

WHAT WOULD YOU PUT IN GIANT'S PARK?

Report on the Public, Community and
Stakeholder Consultation on Giant's Park



LOTTERY FUNDED

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Giant's Park consultation process was extensive, intense and productive with the concept of transforming the landfill site at Belfast's North Foreshore capturing the imagination of the 6,500 people who engaged in the process.

Major consultation exercises of this nature normally attract a lot of interest but to secure involvement from 6,500 people in CTA's experience is unprecedented. We have been involved in numerous large scale consultations in recent years and even where the subject matter has been controversial, involvement from one or two thousand people is generally considered as a major success.

The scale of involvement in the Giant's Park consultation has undoubtedly emanated from the fact that the proposal provides a unique opportunity to develop an unusually large stretch of land, albeit a former landfill site, close to the centre of Belfast City. The citizens of Belfast and the specialist interest groups we met and spoke to were mindful of this fact and the opportunity the closure of the landfill site presents. Thus engagement in the consultation process was enthusiastic and produced many interesting and varied suggestions for the future development of the site as a facility for all to enjoy.

The conversations with community groups and the public took place in a wide variety of ways: community workshops throughout the city; focus groups with special interest parties (including those with knowledge of sports and outdoor pursuits, the natural environment and conservation, equality issues, the business environment, politics, and women's issues); interactive planning workshops with school groups; a focus group session with Belfast Youth Forum; seven public road shows throughout the city talking to members of the public in shopping centres, entertainment complexes and Queen's University; and open bus tours of the site for members of the public on the final day of the consultation period. In total we met with and spoke to almost 2,500 people in these face-to-face sessions.

As well as the above opportunities for discussion, participants were given the option of submitting ideas online both by email and via a "design your own Giant's Park webpage" together with a dedicated telephone answering service and text number service.

The most popular and widely used option was a household flyer which was posted to 168,000 households in Belfast. Thousands of these flyers were returned with preferences for the park chosen and comments made about what householders would like to see in the park.

The results from all of these consultation methodologies can be broken down into three major subheadings:

- Top ten components for Giant's Park;
- Key factors for Belfast City Council to consider; and
- Innovative ideas and suggestions for the park.

TOP TEN COMPONENTS FOR GIANT'S PARK

The findings from all of the components of the consultation process were considered by the full Giant's Park Project Team which identified the top ten elements the Giant's Park should contain:

- landscaping/planting;
- a play park with children's activities;
- retention of a large expanse of the natural habitat that exists on the site;
- an environmental education centre and café;
- cycling and pedestrian paths;
- an open air concert/festival space;
- bird hides;
- a pedestrian and cycling bridge over the M2 motorway;
- artwork and sculptures; and
- sports pitches.

KEY FACTORS FOR BELFAST CITY COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

The Council was urged to consider a number of critical factors in the development of the park: accessibility, cost, safety, the natural environment, equality, the correct balance of key components; and linkages with other projects and other parts of Belfast City.

In terms of accessibility, the Council was asked to work closely with communities to ensure that the development of the proposed bridge is acceptable to all communities. Suggestions were also made that environmentally friendly forms of transport should be considered with perhaps no or few cars allowed into the park, as well as the introduction of a shuttle bus service to and from the park and a transport system around the park itself.

From a financial perspective comments were made that entry into the park should be free and that there should be free events held throughout the year. Ratepayers also want an assurance that they will not have to meet high development, maintenance and running costs in the future.

Safety issues were seen as paramount and the Council was asked to ensure the park is designed and operated as a safe place with an on-site ranger presence taking into account the safety of vulnerable visitors (older people, people from ethnic minority communities, people with different sexual orientation, young children and women).

The natural environment and habitats that have evolved at the landfill site were seen as an asset and the Council was therefore urged to carefully consider the development of the site so as to retain these natural features and delicate ecosystems.

From an equality point of view participants said that the Giant's Park should be "shared" space rather than being seen as neutral space. Involving the full and diverse range of communities in the City in the design and development of the park will be important in terms of achieving this sense of sharing space.

The Council was asked to strike the correct balance in terms of the key components of the park with the mix including education, exploration, the environment and fun.

Linkages were suggested to connect the park with other "giants" in the City and beyond (Giant's Ring and Giant's Causeway for example) as well as with other parks and projects around the city and in North Belfast in particular.

“ Congratulations to Belfast City Council and everyone involved on a fun, open and genuine consultation. ”

INNOVATIVE IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PARK

Many innovative ideas were suggested for the Giant's Park. While there are too many to mention here, those most often raised included a museum dedicated to the giants of Belfast industry; giant hot air balloons; "giant" views of the park with helicopter trips and boat tours of the Lough; and the creation of the excitement factor by using the Lough for water-based sports and travel around the park and along the River Lagan. Overall, there were references made about the need for the "wow" factor to be built into the park. The park needs a heart it was said and it needs to be something different that people will want to visit over and over again. Some ideas included a drive-in cinema, a maze, an ice skating rink, a greyhound racing track, a mono rail or miniature railway, sensory gardens and a motorbike/car racing track.

The Council was applauded for its efforts with comments made that this type of park is just what is needed for Belfast. Given the current political climate the timing for this project was said to be right and the opportunity is there to be grasped to make the Giant's Park a big and spectacular landmark for the city.

The public and community involvement in the Giant's Park consultation was very successful both in terms of the number of people who got involved and in term of the results and innovative ideas suggested.

The vast numbers of people who got involved alone is indicative of the interest in and support for the redevelopment of the landfill site and the exciting opportunity the Giant's Park proposal presents for Belfast.

“ This will be great for Belfast - just what we need! ”

SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION



Following a competitive tendering process Community Technical Aid (CTA) was appointed in early January 2007 by Belfast City Council to undertake the public and community consultation on the Giant's Park project. Around the same time the Council awarded other contracts to consultancy firms to work on the design, planning and business plan aspects of the project. These consultancies together with CTA and members of Belfast City Council's Development Department make up the members of the Giant's Park full project team.

All of these consultancy appointments were made using development funding that the Council had received from the BIG Lottery having been successful in a first stage application to the Living Landmarks Programme. The Council is now making a second and final stage application to this Lottery programme (by the end of May 2007) hopeful of receiving £25 million to develop the Giant's Park.

The consultation process and awareness raising campaign CTA was appointed to undertake forms an integral component of the Council's bid to the BIG Lottery. The BIG Lottery feedback from the first stage application process had explicitly referred to the need to ensure full and genuine involvement from the community in the development of the Giant's Park concept and bid.

Mindful of the need to ensure comprehensive promotion of the consultation process and to raise public awareness of the Giant's Park, CTA subcontracted the Event-ful Consultancy and worked closely with it to design an integrated approach to the overall publicity campaign and consultation process.

The preparation and planning of each step in the process took place in conjunction with Belfast City Council and other members of the full project team during January and early February 2007. This was followed by a publicity and media launch in late February 2007 at the Waterfront Hall which marked the beginning of an intense five week public consultation period. During this period dozens of events took place throughout the city with thousands of people getting involved and having their say on what they would like to see in the Giant's Park. The consultation ended on 26 March 2007.

This report is an account of the issues, comments and suggestions that were gathered from a wide ranging audience throughout the consultation period. It is an account of what the citizens of Belfast and those from beyond the city want to see in the Giant's Park. Their views and the views of numerous special interest groups have been captured by us and summarised in this report.

SECTION TWO

HISTORY & BACKGROUND

Belfast City Council recognised many years ago the potential presented by the planned closure of the North Foreshore landfill site in spring 2007. The Council saw the unique opportunity to develop the site into an area where economic development, waste management and open space could co-exist in a way that created jobs, facilities, future waste management solutions whilst at the same time providing a much needed area of open space in the city.

Mindful of the need to garner opinion and public support for the future re-development of the site, the Council launched a public consultation document “The Future of the North Foreshore” in October 2005 with consultation meetings, written submissions and website hits recorded during October 2005 and November 2005.

Following this process an application was made to the BIG Lottery’s “Living Landmark” programme at the end of 2005. It was at this point that the proposal was named the Giant’s Park. The Council was successful in this first stage application to the BIG Lottery and was awarded development funding of £250,000 in late 2006 to progress the proposals for the second stage application with the hope of obtaining £25 million to develop the Giant’s Park project. This second and final stage application to the BIG Lottery will be made by the closing date of 31 May 2007.

“ Make the Giant’s Park somewhere to be proud of, a place where everyone will visit. ”

SECTION THREE

METHODOLOGY



The public and community consultation for the Giant's Park project began on 21 February 2007 and ran until 26 March 2007. It included a range of events to ensure as many people and representatives from wide ranging backgrounds as possible could get involved in the process and involved targeting four main audiences: public; community; young people and special interest groups.

PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The public awareness campaign undertaken by the Event-ful consultancy as part of the CTA contract aimed to increase awareness of the site and the development opportunity presented as well as encouraging the people in Northern Ireland to engage in a major public consultation process. Another key requirement of the promotion activity was to alert local people to the various response mechanisms (telephone, text, post, online, email, consultation events and site visits).

The campaign combined a strong mix of advertising, direct mail, public relations activity and events. A launch event at Belfast Waterfront Hall on 22 February 2007 launched a major marketing and promotional campaign to invite local people to tell us "what they would put in the park"! There was excellent press coverage at the event with reporters and journalists present from UTV, BBC NI, GMTV, Irish News, and Cool FM Radio.

In the days following the launch event, a campaign flyer was distributed to every home in Belfast (168,000 homes in total). This was supplemented by press advertising in the three main daily newspapers and Northern Ireland's largest news group – Morton Newspaper Group – which ensured exposure in a further 16 newspaper titles across Northern Ireland. A medium weighted outdoor advertising campaign which included 48 sheet posters, adshels (bus shelters), six sheets and bus spots (T-sides) also got under way during the week commencing 26 February 2007.

To coincide with the outdoor campaign, a radio advertising programme was introduced. With air time on four main radio stations (Downtown Radio, Citybeat, Cool FM and U105), we ensured that as many people across Northern Ireland and across different age groups were targeted. As well as this newspaper articles appeared in the full range of local and regional papers throughout the consultation period.

“ The “wow” factor is needed to make this park a real success. ”

ROADSHOWS

A programme of shopping centre promotions was also arranged during the consultation period. Seven venues were selected across Belfast (north, south, east, west and central) to ensure that the consultation drew reactions and responses for the whole population of Belfast and from those beyond the city. These travelling exhibitions were manned by CTA staff and served three purposes: they provided another key advertising opportunity, allowed people to hear more about the development opportunities, and also provided a valuable means for collecting data.

The seven locations visited were:

- Connswater Shopping Centre - 27 February 2007;
- ADSA (Shore Road) - 1 March 2007;
- St George's Market - 3 March 2007;
- Park Centre - 8 March 2007;
- Odyssey Pavilion - 10 March 2007;
- Abbey Centre - 15 March 2007; and
- Queen's University Students' Union - 22 March 2007.

Appendix 1 gives details of these seven venues and the number of people we spoke to at each with Appendix 2 giving the list of geographical locations that people we spoke to at the seven venues came from. As this list of locations illustrates, we managed to obtain a comprehensive geographical spread of participants from throughout Northern Ireland.

The exhibition at each of the seven venues included a DVD and fly over presentation of what the Giant's Park could look like in years to come. Both CTA and Council staff were on hand to explain the project to people and invite them to respond to the ideas being proposed and give their own suggestions. These events were very successful in terms of numbers of people spoken to; over 2,000 in total at these seven venues. It also proved to be a very effective way to access and speak with people with disabilities and people from a variety of ethnic minority backgrounds.

“ This will provide a great countryside experience even though we're here in the city. ”

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

Beyond the public side of the consultation community groups in Belfast were targeted and invited to five community planning workshops held throughout the city. These took place at: W5 for community and voluntary groups from East and South Belfast; Belfast Castle for North Belfast communities; Farset International Conference Centre, Springfield Road and the Spectrum Centre, Shankill Road for West Belfast communities; and the Holiday Inn, Ormeau Avenue as a central location for community group representatives from across the city. Only a small number of community representatives registered in response to the Council's written invitation to these events. As a result CTA personally contacted community representatives to encourage attendance. The communities who attended these sessions were also given the opportunity to have a tour around the North Foreshore site, to put in context the issues which had been discussed at the workshops. Many of them took up the offer and either went to the site directly after the workshop or at a later date.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONSULTATION

From a young people's perspective, staff at W5 organised and hosted two Giant's Park design workshops with schools as part of a pilot project within W5's education programme. Students from St Louise's Comprehensive College on the Falls Road in West Belfast and from Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School, Ballysillan in North Belfast had come along to the two sessions held back in January 2007. The students were given an introduction to the project and were then tasked with designing their ideal park. CTA planning staff were there to brief the students on the project and to record their ideas, as was a team of environmental and landscaping experts who answered questions and who gave advice on the conflicts that can arise from the need or desire for a variety of uses on the site.

In addition Belfast City Council met with 150 students at Castle High School, a Protestant school on Fortwilliam Park in North Belfast, which is the school closest to the landfill site. Each student was given an opportunity to complete a flyer and to hear about plans for the Giant's Park.

SPECIAL INTEREST FOCUS GROUPS

Special interest group discussions were held in small focus group sessions in a dedicated and specially designed portacabin housed on the landfill site throughout March 2007. These were held with representatives from sport, environmental organisations, councillors, and representatives from the local business community. These sessions started with a tour around the landfill site, facilitated by Belfast City Council and CTA followed by the DVD presentation and a discussion of the issues.

EQUALITY GROUPS

Looking specifically at equality issues and being mindful of the need to consult the nine equality groups identified by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, we held three different focus groups with representatives from equality organisations. The groups represented were the Belfast Youth Forum, Age Concern, Disability Action, NIPPA, Shankill Women's Centre and The Women's Tec. In addition representatives from the Indian Community Centre and the Equality Commission came to other community workshops.

PUBLIC TOURS

The whole process ended on Sunday, 25 March 2007 with public tours of the landfill site. People were collected from the City Hall by bus and taken on a land rover tour of the site. In total 53 people came along on the day and availed of this opportunity to see the landfill site and the potential for redevelopment. They also had the opportunity to watch the DVD flyover presentation and participate in a round table discussion on the proposals for the park.

Appendix 3 lists all of the aforementioned consultation events and the numbers of people who attended each with Appendix 4 giving important feedback comments on some of these events. Appendix 5 lists those who attended each workshop and each focus group session. Appendix 6 lists those organisations or individuals who sent written submissions on their ideas for the Giant's Park, and Appendix 7 provides the full results and data from the consultation responses.

“ The city needs something spectacular like the Giant's Park. Good luck to the Council, we hope they get the money. ”

SECTION FOUR

FINDINGS

The information in this section has been collated from all of the comments gathered and views expressed throughout the consultation. Editorial judgement has been used in terms of summarising and grouping the results together.

4.1 TOP TEN COMPONENTS FOR GIANT'S PARK

The results from the returned household flyers, all text messages, email submissions, telephone call messages and website submissions were compiled and inputted onto the Council's information management database. The print out of these results was then used by CTA to compile summary information which was tabled at a Belfast City Council selection workshop held on 3 April 2007 at Belfast Castle attended by the members of the Giant's Park full project team. At this workshop the top ten components for the Giant's Park were selected. These were chosen on the basis of returned flyers, phone calls, emails etc as well as taking into account the comments made during the workshops and focus groups. In addition a judgement was made and a score awarded by the Council and the Giant's Park project team as to the public opinion, technical feasibility, planning feasibility and strategic benefits of each element. Only scores of over 70 were then selected for the top ten components.

The following table shows the results for these top ten components with the associated score awarded at the 3 April 2007 selection workshop. For fuller information Appendix 7 has been included at page 37 which shows the full results and data from all public consultation responses together with the results from the "other" suggestions before the selection workshop was held.

Top Ten Components for Giant's Park

Rank	Component	Score
1	Landscaping/planting	91
2	Play park with children's activities	90
3	Natural habitat	89
4	Environmental education centre	88
5	Cycling and pedestrian paths	86
6	Open air concert/festival space	76
7	Bird hides	76
8	A pedestrian and cycling bridge over the M2 Motorway	75
9	Artwork and sculptures	74
10	Sports pitches	71

4.2 KEY FACTORS FOR BELFAST CITY COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

Accessibility

Accessibility issues were discussed both in terms of access into the park and around the park. Two means of access into the park were already part of the consultation proposals up for discussion, that is the pedestrian and cycle bridge crossing the M2 motorway from the Shore Road and the cable car proposal from Cave Hill into the park.

There were mixed reactions to these proposals. Generally speaking the bridge was welcomed by communities in the North Belfast area. They had some reservations about the location of the bridge along the Shore Road and the fact that this may cause some problems for different sections of the community. However, some of the North Belfast cross-community representatives who came to the community workshops and who then visited the landfill site said that the location of the bridge on the Shore Road should be satisfactory provided that the City Council engages in direct dialogue with communities right at the outset of the project planning and design stage. Other representatives from North Belfast tourism projects said that they also believe the timing is right for a more integrative approach to community development projects and that a bridge of this nature could signify the willingness of communities in North Belfast to move forward.

The cable car option was generally welcomed by members of the public. Many said that an attraction of this nature and scale would provide the mechanism to “pull” visitors into the city and into North Belfast. There was however a guarded welcome from others who were not so sure that the cable car was a good idea. Others still were strongly opposed to the concept, for example Cave Hill Conservation Campaign. It and others focused on the damage such infrastructural works would cause to the Cave Hill; the safety issues involved in cabling traversing the motorway as well as the potential for car accidents if drivers were distracted by an overhead cable car; the destruction and disturbance that a cable car would cause to the environmental and aesthetic setting of the Belfast Hills; and the intrusion and loss of privacy for those homeowners along the route of the cable car.

The discussion of accessibility also focused on other means of transporting visitors to the park. The option most often suggested was a shuttle bus service and perhaps even doubling up the proposed park’n’ride shuttle service from the proposed on site park’n’ride facility as a means of bringing people in and out of the city centre to the Giant’s Park.

Some discussion, particularly amongst those with an expertise in environmental issues, concentrated on the potential for devising an eco-friendly form of transport to and around the park. Given that there will be a large scale methane facility on the site with renewable energy featuring strongly in the overall project, it was suggested that a mono-rail or bus service to and/or around the park could perhaps be powered by the energy created by the planned methane gas recovery facility.



Some equality representatives said that people with physical accessibility issues will need rest areas provided, especially on the bridge as proposed with a 350 metre span. They also said that some imaginative thought must be given to sensory garden experiences and shared/segregated cycling and walking paths.

Other accessibility options to and around the park included: a dart system from the city centre to the park; a bus service linking in with the Metro bus service on all arterial routes; a train halt on the Shore Road linking in with the proposed cross M2 bridge; a light rail system into and around the park; bike hire in the park perhaps providing a 'park'n'bike' scheme; and the hire of accessibility aids and vehicles in the park maybe in partnership with Shop Mobility.

One important final point to note is the difficulty CTA had in engaging communities from outside of North Belfast. This also seemed to be for accessibility reasons. When we did speak to communities from south, east and west Belfast they said that encouraging their communities to travel to and use the park would be important. Even more imaginative access solutions to get communities to the park from all parts of the city were called for so that the bridge alone is not seen by the Council as the only access problem needing a solution. The bridge, it was said, will help to open up the park to North Belfast communities but more will need to be done to encourage community representation from other sectors in the city.

Cost and Financial Planning

Participants often asked about the issue of payment into the park. In the spirit of the existing park and open space policy operated by Belfast City Council it was stressed that there should be free access into the park at all times.

It was also suggested that free events should be hosted by the Council in the park, again in line with existing policy and Council practice.

Apart from this, it was said that costs for activities and attractions should be kept at reasonable rates and that Belfast ratepayers should not have to pay increased rates to cover the maintenance and running costs of the park.

Financial assurances were also sought that the Belfast parks budget would not be affected by a need to fund the Giant's Park project. Communities around the city were particularly mindful of this "danger" and were assured when told by Council staff that the parks budget would remain intact and separate from the Giant's Park budget.

“ No point in creating something which could be anywhere - so create something distinctive. ”



Safety

Safety issues featured high on the agenda of many of the discussion sessions. The Council was urged at this very early stage to consider carefully the safety issues of a site of this size and scale, and the potential for future safety and security problems.

The key to addressing this issue was seen as twofold: well thought-through design now and maximum staff/ranger presence in the future. The Council should take a firm stance on the subject of safety with a zero tolerance policy right from the outset, it was stressed.

People said that the safety of the most vulnerable visitors is of paramount importance. These include older people, people from ethnic minority backgrounds, young people, children and women, and measures such as on-site rangers and “panic stations” would provide a degree of comfort and add to feelings of safety and security in the park.

Looking at children’s safety issues in particular there was some reference made to the need for striking a careful balance between making the park safe for children but not in such an over-protected way as to affect their enjoyment and sense of adventure in the park.

On this point a recent conference on the subject of children’s play was referred to where it was stated that making an area “safe enough” for kids was better than children being “safe at all times”.

Other safety issues centred on the toxicity of the site, the stability of the landfilled waste (that is, the potential for settlement) and the noise, smells and general nuisance that redevelopment of the site could provoke in the short term.

Some participants queried the proximity to the Arc 21 waste management facility adjacent to the Giant’s Park. They failed to see how the Giant’s Park could be developed and promoted as a children’s park with the possibility of an energy from waste facility on the neighbouring Arc 21 site. However there was recognition that no proposals have been put forward for such a facility.



Natural Environment

There were at times conflicting views on the redevelopment of the landfill site and the resultant impact on the natural habitats and wildlife that the site supports. Many participants, not just environmentalists, said that at least part of the site should be left natural and wild as people are already enthusiastic about the natural habitat that exists on site at present. This support is borne out by 'natural habitat' coming third place within the top ten components for the park.

Participants and environmentalists said that the Council needs to carefully balance the visitor experience with requirements to respect the wildlife, and the important bird populations in particular which over winter on the landfill site.

RSPB representatives were especially helpful on this subject and described how the eastern perimeter of the site bordering the Lough is one of the most sensitive areas where the birds feed during the low tide. By contrast they said that the wildlife lagoons at the northern end of the site are used primarily for roosting and if sensitively designed (by cutting back through one of the peninsulas there to effectively create an "island"), the birds would be protected and visitors could observe them without causing harm or damage. RSPB is keen to remain involved in the planning and implementation phase of the Giant's Park project.

Natural landscaping is an important factor and there was considerable discussion on how difficult this could be to achieve as deeper rooted trees (of which many native species are) will not be suitable on the site given there is only a six foot deep topsoil layer there. Willows were suggested as one example of a good native species that is quick growing and does not root too deep. The most important reason for careful landscaping is to create interesting vistas and strong screening of different zones and protected wildlife areas, it was said.

Overall there was a lot of support for telling the story of the natural environment at the Giant's Park, that is the hills, the Lough and the wildlife and how they have all jockeyed for position with the waste and mountains of rubbish dumped there over three decades. Many said this "environmental footprint" story is one that needs to be told and is worth telling and could be housed in the proposed environmental education centre.

Finally the Council was asked to phase the development of the park and allow components to naturally and organically evolve over a long period of time. This approach was seen as an attractive, viable and sustainable way forward that would suit and meet many needs and desired outcomes for both the Council and environmentalists.



Equality

A key phrase highlighted several times was the need for the Giant's Park to develop as "shared" space rather than neutral space that could eventually become territory. The Giant's Park, it was said, should be a park for everyone in the city and beyond; a truly regional and 21st century park.

To achieve the shared space concept it was said that communities from all walks of life must be involved in the design of the park. Encouraging involvement for example from ethnic minority communities by holding design competitions for pieces of artwork and sculpture for the park would be a very useful step. This would enable all sections in the community to feel a sense of ownership of the park, to feel that it is their space and that everyone is welcome.

Multi-lingual signposting and interpretative material could also be provided on the site to encourage inclusion. As well as this children and young people's views could be sought on the activities to include in the park, and older people and women's issues need to be considered, as referred to in the aforementioned accessibility and safety sections.

Correct Balance of Key Components

It was said many times that children's activities are core to the development of the Giant's Park. This is borne out by the fact that a children's play park came second in the top ten components list. The Council was encouraged to look at exciting and innovative children's parks with a wider appeal that exist elsewhere in the world (especially in France, USA and Canada).

There was caution expressed, nonetheless, that this element of the park should not become a "Disney" experience, but that the key components and the correct balance should include a mix of education, exploration, the environment and fun. Furthermore it was said that the themes of environment, sustainable development and social development should be harnessed together with one of the major outputs of the overall experience focusing on improvement of the quality of life and health of Belfast's citizens.

Other mixes of activities suggested include a balance between "wet and dry" facilities taking account of the variable weather and the fact that the park occupies an exposed location on Belfast Lough which could be very unwelcoming during winter months, as well as enough entertainment and activities on site both day and night to encourage an all day "life" in the park.



“ This is a one off opportunity - let’s get it right. Don’t make this park just like all the others, make it really special. ”



In terms of telling the environmental footprint story, participants said that it is not just school children who want to learn about this aspect of the landfill site. This is an interesting story and there should be enough of an emphasis placed on this so that every visitor to the park can learn about sustainable development, climate change and biodiversity.

While the environmental education theme is an interesting and attractive one for the park, there were many comments made about the park still in need of a “heart” and the “wow” factor. Many participants said that

the Giant’s Park name is a good one and will provide a much needed theme for the activities in the park but there was mixed enthusiasm for the Gulliver figure. Comments were made that as a symbol something much more attractive is required to draw visitors to the park.

One attraction that the park could offer is access to the water and the Council was asked to negotiate with the statutory authorities to see if there is a way to allow access to the Lough while ensuring protection of the birds and wildlife.

Linkages

The Council was encouraged to develop linkages with the Giant’s Park and other park land and attractions in the city. It was highlighted that physically the Giant’s Park could be linked with the Belfast Hills and the Lough with interpretive material telling the story of the natural environment of both.

In terms of the Giant’s Park name, while there were mixed reactions (some liking it, others thinking it was a tenuous link) the Council was encouraged to link the name in with other “giants” in the city and around Northern Ireland for example the Giant’s Ring, the Giant’s Causeway, Belfast Giants, the “giant” cranes of Harland and Wolff and the “giant” names of Belfast industry.

Specifically linking the Giant’s Park in with the Jonathan Swift story some mention was made of his original homestead and church at Ballynure in Newtownabbey and how Belfast City Council could link the story with what is already provided by Newtownabbey Borough Council.

4.3 INNOVATIVE IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PARK

Including all of the suggestions made at workshops and focus groups, as well as written submissions sent to the Council and/or CTA and “other” suggestions included in the returned household flyers, the following innovative ideas and suggestions for the park were made:

- Giants of Belfast industry museum;
- Giant hot air balloon rides;
- Giant views of the site by helicopter and boat tour;
- Multi-sports and outdoor pursuits area with a combination of bike trails, zip lines, orienteering, climbing wall, kiting, high ropes, land yachting, sea based activities, punting and quieter zones for passive recreation;
- Links with Gulliver’s Way Park proposal in Ligoniel which will involve the use of dams and walkways to encourage environmental tourism in Ligoniel village;
- Giant fountains of coloured water with music;
- Giant ships;
- Community garden and community allotment education projects;
- Giant aquarium;
- Camping and other outdoor accommodation for children, young people and community groups involved in outdoor pursuits;
- Eden-type project;
- A maze;
- The National Stadium;
- Outdoor ice skating rink;
- Drive-in cinema;
- A racing track (greyhounds/cars/motorbikes);
- Mono rail system or miniature railway; and
- A relocation of the Beat Initiative - the Belfast based community carnival and arts project which is looking for new premises for its workshops and outdoor community events.

SECTION FIVE

THE FUTURE



Belfast City Council was congratulated by many consultees on its innovation and vision for the Giant's Park concept and proposals. Everyone involved in the consultation would like to see something happen to the former landfill site so that the transformation of such a huge stretch of land near the centre of Belfast City can get under way.

Some commentators want to see something large scale happen; others want to see something more natural evolve on the site. Most people were keen to know when they were likely to see something happen on the site and when the park would be open. Recognising that it would probably be several years until the opening, the Council was asked in the meantime to conduct regular and ongoing public tours of the site to keep knowledge and interest of the project alive.

The Council was also urged to engage in ongoing consultation with members of the public and specialist interest groups as ideas for the park will change and evolve in the short to medium term.

Finally, the Council was encouraged to involve users (especially women, children, cross sections of the community and people from different ethnic minority backgrounds) in the design and development of ideas, activities and infrastructure for the park.

All those who got involved in the discussion on Giant's Park are looking forward to the fruition of this exciting opportunity for Belfast City. Many believe it is long overdue and just what the city and Northern Ireland as a whole needs.

“ Leave the natural environment alone and don't destroy the natural habitats that are there. ”

APPENDIX ONE

ROADSHOW VENUES

Seven Venues for Roadshows with Numbers of People who participated at Each Venue

Venue	Number of People we met/spoke with	Number of Flyers Returned
Connswater Shopping Centre	300	138
ASDA (Shore Road)	200	77
St George's Market	300	136
Park Centre	350	183
Odyssey Pavilion	200	100
Abbey Centre	300	128
Queen's University Students' Union	400	218
Total	2050	980

Note: As a percentage of the total we spoke to or met with at the shopping centres, 47.8% of them completed flyers.

As a percentage of all the flyers returned to Belfast City Council (3,998) almost one quarter were returned at the shopping centres (24.5%).

APPENDIX TWO

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS OF PARTICIPANTS

Geographical Locations of Participants at the Seven Roadshows

Aghalee	Comber	Glenavy	Newry
Antrim	Cookstown	Glengormley	Newtownabbey
Ardglass	Crossgar	Greenisland	Newtownards
Aughnacloy	Crossmaglen	Helen's Bay	Omagh
Ballyclare	Crumlin	Hillsborough	Portadown
Ballygawley	Darkley	Holywood	Portgleneone
Ballymena	Derry	Jordanstown	Portstewart
Ballymoney	Down	Kilkeel	Randalstown
Ballynahinch	Downpatrick	Killinchy	Rathcoole
Ballywalter	Draperstown	Killyleagh	Rathfriland
Banbridge	Dromore	Larne	Rostrevor
Bangor	Dunamanagh	Leeds	Saintfield
Belfast	Dundalk	Lisburn	Scarva
Carrickfergus	Dundonald	Lurgan	Strabane
Carryduff	Dungannon	Magherafelt	Strangford
Castleberg	Dungiven	Manchester	Tallin (Estonia)
Castlewellan	Enniskillen	Millisle	Templepatrick
Claudy	Exeter	Monkstown	Tempo
Coleraine	Feeny	Newcastle	Whitehead

APPENDIX THREE

CONSULTATION EVENTS AND PARTICIPANT NUMBERS

Consultation Events and Participant Numbers

Date	Venue	Participants	Attended
26 Jan 2007	W5	St Louise's Comprehensive College - Falls Road	30
29 Jan 2007	W5	Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School - Ballysillan	30
21 Feb 2007	Site Tour and Portacabin	Environmental Interest Focus Group	10
22 Feb 2007	Waterfront Hall Launch	Range of Interests	100
23 Feb 2007	Site Tour and Portacabin	Sports Interest Focus Group	12
27 Feb 2007	Connswater Shopping Centre Ozone Complex	Members of the Public (Mainly East) Belfast Youth Forum	300 16
28 Feb 2007	W5	East Belfast Community (intended for East but only North reps came)	3
1 Mar 2007	ASDA Shopping Centre	Members of the Public (mainly North Belfast)	200
3 Mar 2007	St George's Market	Members of the Public (Belfast and regional)	300
5 Mar 2007	Belfast Castle	North Belfast Community	25
6 Mar 2007	Site Tour and Portacabin	Equality Focus Group	3
7 Mar 2007	Farset International	West Belfast Community and Newtownabbey Borough Council	6
8 Mar 2007	Park Centre	Members of the Public (West and South)	350
9 Mar 2007	Site Tour and Portacabin	Business Interest Focus Group (Duncrue tenants)	10
10 Mar 2007	Odyssey	Members of the Public (Belfast and regional)	200
13 Mar 2007	Site Tour and Portacabin	Councillors	5
14 Mar 2007	Spectrum Centre	Shankill Community, Regional Organisations, & Equality Commission	4
15 Mar 2007	Abbey Centre	Members of the Public (Newtownabbey and Carrick)	300
20 Mar 2007	Site Tour and Portacabin	Women's Focus Group (Shankill and Women's Tec)	16
21 Mar 2007	Holiday Inn	Central, South, North and West Community, and Sustrans and Indian Community Centre	6
22 Mar 2007	QUB Students Union	Students, Lecturers and Members of the Public (Regional)	400
25 Mar 2007	Bus Tours	Members of the Public (Regional)	53
27 Mar 2007	Castle High School, Belfast	Students	150

APPENDIX FOUR

FEEDBACK ANALYSIS

CTA recorded 100 people as attending the community workshops and special interest Focus Groups, of these 71% completed an evaluation form.

All participants described the meeting they attended as either 'excellent' or 'good', with the majority opting for 'excellent'.

Only one participant was not sure whether or not the meeting had given them an adequate opportunity to express their views.

Slightly more females than males participated at the meetings (55% versus 45%).

Just over half (51%) of participants fell into the 26-45 age group; 31% in the 46-60 age group; 14% ticked 19-25; and 7% were aged over 60.

Analysis of participant postcode is shown below:

	Number	
North Belfast	30	42%
Outside Greater Belfast	11	15%
South Belfast	9	13%
Central Belfast	7	10%
West Belfast	6	8%
East Belfast	4	6%
No Response	4	6%

Note - For this exercise, North Belfast - the area closest to the site - includes postcodes BT36 and BT37 (Newtownabbey) and BT13 (the Shankill area).

All participants described their ethnic background as white and 6% considered themselves as having a disability.

There were slightly more participants who said their community background was perceived to be Protestant (44%) than Catholic (41%) with the remainder (15%) opting for neither.

APPENDIX FIVE

CONSULTATION PARTICIPANTS

Attendees at all Community Workshops and Focus Group Sessions

Allen, Philip	-	Friends of the Earth
Armstrong, Derek	-	Bike Dock
Baxter, Helen	-	NI Orienteering Association
Boyd, Trish	-	Shankill Women's Centre
Bradley, Imelda	-	Conservation Volunteers
Bradley, Jim	-	Belfast Hills Partnership
Browne, David	-	UUP Councillor
Caines, J	-	Shankill Women's Centre
Carlin, Angela	-	Mountaineering Council Ireland
Carlisle, Betty	-	Shankill Women's Centre
Carser, Ronnie	-	Ulster Federation of Rambling Clubs
Caulfield, David	-	Belfast Sea Cadets
Christie, Sue	-	Northern Ireland Environment Link
Crickard, Helen	-	Women's Tec
Collins, Paul	-	Cornerhouse Family Centre
Courtney, Sharon	-	Shankill Women's Centre
Dickson, Stephen	-	Belfast Activity Centre
Dixon, Martin	-	The Harbour Café
Donaghy, Fiona	-	Mount Vernon Community House
Donnelly, Adrian	-	Mount Vernon Community House
Doonan, Carl	-	Cornerhouse Family Centre
Duff, Frances	-	Mount Vernon Community House
Farrell, David	-	Holylands Residents' Association

Gilling, Kate	-	Cornerhouse Family Centre
Glassey, Irene	-	Shankill Women's Centre
Greg, Anita	-	Women's Tec
Hanson, Declan	-	Mount Vernon Community House
Hoey, John	-	Stewartstown Road Regeneration Project
Houston, Niall	-	Ligoniel Improvement Association
Hughes, Dermott	-	Ulster Wildlife Trust
Humphries, William	-	DUP Councillor
Jackson, Neill	-	Dargan Newsagents
Kane, Dee	-	Greater Ballysillan CEP
Keenan, Josephine	-	Footprints Women's Centre
King, John	-	Age Concern
Kingston, Brian	-	Belfast Sea Cadets
Kirkpatrick, Jim	-	(High Sherriff) DUP
Knox, James	-	Age Concern
Lindsay, Damien	-	Beechmount Community Project
Lindsay, Margaret	-	Newtownabbey Borough Council
Liya, Sally	-	Northern Ireland Cycling Initiative
Loneragan, Aidan	-	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Lundy, Carol	-	Shankill Women's Centre
Lyons, Karen	-	Mark Lyons Graphics
Lyttle, George	-	Bryson House
Marshall, Robbie	-	Ulster Angling Federation
McCann, Fergal	-	Ligoniel Healthy Living Centre

McCann, Orla	-	Disability Action
McClellan, Linda	-	Shankill Women's Centre
McClure, Mike	-	Sports Council
McCorry, John	-	North Belfast Partnership
McGeehan, Anthony	-	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
McIlroy, Donna	-	Shankill Women's Centre
McKenzie, Margaret	-	DUP Councillor
McNeill, Paul	-	West Belfast Partnership Board
McVeigh, Keri	-	Turley Associates
Mekki, Samantha	-	Mark Lyons Graphics
Milligan, Caroline	-	NIPPA
Mullan, Brian	-	Friends of the Waterworks
O'Neill, Charlie	-	Fortwilliam Golf Club
O'Neill, Clare Louise	-	Mount Vernon Community House
O'Neill, Pauline	-	Ligoniel CEP
O'Prey, Deirdre	-	Footprints Women's Centre
O'Reilly, Kieran	-	Ligoniel Improvement Association
Pentland, Alan	-	Sustrans
Pierce, John	-	Pierce Group
Poots, Brian	-	Woodland Trust
Purdy, Michael	-	Fortwilliam Golf Club
Roberts, Paul	-	Ashton Community Trust
Robinson, Denise	-	Cornerhouse Family Centre
Rodway, David	-	DUP Councillor

Scott, Micheal	-	Antrim GAA
Sloan, Isabella	-	Footprints Women's Centre
Stewart, Roberta	-	Shankill Women's Centre
Stuart, Anthony	-	Ligoniel Improvement Association
Stubbs, Lorraine	-	Shankill Women's Centre
Thompson, Sam	-	20/20 Architects
Todd, Bev	-	Greater Ballysillan CEP
Wallace, Kim	-	Cornerhouse Family Centre
Wilson, Anne	-	Shankill Women's Centre
Wright, Clare	-	Countryside Access and Activities Network
Wylie, Moyra	-	Mount Vernon Community House
Young, Enda	-	Belfast Activity Centre

Note: While 100 people attended the community workshops and focus group sessions not everyone signed the attendance sheets. There are therefore less than 100 names recorded above.

APPENDIX SIX

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

Written submissions suggesting ideas for Giant's Park were received from the following organisations, companies and individuals:

- Ligoniel Improvement Association
- The Beat Initiative
- Dale Farm
- Cave Hill Conservation Campaign
- Friends of Ferguson Heritage Limited

Their comments and ideas have been integrated into the main findings section under the title of "Innovative ideas and suggestions for the park".

APPENDIX SEVEN

RESPONSES & RESULTS

All Public Consultation Responses and Results

(Prior to Selection Workshop)

Rank	Component	%
1	Play Area	70.2
2	Education Centre	61.1
3	Cycling	59.7
4	Open Air Festival/Concert Space	54.5
5	Bridge	48.6
6	Golf (pitch and putt)	44.1
7	Sports Pitches	42.6
8	Artwork	40.7
9	Cable Car	39.8
10	Bird Hides	39.1
11	Ferris Wheel	38.3
12	Wind Turbines	38.4
13	Horse Riding	37.2
14	Skateboarding	33.3
15	BMX Track	29.4

(Note: Total sample size of 3,998 respondents)

Over half of those who completed the flyers, sent emails, text messages and phone messages listed “other” suggestions. Of these suggestions, the main or most often quoted (more than 100 times) included:

- environmental landscaping/trees etc;
- retention of natural habitat;
- pond/lake;
- formal sports;
- children’s activities/facilities;
- animals;
- paths/walking;
- rail - to and around the site;
- picnic/BBQ;
- water features; and
- ice rink.

Community Technical Aid is the only region-wide voluntary organisation which provides professional planning and architectural services for community and voluntary groups. We facilitate community participation in planning and support community development by assisting groups to develop the skills, knowledge and infrastructure needed to regenerate disadvantaged urban and rural areas.



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