessment criteria as set out in the Development Brief.

“1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Members following the conclusion of the marketing process for lands at Giant’s Park for a proposed commercial leisure led and mixed use development and to advise regarding the forthcoming presentations by developers in relation to their respective development proposals.**

2 Commercial Leisure Led / Mixed Use Development Marketing Update

- 2.1 As Members will be aware, a marketing process has been ongoing in respect of lands at Giant’s Park, North Foreshore for a potential commercial leisure led and mixed use development. These proposals relate to the 200-acre portion of the site located to the north and west. The Strategic Policy and Resources, at its meeting on 21st August 2015, had approved the commencement of a Development Brief marketing process for a commercial leisure and mixed use development. Subsequent reports have been brought back to both the North Foreshore Steering Group and to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee regarding this two stage marketing process.**

- 2.2 Following the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to progress on this basis, the North Foreshore Steering Group on 14th November 2016 approved the final draft of the Expressions of Interest document to be issued to the market. This included suggestions from Members previously made at the October 2016 meeting. Members also received an update on three previous public consultation exercises undertaken regarding potential future uses of the site which had concluded a broad range of leisure type uses as being appropriate. On this basis and also because this is a land disposal and not a public procurement exercise to provide specific facilities, the Expressions of Interest was deliberately not prescriptive in respect of proposals that would be considered.**

- 2.3 In broad terms the Expression of Interest marketing particulars sought development proposals from developers with the experience and ability to acquire a site and build and manage a commercial leisure led and mixed use development but with no prescriptive uses identified. Members of the North Foreshore Steering Group were reminded at its 16th April 2018 meeting by the Director of Property and Projects that all submissions had to be considered in this broad context.**

- 2.4** The marketing of the site has been by way of a two stage process; the Stage 1 Expression of Interest had sought broad proposals for a commercial leisure led and mixed use development and the subsequent Stage 2 process required a much more detailed submission. At their meeting on 23rd June 2017, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee gave approval to eight development submissions progressing to the more detailed Stage 2 process with further details to be brought back to Committee following this process.
- 2.5** The Stage 2 process required developers to provide details on the development team, detailed development proposals, finance, funding, delivery programme, strategic context and economic and social benefits etc.
- 2.6** The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, on 20th April 2018, approved the minutes of the North Foreshore Steering Group of 16th April 2018 which noted that four submissions had been received by the closing date of 28th February 2018 for the Stage 2 of the Expressions of Interest process with the evaluation and clarification process ongoing. The detailed development proposals received were for an extensive range of commercial leisure led and mixed use proposals. Members were advised that developers would be invited to present their detailed proposals to a future meeting of the North Foreshore Steering Group with Members from the Strategic Policy and Resources and City Growth and Regeneration Committees also invited to attend.
- 2.7** The Expression of Interest documents set out the detailed selection criteria against which submissions would be assessed. Further clarification on various issues was also sought and followed up, where applicable, with interviews with prospective developers. The Evaluation Panel has undertaken a detailed assessment of all submissions received in line with the selection criteria as set out and this will be finalised following the presentation of proposals at the Steering Group on 13 June.
- 2.8** At this meeting on 13th June each developer will provide an overview of their development proposals by way of a presentation (10 minutes) with a further 10 minutes allocated for Members to ask questions/seek clarification from respective developers/teams thereafter. Officers will also update Members on the evaluation process to date.
- 2.9** It is hoped that a report can be subsequently brought to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in August seeking approval to appoint a preferred bidder to take forward development of these lands, subject to detailed terms to be agreed.”

Representatives from four separate developer consortia presented their detailed development proposals to Members. Three of the submissions focussed on the commercial leisure led development and one submission focused on warehouse development for part of the lands only. All developers provided an overview of their development proposals and the potential economic and social benefits including jobs created, visitor numbers and community benefits including their past experience in the

delivery of major developments; financial backing; development programme and the ability to deliver on their proposals.

Development Submission One

Representatives from the first development submission attended in connection with this item and were welcomed by the Chairperson.

They provided the Steering Group with detailed plans in respect of their development proposals for Giant's Park, focusing on commercial leisure led development. The Members were provided with an overview of the potential community benefits associated with their proposals, including the opportunities for local employment associated with their proposed investment. The Members were provided with examples from around the world where their development works on similar landfill sites had revitalised those areas and brought substantial economic and social benefits to those communities.

In response to a question from a Member in respect of the development team's ability to deliver on their development proposals, the team representatives referred to their past experience in the development on contaminated land and of their ability to raise adequate capital to complete the necessary work outlined in their development proposals. The Steering Group were provided with an estimate of the potential visitor numbers and completion date of the project should they be successful in being awarded the contract.

The Steering Group thanked the developer representatives for their detailed development proposals and they departed from the meeting.

Development Submission Two

Representatives from the second development submission provided the Steering Group with an overview of their plans to develop lands on a portion of the Giants Park, focusing on warehousing. They referred to their previous development projects and the Steering Group was provided with financial assurances on their ability to secure the necessary financial resources to deliver their development proposals. They confirmed, however, that their interest was solely in relation to one portion of the lands only i.e. the commercial development of the lands on the western portion of the site and that they would not be interested in developing the northern lands for leisure related purposes as set out in the Brief. They did indicate that they would also be interested in acquiring some additional land in this northern section for development at a later stage if the Council could zone this for commercial development purposes.

In response to questions from Members, they provided information in regard to the number of jobs which they estimated would be created as a result of their development proposals, including the income accruing to the Council associated with the expansion of the rate base. In response to a further question from a Member the developer conceded that their development proposals would result in the site being split as a result of their requirement to develop part of the land only.

The Steering Group thanked the developer representatives for their development proposals and they departed from the meeting.

Development Submission Three

Representatives from the third development submission attended in connection with this item and were welcomed by the Chairperson.

They provided the Steering Group with a detailed presentation in regard to their proposals for the development of Giant's Park, focusing on commercial leisure led

development. They outlined the potential employment opportunities as a result of their proposals and assured the Members of their financial backing to enable them to complete the development programme. The developer outlined their proposals to enhance transport networks between the Giant's Park and the city centre and, in response to concerns from the Steering Group, stated that their development proposals would not displace other facilities in the area. They provided the Steering Group also with an estimate in regard to the number of potential jobs created as a result of their proposals, including the number of visitors to the Giant's Park associated with their development plans.

The Steering Group thanked the developer representatives for their detailed presentation and they departed from the meeting.

Development Submission Four

Representatives from the fourth development submission attended in connection with this item and were welcomed by the Chairperson.

The development company provided the Steering Group with a summary of the key elements of their development proposals, focusing on a range of commercial leisure led developments. They outlined the potential economic development which they estimated would accrue from their investment in the Giant's Park. The group provided details of their financial backing and assured the Members of their ability to deliver the project. In response to a question from a Member, the Group provided information in regard to the number of potential jobs which it anticipated would be created as a result of their development proposals and the benefits which would be provided to the local community. The development company representatives stated that their proposal would provide a unique leisure experience which would cater for all age groups, stating that their proposals would complement the Council's Belfast Agenda priorities and assured the Members of their commitment to the project, which would be both financially and economically sustainable.

The Steering Group thanked the developer representatives for their detailed presentation and they departed from the meeting.

Summary/Discussion

The Director of Property and Projects provided the Steering Group with an outline of the process to be undertaken prior to the selection of the preferred developer. He stated that it was his intention to bring a report to the August meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee with a recommendation in relation to a preferred developer, following a rigorous and robust evaluation process being undertaken in accordance with the assessment criteria set out in the Expression of Interest Development Brief.

Noted.

Proposed Filming by Westway Film Productions

Members of the Steering Group were advised of proposed filming scheduled to take place at Giant's Park by Westway Film Productions, as discussed at the previous meeting of the Steering Group. It was reported that the production, 'Ulster Giants' was focussed on a range of civil engineering projects in Northern Ireland and specifically in relation to the Giant's Park, it was proposed to cover the transformation of a former landfill site for future development, including the challenges encountered from a civil engineering and construction perspective. The Estates Manager stated that It had been agreed further that, relevant officers would take part in the filming and that the Chairperson of the Steering Group

would be asked if he wished to participate, subject to the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee .

Noted.

Date of Next Meeting

The Steering Group agreed that its next meeting be held on Monday, 13th August at 12.30 p.m.

Chairperson