

# Development Committee

Monday, 26th March, 2007

## SPECIAL MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor McCausland (Chairman); and  
Councillors M. Browne, Hartley, Humphrey,  
A. Maskey, McGimpsey, Newton and Ní Chuilín.

Also attended: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor  
(Councillor McCarthy);  
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Patterson); and  
Councillors W. Browne, Campbell, Cobain, Hanna,  
Hendron, Lavery, McCann, McKenzie, Moore,  
Mullaghan, Rodgers and Rodway.

In attendance: Mr. P. McNaney, Chief Executive;  
Ms. M.T. McGivern, Director of Development;  
Ms. S. McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives;  
Mr. K. Anderson, Estates Surveyor; and  
Mr. N. Malcolm, Committee Administrator.

### Apology

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor D. Dodds.

### Titanic Quarter

The Committee considered the undernoted report regarding the development of Titanic Quarter:

#### “Relevant Background Information

**Titanic Quarter is a unique opportunity for development of the city and has the capacity to showcase and underpin the re-emergence of Belfast as a significant western European location. The development will have an important architectural, social and commercial impact upon the city, bringing investment, jobs and tourism to the location as well as increasing the numbers of people living close to the city centre. All of this will contribute to the economic well-being of the city in general and will have a direct impact on the Council’s rate base. For all of these reasons Council Officers has been broadly supportive of the proposed development while making efforts to ensure its longer term viability as a vibrant and sustainable mixed use location. The issues raised in this report are therefore raised within this broad context and can be viewed as a positive contribution by the Council towards achieving all of these broad objectives.**

This Special Committee meeting provides Elected Members an opportunity to hear presentations from Titanic Quarter Limited and DOE Planning Service on the proposed development of Titanic Quarter, Belfast. Members will also be provided with an opportunity to ask questions of key representatives from Titanic Quarter Limited; Harcourt Developments Limited; Belfast Harbour Commissioners; DOE Planning Service and DRD Roads Service. The meetings of the Development Committee on 17 January 2007 (regarding the Titanic Quarter Development Framework) and 14 February 2007 (regarding Connsbank Junction) provided authority for this Special Committee and extracts from the minutes of those meetings are attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

In addition to the documentation provided with previous reports to Committee, Council officers have more recently submitted a preliminary response to Planning Service on the Outline Planning Application for 'Phase 2' of the Titanic Quarter development. A copy of the preliminary response is attached as Appendix 2 to this report. Members are asked to endorse the content of this preliminary response to the Phase 2 Planning Application prior to inviting the various guests to make their presentations at the Special Committee.

Members are asked to note that this preliminary response is not a substitute for the role of the Town Planning Committee in dealing with the Phase 2 Application.

The three main areas highlighted in the preceding paragraphs are:

- (i) The Titanic Quarter Masterplan / Development Framework prepared by Titanic Quarter Limited.
- (ii) The Outline Planning Application submitted by Titanic Quarter Limited in respect of 'Phase 2' of the proposed Titanic Quarter development.
- (iii) The proposed new road junction at Connsbank on the Sydenham By-Pass.

A summary of the main issues arising from each of these areas (as endorsed by Committee) and potential questions to ask on each of these are provided in Appendix 3 to this report.

#### Key Issues

- The Development Committee at previous meetings has previously endorsed officer's responses to Planning Service on the Titanic Quarter Development Framework and on the proposed new road junction at Connsbank.

- Members of the Development Committee are to be asked at this Special Meeting to endorse the preliminary response prepared by Council officers in relation to the Titanic Quarter 'Phase 2' Outline Planning Application.
- Members are asked to receive the presentation(s) by the invitees (first by Planning Service/Roads Service followed by Titanic Quarter Limited) and to ask questions thereafter. A summary of key issues and potential questions are contained in Appendix 3.
- Following the presentations and question and answer session Members of the Development Committee are asked to provide further guidance to Council officers on any issues they consider appropriate.

#### Resource Implications

There are no known requirements for additional financial or human resources at this time. The current junction proposals would require release of Council lands at King George V Playing Fields for roads use. Discussions are in train with DRD Roads Service and Titanic Quarter Limited to try and reduce or eliminate the need for release of Council owned open space.

#### Recommendations

- (i) Members of the Development Committee are asked to endorse the preliminary response prepared by Council officers contained in Appendix 2 in relation to the Titanic Quarter 'Phase 2' Outline Planning Application.
- (ii) Members of the Development Committee are asked to provide further guidance to Council Officers following the presentations by invitees and the question and answer session.

#### Key to Abbreviations

TQL – Titanic Quarter Limited

DOE – Department of the Environment, Northern Ireland

DRD – Department for Regional Development, Northern Ireland."

The Committee was advised that representatives from the Department of the Environment's Planning and Roads Services were in attendance. Accordingly Messrs. Tom Clarke, Strategic Planning Manager, John Cummins, Belfast Divisional Planning Manager, and Tom McCourt, Belfast Divisional Roads Manager, were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman.

With the assistance of visual aids, Mr. Clarke informed the Committee that the work at Titanic Quarter would be undertaken within a Development Framework/Masterplan for the area and that various issues regarding the scheme would be discussed at the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan Inquiry. He indicated that the Masterplan for the Quarter was in the process of being agreed by various Government Departments and that a Transportation Masterplan for the area would also be produced. He pointed out that work on Phase 1 of the plan had commenced and that Article 31 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 would be applied to the planning application for Phase 2, thereby designating it as one of major importance. This would mean that, before the application was determined, the Department of the Environment would either cause a Public Local Inquiry to be held before the Planning Appeals Commission or issue to the applicant a Notice of Opinion indicating how it considered that the application should be decided.

Mr. Clarke advised the Members that the application in connection with Phase 2A, which dealt solely with the project to provide a new Belfast Institute for Further and Higher Education, had been received in February and was being processed currently. He indicated that it was the intention of the developers to submit applications for the remaining two phases of the plan as and when necessary. Mr. Clarke stated that, due to the significant impact on the amount of road traffic which would result from the completion of the project, it had been decided that a further point of access to the area should be provided on the Sydenham By-pass at Connsbank. The work in this regard would be undertaken in association with Phase 2 of the project and would be the subject of a separate planning application. The work would be linked to the Sydenham By-pass Widening Scheme and was likely to have implications for nearby Parks and open spaces within the ownership of the Council.

The representatives from the Planning and Roads Services then answered various questions which were put to them by the Members. They pointed out that the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan indicated that 10% to 15% of the residential accommodation within Titanic Quarter was to be used for social or affordable housing purposes. However, this issue would be discussed at the Inquiry into the Area Plan. Mr. Clarke indicated that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive had provided figures regarding its definition of affordable housing and that this information would be the basis for further discussions which would be held between the Planning Service and Titanic Quarter Limited. He stated that the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan Inquiry would affect only Phases 3 and 4 of the Titanic Quarter Plan and that the Planning Service had requested Titanic Quarter Limited to provide a full range of health, education and shopping facilities on the site.

The Chairman thanked the representatives from the Planning and Roads Services for their presentation and for the information which they had provided.

The Committee then agreed that representatives from Titanic Quarter Limited and the Belfast Harbour Commissioners be admitted to the meeting. Accordingly, Messrs. Mike Smith, Eric Kuhne, Mark Evans, Eric Porter and Conal Harvey and Mrs. Diana Fitzsimons on behalf of Titanic Quarter Limited, together with Messrs. Roy Adair, Maurice Bullick and Mark Doherty from the Belfast Harbour Commissioners, were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman.

The representatives from Titanic Quarter Limited made a presentation regarding its proposals and indicated that it was the Company's intention to contribute to a new future for Belfast on land which had, in the past, made a significant impact on the City's fortune. It was the intention of the Company to restore the character of Queen's Island and to celebrate the 200 years of shipbuilding which had taken place in that area of the City.

Mr. Smith indicated that the timeframe for the development of the site was between fifteen and twenty years and would involve investment of approximately £3 billion, which should create 25,000 jobs and provide a rateable income of £40 million per year. He pointed out that work had already commenced on the site and that, having been awarded the Public Private Partnership Initiative, work on the new college for the Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education would commence in September.

Mr. Harvey stated that, in the three years since planning work on the project had commenced, Titanic Quarter Limited had proved that it could deliver a project which would benefit the City. He pointed out the Titanic Signature Project, which had been initialised by the Council, would, if completed, become the most significant tourist attraction in Ireland and would have benefits for the City as a whole.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the representatives from Titanic Quarter Limited answered questions which were put to them by the Members. Mr. Smith indicated that the Company was keen to attract foreign investors into Belfast and was confident that the mix of uses available on the location would achieve this.

In answer to Members' questions regarding the provision of social or affordable housing in Titanic Quarter, Mr. Smith indicated that the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan required the scheme to provide 10% to 15% of such housing and that Titanic Quarter Limited had embraced that requirement.

The Chief Executive of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners indicated that the Commissioners intended to use the income which it would obtain from its interest in the scheme to undertake further development work at Belfast Port.

At the conclusion of the presentation the representatives from Titanic Quarter Limited and the Belfast Harbour Commissioners thanked the Committee for the opportunity to address them.

The deputations then retired from the meeting.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided by the representatives from the Planning and Roads Services, Titanic Quarter Limited and the Belfast Harbour Commissioners. In addition, the Committee endorsed the response which had been prepared by the officers in relation to the Phase 2 Planning Application for Titanic Quarter, a copy of which is available on the Members' Portal.