

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Monday, 8th April, 2019

SPECIAL MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Graham (Deputy Chairperson) (in the Chair);
Alderman Kingston; and
Councillors Beattie, Black, Johnston, Magee,
Murphy, O'Donnell, O'Hara and Walsh.

Also attended: Alderman Convery and Councillor Campbell.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;
Mr. N. Grimshaw, Strategic Director of City and
Neighbourhood Services;
Mr. G. Millar; Director of Property and Projects;
Mrs. C. Reynolds, City Regeneration and Development
Lead Officer; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of the Chairperson (Councillor Lyons),
Aldermen Haire and McGimpsey and Councillors Dorrian, Hussey, Kyle and Mullan.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the report associated with the following item is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the Press and public from the Committee meeting during discussion of the item as, due to the nature of the item, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

Update on Cave Hill Country Park and North Foreshore Development Proposals

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 6th March, it had agreed that a special meeting be held to receive from Rooney Smith Associates a presentation

on the outcome of the strategic study which it had undertaken to identify development options for the Cave Hill Country Park and associated assets, namely, Belfast Castle, Belfast Zoo and the Floral Hall. The Committee had agreed also that representatives of Giant's Park Ltd., the preferred developer, be invited to the meeting to provide an update on the development proposals for the North Foreshore.

Accordingly, Mr. D. Rooney and Mr. M. Smith, Rooney Smith Associates, and Mr. K. Carlin, Mr. P. Johnston, Mr. D. McKay, Mr. J. Millar and Mr. J. Mullan, representing Giant's Park Ltd., were welcomed to the meeting.

Messrs Rooney and Smith reviewed the current status of Belfast Castle, Belfast Zoo and the Floral Hall and outlined for each asset several options which had been identified within the strategic review for consideration. In terms of the current status of the Cave Hill Country Park, Mr. Rooney pointed out that it was presented as a general recreational facility, with Belfast Castle providing it with a strong identity and acting as a key hub, and he highlighted a number of strategic opportunities, again arising from the strategic review, to be taken into account when considering the future vision for the Park.

Mr. Millar informed the Committee that the Giant's Park would provide a world class, diverse, inclusive leisure destination and would complement existing and proposed leisure and tourist opportunities. He drew the Members' attention to the six hubs/zones which would form the key elements of the Park and pointed out that 2,240 jobs and 230 apprenticeships would be created. Approximately three million tourist visits and £9 million of tourism spend would be generated annually. He confirmed that the next steps in the development process would involve the undertaking in May of an extensive consultation exercise and the submission in November of a planning application. It was the intention that planning approval would be obtained by March 2020 and that the project would be completed by 2026.

The Director of Property and Projects informed the Committee that, in light of the issues which had been outlined by Rooney Smith Associates and Giant's Park Ltd., a number of imminent decisions were required, to allow for work to commence around, for example, funding provision, designs, programmes of work and procurement.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to accelerate the decision-making process on the future development of the Cave Hill Country Park, including the associated assets, and of the North Foreshore site and agreed that this be included in the initial series of Party briefings to be organised in the new Council term.

Chairperson