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 FRIDAY
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 09:19:29

Maze or bust says Kelly

The only option says SF

Sinn Fein will not support a new sports stadium for Northern Ireland unless it is on the site of

the former Maze Prison, a member of the power sharing executive warned today.

As speculation continued that plans for a £240 million stadium hosting soccer, rugby and Gaelic Games matches may be jettisoned because of divisions in the Democratic Unionist Party, Stormont junior minister Gerry Kelly insisted the development of the site must begin as soon as possible.

The North Belfast Assembly member said: "The Long Kesh masterplan proposal emerged from a lengthy and thorough consultative process. It received endorsement across the political spectrum.

"The Long Kesh masterplan is one package. With it, a major opportunity now exists to provide a world class facility for sport which would command the support and confidence of the GAA, the IRFU and the IFA and the wider sporting public.

"Sinn Fein will not accept a stadium being built on any other site."

Earlier this week, Finance Minister Peter Robinson and Sports Minister Edwin Poots moved to quell claims that their party, the DUP, had decided to abandon the plans.

Some members of the DUP oppose the Maze site because they argue Belfast would be a much better location.

Other unionists have raised concerns that the Maze masterplan also includes plans for the preservation of some of the old H-Block prison buildings as part of a conflict transformation centre.

Some DUP members, including Economy Minister Nigel Dodds, have voiced concerns that the retention of the prison buildings could be used as a shrine to terrorism.

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On 14 Mar at 09:34 - hopeful from republican west belfast said:

i agree with sinn fein . the new stadium should be built on the old long kesh site. it makes perfect sence to do it there. if it was done in Belfast (i.e maysfield) it would cause even more conjestion on our roads than there already is. plus with belfast just gettin victoria square opened i think its time to bring moria into the 21century as well. with regards to the preservation of some of the old long kesh i believe this is a great idea. i dont think its a shrine to terrorism, i think its part of our history that should remain so that the future generations from ireland can see exactly what was there and see what it represented

On 14 Mar at 10:07 - Subby from Belfast said:

I actually don't care where the new stadium is built as it'll end up being in the old Maze site regardless of what the DUP want. As a prodestant I've no real issues apart from one in that what happened to the republican prisoners, hunger strike, could turn it into a bit of a shrine which, to the old school prodestants, would be viewed as not acceptable. I think that's the main gripe with the so called "unionists" the fact that they see it as nothing more than a terrorist shrine. Personally I@d like to see the maze knocked down, wiped from memory and new affordable housing built there instead. IF we're ever to move on in this country we need to let go of the past.

On 14 Mar at 10:11 - Colin from Belfast said:

OR...as the MAZE prison and all that went on in there (for both sides) was so divisive right throughout the Country how about levelling the whole place and building something new and positive there now so we can maybe start to look forward rather than back for a change, lets face I don't think that this or even the next generation are likely to forget "the way it was" here - and if by not having "the Maze" sitting there glaring at us everytime we go out to watch our sport (or concerts or whatever) then thats GREAT and I thnk we should do all we can to encourage that !! So let's level the place, build the stadium and all move on eh !

On 14 Mar at 10:42 - El Tel from West Belfast said:

This is terrible news. If the stadium was within walking distance from the city centre (like in Cardiff) it would be far better. The place would benefit from people eating and drinking at venues of their choice. If it goes to the Maze then you will get rubbish burger and chips at nearly £10 a pop and nowhere to have a pint as well as having to get a bus or a train. Captive audiences can be scammed out of lots of money as they will have no choice. Also, Im pretty sure theres not enough people in Moira and the enrire surrounding area to use facility and keep it afloat.

On 14 Mar at 11:11 - SIMON from LISBURN said:

i think it is a stupid idea because if you think about it 95% of people will want to travel to the stadium around half an hour before the match starts but for 1 most people will be in belfast drinking because there is very few bars in lisburn as it is and they still keep closing that and not opening new ones, 2 there is no hotels in lisburn so fans will be staying in belfast, 3how are people going to get out to the maze the closest train station is still about 7 miles away at knockmore and lisburn have a very small taxi service they need to start thinking not just about were to put the stadium but also transport to the place and also were traveling fans are going to stay around it. But then if they come up with the idea of extending the rail sevice to the maze that is going to make an increase in rates for use the general public which is not going to make the us happy at all at the end of the day it is a stupid idea that hasnt had enough thought gone into it



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FILM: THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL

DIRECTOR: Justin Chadwick.

STARRING: Natalie Portman, Scarlett Johansson, Eric Bana, Kristin Scott Thomas.

DETAILS: UK / US / 115mins (15A)

RATING: ★★☆☆☆

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