STATEMENT FROM BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Earlier this year, after consulting widely with stakeholders, Belfast City Council drafted a resilience strategy aimed at transitioning Belfast into an inclusive, low-carbon, climate-resilient economy within a generation. We’ve taken this commitment seriously, and lately, the citizens of Belfast have reminded us that they do as well.

In the last few weeks, Belfast’s citizens have filled our meeting halls, occupied City Hall, and flooded our phone lines with opposition to the Belfast Tribeca project led by Castlebrooke Investments, asserting clearly that our city needs affordable housing a great deal more than it needs more state-of-the-art coffee shops or luxury lofts.

Therefore, heeding our duty to protect and promote the rights of our city’s residents, and in order to alleviate the severe lack of affordable homes across the city, we are cancelling Tribeca Belfast and directing Castlebrooke and affiliated companies to cooperate with us on a brand new project: the Mackies Sunflower EcoVillage.

While Tribeca Belfast would have undoubtedly brought a degree of “vitality” to Belfast City Centre, it would have served only a small percentage of Belfast citizens. Our duty, however, is to raise the quality of life of all citizens. With the design and development of Mackies Sunflower EcoVillage, Belfast will become a model of resilient strategic development and democratic decision-making for cities the world over.

No longer can the development of Belfast be held back by paramilitaries and political agendas that keep the city divided with security barriers. It’s time to roll up our sleeves and build the city our citizens truly want.

Indeed, it is local government’s responsibility to reflect and support the most ambitious hopes of its people, and we are grateful to the citizens of Belfast for fulfilling their role in the bargain: making their voices and demands heard, loudly, inexorably, unignorably.

As for Castlebrooke Investments, we thank them for their kind understanding, even if it didn’t come quickly, and we look forward to working on a sustainable model for the future together.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Suzanne Wylie
Chief Executive
Belfast City Council

WHO WE ARE

Castlebrooke Investments employs a methodical, opportunity-led investment approach to profitably developing cities. Throughout the investment process, we undertake diligent analysis and consult leading property expertise to determine value, reposition assets, and produce business plans that consistently exceed industry standards. In a word, we build successful, lucrative cities with excellent return on investments.

A NOTE TO OUR INVESTORS

We appreciate the trust you have long placed in Castlebrooke as a premier extractor of value from today’s urban landscapes. We understand, too, that many of you are disappointed at the less-profitable direction we have been forced to take in Belfast. We did our best to fight the public will as long as we could, but at a certain point, the public-relations consequences of continuing to resist would have outweighed potential benefits. Also, we wish to point out that our current projects in Belfast—notably the Mackies Sunflower EcoVillage—are financially profitable as well, albeit not on the same scale as the previous ones. And as our business model is pressured to move from primarily extracting value from, towards mainly adding value to, society as a whole, we hope you’ll stick with us on our grand Castlebrooke adventure.

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Belfast City Council

SUNFLOWER ECOVILLAGE

MACKIES, BELFAST

Belfast’s choice for sustainable social housing

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Nestled at the foot of the Black Mountain, surrounded by lively communities who helped build Belfast, Mackies is publicly controlled and less than a 20-minute cycle from the city centre. The Mackies Sunflower EcoVillage represents a breakthrough development opportunity that will house approximately 400 residents, including families in a sustainable model of housing that fosters community cohesion and that, if replicated, will provide a solution to both housing and climate challenges in urban environments the whole world over.

We at Castlebrooke have come to recognise, with the pressure and help of the Council, that the future of development in Belfast must integrate communities and bring down barriers, and we do see how Mackies is the perfect place to begin this long-overdue work.

The Sunflower EcoVillage will be built around residential clusters consisting of terraced houses and three-story apartment buildings, complemented by state-of-the-art community and leisure facilities and Belfast’s first free public transport system.

Central to the design will be innovative architectural products rooted in environmental sustainability: rainwater recycling, LED lighting, and the oldest detoxification technology on earth—sunflowers. Using robust social clauses recommended by the Council, we will guarantee 3000 jobs in the project’s design and development phase, and 1000 permanent jobs to help alleviate the unemployment crisis impacting local residents.

DETOXIFYING THE FUTURE

The Sunflower Detox Project, proposed by Belfast City Council’s Chief Executive Suzanne Wylie, is a low-cost, high-impact, fully scalable solution for cleaning up toxic-waste sites. Sunflowers provide an accessible alternative that requires no bulldozers or construction equipment, nor any advanced technology beyond the instruments needed to measure toxin levels.

We would like to pay particular regard to Wylie’s visionary leadership in ordering the use of sustainable design techniques that can be taught to every schoolchild or practiced by every landowner without recourse to expensive contractors that only large companies can afford.

Recognising our obligation to abide by the Belfast City Council decision-making and planning processes, we are committing 100% to the principles, needs, and timelines of this project. If our record says anything, it’s that Castlebrooke never backs away from a challenge.

JOIN US FOR OUR LAUNCH

Join us at 1pm on Saturday 29th February 2020 (a very auspicious Leap Day!) to plant sunflowers and celebrate the launch of Mackies Sunflower EcoVillage!

Next to the award winning Innovation Factory, Forthriver Business Park, 385 Springfield Rd, Belfast BT12 7DG