

Extract of Minute

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

12th April, 2017

Restricted Item

Gasworks Northern Fringe Masterplan

Please note that, in accordance with Standing Order 47 and Section 41(1)(b) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, the Chief Executive has received a valid Call-In requisition signed by 9 members of Council in relation to the following decision.

(Ms. C. Reynolds, Estates Manager, attended in connection with this item)

Upon receiving advice from the City Solicitor, Alderman McGimpsey and Councillors Boyle, Dorrian, Johnston, Magee, McAteer and Mullan declared an interest and left the room for the duration of the item. The City Solicitor identified that a planning application directly impacted by this item was scheduled for hearing by the Planning Committee at its meeting on 13 April 2017.

The Estates Manager advised the Committee that the former Development Committee, at its meeting in June 2005, had approved the appointment of Consarc to draw up draft proposals for the potential use of 6.5 acres of the former Gasworks site, adjoining the Gasworks Business Park, which had become known as the Gasworks Northern Fringe.

She advised the Members that, since the 2009 Masterplan, the adjoining NIE site on Stewart Street had recently been secured for the site's inclusion in the Council's Masterplanning exercise. She provided the Committee with an overview of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) and reminded the Committee that Consarc had been re-appointed in April 2015 to engage with the local community to revise the Masterplan, taking account of the introduction of a much wider housing requirement in the BMAP housing designation.

She reported that, following engagement with various statutory agencies, including the Planning Service, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, TransportNI and further community consultation, Consarc had since provided a revised Masterplan for the Gasworks Northern Fringe.

She outlined that, taking account of both the BMAP housing designation and the original Masterplan's exclusive commercial proposals, the revised draft Masterplan proposed the introduction of residential uses to produce mixed-use proposals.

The Members were advised that the revised plan had been submitted to the Planning Service through the Pre-Application Discussions (PAD) process in order to establish the requirement for further consultants reports which would be needed to support any further submission to secure a formal outline planning permission.

The Chief Executive advised the Members that she wished to amend the recommendations within the report to the following:

The Committee is requested to:

1. note the updated position in relation to the emerging Gasworks Northern Fringe Concept Masterplan;

2. note that a pre-planning process was being pursued; and
3. agree to submit an Outline Planning Application for mixed use development, including a PAD process.

During discussion, a Member expressed concern that a planning application within the Gasworks Northern Fringe site would be considered by the Planning Committee the following day, despite the Masterplan having not yet been completed. Whilst the Member stated that she did not want the entirety of the site to be used for social housing, she expressed concern that the application did not align with the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) and was contrary to advice from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE).

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Hargey,
Seconded by Councillor O'Hara,

That the Committee agrees not to submit an Outline Planning Application, as the Gasworks Northern Fringe Masterplan has not yet been completed.

On a vote by show of hands four Members voted for the proposal and six against and it was declared lost.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to:

1. note the updated position in relation to the emerging Gasworks Northern Fringe Concept Masterplan;
2. note that a pre-planning process was being pursued; and
3. submit an Outline Planning Application for mixed use development, including a PAD process.