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Plans for Stadium at Ormeau Park Accelerate

According to City of Belfast Stadium project manager Paul Durnien, the project to locate the City of Belfast Stadium at Ormeau Park could be ready for planning as soon as mid January.

Releasing new detail Paul Durnien said: "Every day this project is gaining momentum. We have a strong experienced consortium driving the proposal who are working quietly behind the scenes to deliver this project on time and prepare a feasibility study for Belfast City Council which will demonstrate that this project fulfils the criteria necessary to bring Northern Ireland's 'home of Northern Ireland Sport' to the Ormeau Park in Belfast."

"The new images detail the footbridges which will mean that the Ormeau Park site will offer unrivalled access to the entire population of Belfast and Northern Ireland. These footbridges linking the Ormeau Park to the Gasworks site and to Shaftesbury Avenue simply means that the walking distance will be literally 10 minutes from the city centre to the stadium. "

"Similar to other European cities there will be an improved and sustainable transport network in place which will provide the right mix of public transport and park and ride facilities – which also gives people the opportunity to drive without disturbing local residents and the community. Every day Belfast manages in the region of 7 million people travelling to work – therefore the infrastructure will be able to manage 25,000 people coming into Belfast and does not cause our project traffic engineers any major concerns."

The proposed City of Belfast Stadium is being built to initially accommodate a capacity of 25,000 seats with the option to extend to 35,000 seats as required. The site will not occupy any of the park land currently used by the local community and the new stadium will replace and occupy the site currently housing the Ozone leisure facility. The stadium can accommodate, soccer, gaelic games, rugby and also greyhound racing. The arena area will additionally be used for concerts and other one-off sporting events, for example motor cross, speedway or monster truck shows. Plans to incorporate the Belfast City Council's planned leisure facility, which will replace the Maysfield leisure facility, will be incorporated within the overall development. The leisure centre will also incorporate sports halls, swimming pool, leisure facilities, training facilities for the general public together with elite sports training, conditioning and a sports medical centre.

As for being labelled as a 'plan B' and not being considered by the Government, Paul Durnien commented: "This is a private venture and we are convinced that it is viable and deliverable with or without government support. It is government policy to support economically viable, innovative, enterprising private sector proposals – there's no reason therefore why the government should shun a project which delivers all of these policy objectives."

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