



5 comments  
TUESDAY  
24/07/2007  
16:17:49

**McGuinness rules out Maze memorial**

Northern Ireland's Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness tonight moved to dispel unionist fears that a proposed conflict transformation centre on the site of the former Maze Prison would be a shrine to terrorism.

The Sinn Fein Deputy First Minister was commenting after Stormont Sports Minister Edwin Poots insisted he would not table any proposal for a 35,000-seater stadium at the 365-acre site if it meant a shrine would also be built there justifying loyalist and republican paramilitary murders.

Mr Poots told the Ulster Unionist deputy chairman of the Assembly's Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee David McNarry he would not submit a stadium plan which could not command cross-community support. "Ultimately no unionist will accept any proposal which will be a glorification of terrorism," he said.

"There will have to be cross-community consensus. However, unionists will not support anything that says terrorism was right, that the killing of innocent individuals was right.

"That is the bottom line. That has to be taken into consideration."

Mr Poots and his officials have been working alongside the governing bodies of soccer, Gaelic games and rugby in the province on a business plan for a £55 million stadium on the site of the former jail.

The Executive also has plans to build an indoor arena on the site, an

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- Woman dies in Dublin house fire
- 12:07 Bomb quiz trio released by police
- 11:32 Police car stolen in Lisburn
- 11:29 Bomb threat in Co Armagh
- 11:22 Irish language act in the spotlight
- 11:02 English floods claim two lives
- 10:36 Man dies in Donegal road accident
- 10:02 Galway to get €40m revamp
- 09:41 Criminals exploiting UK flood crisis
- 09:12 Charges after Tesco bomb threats
- 08:49 Pedestrian dies in Kerry crash
- 08:42 Calls for Orange hall law change
- 08:34 Five charged over Co Down attack
- 08:09 New Belfast flights for airlines
- Unit closed at Belfast hospital
- Man 'critical' after Wexford shooting
- John Lewis application withdrawn
- Victims' commissioner 'sop to DUP'
- Operation Banner to end July 31
- Body found on Galway shoreline
- US firm to sell Tullamore plant
- Woodward: 'No shrine at Maze'

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agricultural showground, houses and cafes.

However some unionists have been unnerved by the conflict transformation centre's plan, retaining one of the H-Blocks and the prison hospital where 10 republican hunger strikers died in 1981.

Mr Poots' cabinet and party colleague, Enterprise Minister Nigel Dodds warned the DUP minister unionists will not stomach any stadium linked to anything which glorified terrorism.

Mr McGuinness insisted in Brussels tonight there was no prospect of the conflict transformation centre becoming a terrorist shrine.

"I do not know anybody who has advocated a conflict transformation centre who is arguing for a shrine of any description or arguing for there to be what some call a shrine for terrorism," he told PA.

"People are making arguments around something that simply does not exist.

"The whole issue of a stadium on the Maze site is down to the Culture, Arts and Leisure Minister.

"Everything else on the Maze site will be decided by the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister.

As Deputy First Minister, I am not arguing for any kind of shrine and the First Minister Ian Paisley knows that.

"If we want a conflict transformation centre, then it has to concentrate on how we resolve conflict.

"But let us be also clear if there is no conflict transformation centre, then there is not going to be a stadium."

Mr Poots told the Assembly committee that if a decision was not made soon on whether the Maze stadium project could go ahead, the Irish Football Association had warned him at least two international soccer friendly matches could be played outside Northern Ireland next February and March.

The minister was horrified at this prospect and vowed to do all in his power to lobby cabinet colleagues to help retain international matches in Belfast.

He also revealed the Gaelic Athletic Association had categorically ruled out backing the multi-sports stadium project if it was located in two of the Belfast sites originally considered - the North Foreshore and the Titanic Quarter.

While the North Foreshore would like the Maze have received received planning permission, the committee was told it would have been more costly to build the stadium on what was a landfill site.

There were also environmental health concerns and it would not have

been able to accommodate facilities the former prison could house.

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On 24 Jul at 13:38 - James from Belfast said:

I would like make an important point in relation to the new Northern Ireland stadium. Football fans would have you believe that they hold the key to the stadium's success, when in fact they are the poor relation after Rugby and GAA. Both the GAA and Ulster Rugby can attract thousands more fans week on week making them the key the success of any stadium. Attendances at international football matches are lucky to reach 12,000, while the GAA can attract over 20,000 to a provincial semi-final between only 2 of the 6 Northern Ireland counties - I'll leave it to football fans to do the maths ! If they want to keep Windsor Park or build their own stadium in Belfast, go ahead - neither makes any commercial sense.

On 24 Jul at 17:46 - David from Portadown said:

I am a Northern Ireland football fan and a unionist. I am 100% in favour of the Maze site. I have said from the start that we may end up getting nothing because of all the small thinkers, who can create a problem for every solution. So many of those who insist on a central Belfast stadium have absolutely no vision. With a little added infrastructure, the Maze plan is a gift horse. Wake Up.

On 24 Jul at 19:08 - outsider from outside said:

Level the whole area.dont leave one wall standing. then start on the level ground

On 25 Jul at 10:59 - JOHN from BELFAST said:

It doesn't matter what McGuinness says about a shrine. The fact that the National Stadium (the highest profile spot in NI) is at the Maze prison is more than enough free publicity for the biggest Republican propaganda coup in modern history - the hunger strikes. Would Sinn Fein or GAA accept a stadium on Government land built on Castlereagh police station, complete with a 'conflict resolution centre' explaining the skills and dedication of the RUC men who brought terrorists to justice, thereby protecting the community of Nireland from violence and destruction?

On 26 Jul at 01:26 - David from Craigavon said:

If this is to be belived then why maintain only the republican prisoners wing and not the Loyalist prisoners wing ? This alone shows a bias and understanding of only one side of the conflict. How can it be a conflict resolution centre if only one side is displayed or if it is not on neutral ground !!!!!!!!!!!

ENTERTAINMENT LISTINGS

Content provided by entertainment.ie

FILM: WAITRESS

DIRECTOR: Adrienne Shelley.

STARRING: Keri Russell, Nathan Fillion, Adrienne Shelley, Jeremy Sisto.

DETAILS: US / 107mins (15A)

RATING: ★★★★★

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