

RESTRICTED



Office of the
**First Minister and
Deputy First Minister**
www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk

FROM: Chris Stewart
Regeneration and External Affairs Division
17 September 2004

TO: Jack Layberry, DFP
Nigel Carson, DCAL

cc: Nigel Hamilton
Paul Sweeney
Carol Moore (DCAL)

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MAZE/LONG KESH SITE

1. Following our useful discussion yesterday, I agreed to write to you about the emerging thinking on the Maze/Long Kesh site.
2. You will appreciate that the nature and timing of the current political negotiations about the site present a significant difficulty in relation to SR 2004. The Maze Consultation Panel, comprising nominees of the four main political parties, is charged with bringing forward recommendations for development of the site to Ian Pearson in the first instance. Whilst the end of the Panel's work is in sight, in view of the sensitivity of some of the issues involved, the Panel will not submit its final report until at least after the current round of political talks and probably after the publication of the draft budget. For that reason I can give only a tentative outline of potential developments at this stage.

3. A number of significant issues have yet to be agreed by the Panel. However, I am confident that the Panel will agree to recommend an ambitious development proposal for the site. The likely major components are set out in the attached Annex, which is an outline description only.
4. At this stage little is available in terms of robust costings for the proposals likely to be submitted by the Panel to Ministers. Construction costs for the stadium are estimated at £55 to £60 million; and those for the horse racing development at some £40 million. Transport infrastructure costs are estimated at £27 million. Planning and other enabling costs for the developments at the site are estimated at £5 million, in addition to some £10 million for demolition costs. The costs of the rural excellence centre estimates at £10 million and those of the conflict transformation centre at £5 million.
5. There are a number of potential sources of contributions to offset those costs. Naming rights for the stadium could be expected to raise £20 to £25 million. The Royal Ulster Agricultural Society, should they decide to move, could be expected to bring a potential dowry from the sale of the Balmoral site; and Horse Racing Ireland would be expected to be significant contributors.
6. Other contributing sources could include the National Lottery, and the International Fund for Ireland (particularly in relation to conflict transformation facility). There may also be scope for commercial developers to contribute to transport infrastructure costs, and for income streams from, eg car parking. In the longer term, the release of the retained zone for housing development

RESTRICTED

should also recoup a significant proportion of the original capital outlay - some 100 acres at a possible £1 million per acre by 2014 when the forthcoming BMAP period expires.

7. Drawing the various strands together, our initial estimate of the net public sector capital investment requirements for the stadium, conflict transformation, and infrastructure projects is in the region of £77 to £92 million, assuming a contribution of up to £15 million from sources such as the National Lottery and the International Fund for Ireland. The remaining projects could form part of a later phase of development. However, there may be strong political pressure for early commitment.
8. Clearly, much work needs to be done before conclusions can be drawn about any of these projects. I would welcome the opportunity for the further discussion that you suggested on clarifying accountability, and the preparation of the necessary business cases, subject to the caveat that such discussions need to be informed by emerging thinking on a delivery vehicle.

C F Stewart

C F S STEWART

☎ 28389

MAZE/LONG KESH SITE POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO

1. Following the sift of proposals, the presentations received by the Panel and consideration of the views expressed collectively and individually by Panel members, the potential major components of a development scenario for the site have been identified:

- sports zone;
- conflict transformation and heritage zone;
- rural excellence and equestrian zone;
- community zone;
- retained zone;
- iconic artwork; and
- landscaping/parkland;

SPORTS ZONE

2. This zone could include a number of developments:

- 30,000 seat multi-purpose sports stadium (under consideration at the time of writing this report by the Strategic Investment Board (SIB));
- a hotel;
- conference facility;
- offices;
- ancillary specialist retail and leisure facilities;
- restaurant/entertainment facilities;
- hockey pitches (outside main stadium);
- training facilities.

3. A sports zone would require 50 to 70 acres.

RURAL EXCELLENCE AND EQUESTRIAN ZONE

4. The centrepiece of this zone would be a centre for rural excellence, showcasing and promoting a wide range of rural and agri-food related interests. The key element of the zone would be a purpose built exhibition centre. This would be designed to accommodate the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society (RUAS), but would be flexible and multi-purpose.

Other associated elements might include:

- A horse racing circuit to replace the existing Down Royal grass track circuit at the Maze, but also including a new and unique all-weather track facility on the island of Ireland;
- a museum or visitor attraction on the theme of Harry Ferguson and other aspects of agriculture in Northern Ireland;
- a sustainable living centre – visitor attraction centred on various aspects of sustainable living such as recycling, biomass farming etc.

5. The land requirements for the rural excellence centre would be in excess of 40 acres. The requirement for the horse racing circuit would be some 100 acres. No figures are available for other uses.

CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION AND HERITAGE ZONE

6. The transformation of the site lends itself to providing a mediation/conflict resolution centre. Possible developments could include a conflict resolution centre, involving the development of an archive/library relevant to the Northern Ireland conflict, and a mediation centre similar to (but smaller) than that in Glencree, Co Wicklow. Officials also feel that there would be benefit in exploring the input from QUB and UUJ in setting up a conflict resolution centre. Further work on these projects would be necessary. Land requirements would be in the region of 5 acres.

7. The heritage element of the zone might comprise those buildings and features of the site that are given statutory protection; and the aircraft hangars (not likely to receive statutory protection). Land requirements are likely to be in the region of 15 acres.

COMMUNITY ZONE

8. This would be a small zone (10 to 12 acres) on the eastern periphery of the site, adjacent to the Coronation Estate on the Halftown Road. Development to complement existing community facilities might include:

- an all weather sports pitch;
- play areas/gardens; and
- business/retail units.

9. The proposals for these facilities would be brokered on behalf of the owners of the site by Groundwork NI; an organisation experienced in local improvement schemes involving the environment and the community. The intention would be that the responsibility for the site is transferred to Lisburn City Council who would agree arrangements for the running of the facilities by the Halftown Residents Association on behalf of the local and wider community.

RETAINED ZONE

10 Given the size of the site, a significant proportion (100 to 120 acres) could be retained for medium to long-term development (10 to 15 years hence), whilst still allowing for significant short-term development.

LANDSCAPING AND PUBLIC SPACES

11. Whilst officials have not recommended a dedicated zone for parkland or open space, it will be important to ensure that the overall development of the site takes place in a context of sustainability, good visual amenity, high quality landscaping and good internal access. This “green Maze” approach should include careful development of boundaries, connection zones, open spaces and public amenities to enhance the attractiveness of the site for short or long visits. This theme should be a primary objective of the development.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

12. At the request of the Panel, OFMDFM and DRD jointly commissioned Consultants to undertake an investigation into the implications of future development and traffic growth on the transport networks in the Sprucefield, Maze and Blaris areas, outside Lisburn. Central to this commission is the production of an Access Strategy for the former Maze Prison and adjacent Army Base site.

13. Their report outlines a strategic transport assessment and Access Strategy for the Maze site, taking into consideration the implications of adjacent proposed developments at Sprucefield and Blaris.

14. The report concluded that development on the site of the magnitude that we propose would require a significant amount of additional transport infrastructure including new highway schemes. This would comprise:

RESTRICTED

- Provision of a new M1 Motorway Junction to provide direct access to the Maze site;
- Provision of a dual carriageway M1/Knockmore Link road – this has already been proposed as a single lane road; and
- Upgrade of the Blaris Road, between the proposed M1/Knockmore Link road to the Maze entrance on the Halftown Road to a high quality dual carriageway transport corridor.