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Historical status of Long Kesh must be maintained-SF

Published: 9 July, 2007

Sinn Féin response to DUP statement

Sinn Féin are opposed to any attempts to remove the historic status of the Long Kesh prison and hospital wing where hunger-strikers died. It would be ludicrous and totally unacceptable Sinn Fein MLA Paul Butler has said. Paul Butler said it was still firmly the view of Sinn Féin for the creation of a Conflict Transformation Centre on the site. There is a huge resource at the Long Kesh site for this and other proposals.

There is no viable alternative to the plans put forward by the Maze/Long Kesh Monitoring Group which all of the parties agreed to.

If the stadium is not built at the Long Kesh site then it is unlikely that any stadium will be built.

Paul Butler said the former jail was a "project of international importance".

"Any attempt to remove the listed building status would run totally contrary to everything that we are trying to do in terms of attracting people to our country to learn from what is clearly a whole new experience for us."

There is huge interest around the world in the successful peace process here. The International Centre for Conflict Transformation at Long Kesh would be a showcase for the success of the peace process.

Paul Butler said many people had "looked at this place as a place where there was no future and there was just perpetual conflict".

"Now we have come out of all of that, we have a lot to offer the world."

Ends/deireadh

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