

NORTH FORESHORE MEMBERS' STEERING GROUP

Minutes of Meeting of 8th January, 2019

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

In Attendance: Mr. G. Millar, Director of Property and Projects;
Mr. T. Walker, Head of Waste Management;
Mr. A. Ferguson, Estates Surveyor; and
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Aldermen Copeland and L. Patterson.

Minutes

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

Update on North Foreshore Giant's Park

The Director of Property and Projects submitted the undernoted report providing an update on the progress to develop lands at the North Foreshore Giant's Park:

"1 Commercial Leisure Led / Mixed Use Development

- 1.1 As Members are aware upon appointment of the preferred developer (Giant's Park Belfast Ltd) in September 2018 for the leisure led development there has been continuing engagement with Council officers in working up detailed development proposals in accordance with their evaluated scheme that was presented to Members at its meeting of 13th June 2018. To this end a number of site visits have been facilitated for both the developer's design team and potential occupiers.**
- 1.2 Heads of Terms, outlining structure of the legal agreements required to facilitate control of development, were issued to the developer in October 2018 and broad agreement reached in early December 2018. These Heads of Agreement will permit the Council's Legal Services to draft necessary suite of legal documentation that will require development to have been completed to the Council's satisfaction prior to the developer obtaining title.**
- 1.3 The developer will submit a hybrid planning application for the entire 250 acre site, targeting summer 2019, seeking to secure detailed consent for initial phase of development adjoining Dargan Road (petrol filling station, hotel, fast-food outlets and coffee drive thru) with outline consent for remainder.**

- 1.4 Separate discussions have also been progressed with the Council's Economic Development Unit regarding the economic and social elements of the development proposals that will in addition to forming part of the legal agreement also be a planning condition of any consent(s). In order that these economic and social benefits are maximised and integrated with those existing Council initiatives Council officers have provided an overview of the types of support that are already there to support delivery of the outputs and outcomes included in the developer's proposal. This includes access to BCC employment academies including local animation and schools programmes.
- 1.5 Members are asked to consider whether they wish to receive a further presentation from Giant's Park Belfast Ltd in February/ March 2019 prior to commencing associated consultation for any proposed planning application.

2 Environmental Resource Park

- 2.1 Members are reminded of the decision taken by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting of 17th August 2018 to progressing legal agreements of development of an Anaerobic Digestion (AD) facility and a Data Centre at Giant's Park.

2.2 Anaerobic Digestion facility

Financial viability of this AD facility is underpinned by a ROC's subsidy and initial ability to export electricity to the Grid; there is future ability supply adjacent site developments at Giant's Park. Viridian have now secured the requisite ROA's accreditation from Ofgem and agreement has been reached with Viridian to utilise the Council's existing NIE Grid Connection Agreement, subject to a share of the income from sale of electricity. This export arrangement will be facilitated within the existing generation compound leased to Renewable Power Systems – Council's joint venture partner for the landfill gas electricity project.

- 2.3 Viridian have completed their extended site investigations of a circa 9 acre site and are currently working on detailed design of their facility. Given the central location of the site they have been requested to include a Sustainable Urban Drainage Solution (SUDS) for the site in order to minimise the need for further drainage infrastructure traversing the site.
- 2.4 Draft legal agreements are being finalised in respect of both the existing RPS site and the site required for development of the AD facility. Viridian have commenced discussions with Planning Service.

Data Centre

- 2.5 Whilst Heads of Terms have been issued to Evermore, the firm behind the Data Centre proposal, progress has not been achieved to the same degree as the AD proposal. Operating in a very different occupational market environment from other more conventional property sectors means that agreement based on the traditional Site Option Agreement (SOA) approach is not a

straightforward. A standard SOA provides for development to progress through planning to construction stage based on an agreed programme. However, finance for this £20M development will only be secured upon grant of full planning. The Estates Management Unit are working with the Council's appointed agents to agree the final structure of a deal which will permit this development to proceed with a further report to be brought back to SP&R committee in due course.

3.0 Film Studio

- 3.1 Members have previously been made aware of an approach from Belfast Harbour commissioners (BHC) to expand the film studio at Giant's Park. Following this initial approach a number of months ago BHC were to undertake further market analysis to inform scale and design of any new such facility. However, to date no further information has been received.

4 Site Development Works

- 4.1 Based on a further refinement of potential power requirements from proposed development across Giant's Park and identified end users initial discussions have been held with NIE in order to obtain a quotation based on detailed design of required infrastructure upgrade.
- 4.2 Standard services (electricity, gas, water etc) have been provided to the Giant's Park as part of the ERDF funded infrastructure project and based on specifications commensurate with use and density of development as identified in the Council's Masterplan. Given nature and scale of development proposals now emerging with associated anticipated service requirements a capacity review of existing service provision has been initiated to ensure development proposals are fully supported. This review may identify the need for further infrastructure investment.

5 Heathrow Expansion Logistics Hub

- 5.1 From the 65 potential sites shortlisted six are located in Northern Ireland (including Giant's Park) The Heathrow Procurement Team have now issued a PQQ requiring responses to be submitted later this month. The Council's Economic Development Unit are leading on this response.
- 5.2 Members have previously been made aware that the site identified at Giant's Park conflicts with that currently encompassed in the Agreement for Lease with Arc21. Legal Service have advised that Arc21 are currently going through the political process to provide for an amendment to current legal agreements that would release this site entirely. Therefore, the Council can proceed with a response to the PQQ issued by Heathrow in order to remain in this process.

6 Waste Transfer Station

- 6.1 Members are advised that a Strategic Outline Case for the Waste Transfer Station (WTS) and draft Options Report have been to

the Finance Oversight Board with an additional option to relocate this facility from Giant's Park to the Duncrue Complex. Previous options for the WTS focused on expansion/ replacement of the existing facility at Giant's Park only.

6.2 Whilst an initial possibility to accommodate the WTS facility within the Duncrue Complex would be the available vacant Option Site (previously required by DfI for development of a Park and Ride facility) it is proposed to undertake a review of the Complex as a whole which would establish feasibility of this option in keeping with existing uses."

Commercial Leisure led/ Mixed Use Development

The Director confirmed that Heads of Terms had been agreed with the preferred developer which incorporated 250 acres of commercial development and stated that supporting legal documentation in respect of the development proposal was currently being worked on with Legal Services. The Steering Group was informed that discussions were ongoing currently in respect of capturing the economic and social benefits outlined in the development submission. The Director stated that he would request the developer to attend the April meeting of the Steering Group in order to provide a detailed update on their development proposals for the site and prior to submitting a planning application.

In response to a question from a Member in respect of the long-term ownership of the site, the Director confirmed that the underlying Freehold ownership of the land would be retained by the Council and that the land would be leased by way of a long term lease agreement. The Director confirmed in response to a further question from a Member, in respect of the proposed Data Centre, that the proposal was from a local company and that security arrangements would be required, given the nature of the business associated with the storage of confidential data on site. He confirmed also that the proposed £27 million development proposal would be subject to planning approval.

The Steering Group noted the information which had been provided and agreed to receive a presentation from Giant's Park Belfast LTD at its next meeting.

Environmental Resource Park

The Director referred to the adverse impact created by a change in Government policy in respect of the energy generation subsidies associated with the Anaerobic Digestion facility, (Renewable Obligation Certificates – ROCs). He referred to the fact that a number of companies had pulled out of potential development proposals as a result of the Government's decision to remove the ROC subsidy.

The Director stated that two companies remained on board currently in respect of the Data Centre and Anaerobic Digester, and that draft legal agreements were being progressed. He confirmed that discussions had commenced with the Planning Service in respect of the Anaerobic Digester.

The Steering Group noted the information which had been provided in respect of the issues pertaining to the Environmental Resource Park, incorporating the Anaerobic Digestion facility and Data Centre.

Film Studio

The Director confirmed that, despite a formal approach being made to the Belfast Harbour Commissioners in respect of their proposed film studio extension, no formal response had been received to date. In response to a question from a Member in respect of the Council engaging with N. I. Screen, the Director confirmed that N.I. Screen was the appointed agent in respect of the film studio and stated further that additional capital expenditure would be required, by the Council, to provide additional electricity capacity to service the needs of any expansion proposals. He stated further that discussions in regard to the potential costs associated with providing the infrastructure to meet the additional energy requirements for the site had commenced formally with N.I.E.

Noted.

Heathrow Expansion Logistics Hub

The Director confirmed that six sites had been shortlisted across Northern Ireland as possible development sites in respect of the Heathrow Expansion Logistics Hub. He referred to the advantage of the Giant's Park as a possible site, given its close proximity to the Port of Belfast. The Steering Group was advised that the Giant's Park was in competition for the aforementioned development proposal with a large number of potential sites within both Northern Ireland and Great Britain as a whole.

Noted.

Waste Transfer Station

The Director highlighted the potential to relocate the Council's Waste Transfer Station. He stated that an options appraisal was being carried out to incorporate that facility at a refreshed Duncrue Site and that the Members might wish to consider undertaking a site visit to the Duncrue Complex to view the existing facilities and to consider the viability of relocating the Waste Transfer Station to that location.

In response to a number of questions posed by the Members in regard to the management of the Council's waste, the Head of Waste Management advised the Steering Group that, if it wished to review what happened to local authority collected materials, it might be advantageous for the Chairperson on behalf of the Steering Group to consult with the Chairperson of the People and Communities Committee to determine if Members of the Steering Group could join a planned visit to Huhtamaki and Company in Lurgan, later in 2019 He informed the Members that Huhtamaki were a company who specialised in the manufacture of paper and card products. He suggested further that, it might be beneficial also for the Chairperson of the Steering Group to enquire if a similar invitation could be extended by the People and Communities Committee to visit a number of Councils in Wales to witness at first hand, how their wheelie box operations and recycling facilities were being delivered. The Head of Waste Management stated that Wales was currently at the forefront in the U.K. in regard to the reprocessing and recycling of waste materials.

The Steering Group considered the information provided and agreed that a site visit to the Duncrue Complex, scheduled to be undertaken later in 2019, would be beneficial.

In respect of the study visit, the Steering Group recommended also that, The Chairperson of the Steering Group, or his nominee, be authorised to attend the study visit to Wales along with Members of the People and Communities and for the payment

of appropriate expenses in connection therewith, subject to the approval of the People and Communities Committee.

Date of Next Meeting

The Steering Group agreed that its next meeting be held on Tuesday, 2nd April at 12.30 p.m.

Chairperson