

Development Committee

Monday, 19th September, 2011

SPECIAL MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Stalford (Chairman);
Alderman Campbell;
Councillors Hartley, Hendron, Keenan, Kelly, Kyle,
Maskey, McVeigh, Mac Giolla Mhín, Robinson and
Webb.

In attendance: Mr. J. McGrillen, Director of Development;
Ms. S. McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives;
Ms. L. McCartney, Economic Development Officer;
Ms. R. Sloan, Project Officer; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Aldermen Ekin and Humphrey.

Titanic Quarter - Memorandum of Understanding

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 15th June, that it had agreed to hold a special meeting, to which the key stakeholders from Titanic Quarter would be invited, in order to discuss matters pertinent to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and Titanic Quarter Limited. Accordingly, the Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 Members will recall that Council’s Development Committee, at a meeting on 15th June 2011, agreed that a Special Meeting, to which all key Titanic Quarter stakeholders would be invited, be held to receive an update on the regeneration of Titanic Quarter including the construction and operation of Titanic Belfast; and to discuss the Memorandum of Understanding and its associated achievements.

1.2 Members have previously noted that Titanic Quarter Ltd (TQL) is the company taking forward the development of the Titanic Quarter in a joint venture with the owners of the land, Belfast Harbour Commissioners. At £7bn and covering 185-acres, Titanic Quarter is the largest urban regeneration project in Northern Ireland’s history and one of the largest waterfront schemes in Europe. Mike Smith, the Chief Executive of TQL

will be present at the meeting to update Members on the overall development of Titanic Quarter.

- 1.3 Located in the heart of Titanic Quarter is Titanic Belfast, Northern Ireland's largest ever tourism project. It is funded by the NI Executive, Belfast Harbour, Belfast City Council and TQL and is on schedule for completion by March 2012 in time to mark the centenary of RMS Titanic's maiden voyage a month later. Titanic Belfast is an iconic six-floor building featuring nine interpretive galleries over four floors. The building will house temporary exhibits, a 1,000-seater banqueting suite, education and community facilities, catering and retail space and a basement car park. With around 400,000 visitors per year expected it will generate significant economic and social benefits for all of Northern Ireland. Titanic Belfast will be a major driver of tourism, giving Belfast a truly stunning visitor experience and providing a focal point for Belfast's unrivalled Titanic heritage – integrated for the first time under the banner of Northern Ireland's 'Titanic Signature Project'.
- 1.4 Owned by a new charitable trust, Titanic Foundation Ltd (TFL), Titanic Belfast will be a platform for innovative educational initiatives and cross-community events to inspire future generations of 'Titanic Thinkers'. The TFL Board consists of seven independent trustees. The present Chairman of the board is Jonathan Hegan, a past chairman of RPS Consulting Engineers, and the acting Chief Executive of TFL is Brian Gregory. Both will attend the Committee meeting to update Members on the construction of Titanic Belfast, which is being undertaken by Harcourt Construction (NI) Ltd, in contract with TFL. TFL's update will include the implementation of social clauses within the construction contract.
- 1.5 In April 2011 TFL announced that Harcourt Developments Ltd had been appointed operator of the iconic £97m visitor attraction. As operator, Harcourt will be responsible for delivering Titanic Belfast's attractions and day-to-day running. The company will also be responsible for marketing and promoting the facilities within the building, including banqueting and conference facilities and its permanent visitor exhibitions and educational facilities. Conal Harvey, Director of Group Operations at Harcourt and Tim Husbands, Chief Executive of Titanic Belfast will be in attendance at the Committee to present to Members a detailed update on the operations and management of Titanic Belfast.
- 1.6 The Titanic Watch and Belfast Area Partnership Forum have each been invited to nominate one representative to attend this Special Meeting of Development Committee.

2 Key Issues

2.1 As a condition of Council's funding towards the construction of Titanic Belfast, TQL entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Council in 2009, which set out its commitment to actively work with the Council, key government departments and the community to optimise the city and community benefits of the development of Titanic Quarter.

2.2 The agreement contained in Appendix 1 sets out obligations on both parties and a number of Government Departments to ensure that people from all over the City have the capacity to access the opportunities arising from the regeneration of the 185-acre site. The MOU sets out the governance structure and management arrangements for taking this process forward and seeks to promote partnership working across a number of priority areas namely, work, tourism, housing, space, access and outreach. Working Groups have been set up under each of these themes, all of which are now functional. A detailed report on the progress of the various workstreams is presented below.

2.3 TQ Work

- An inter-agency TQ Work Group has been established to develop and implement an action plan which provides access to skills and training aimed at meeting the needs of Titanic Quarter's employers.
- The Work Group coordinates recruitment, training, skills and education programmes and focuses on the creation of bespoke employment approaches and initiatives to meet the needs of target groups including the long term unemployed, apprentices, graduates and undergraduates.
- A sub-group has also been established to meet the needs of the TQ Work Group and consists of members of the local community, training providers, partnership boards, local and central government officials.
- With local representation on both the work group and the sub group local communities are kept fully informed about upcoming employment and training opportunities and specifically designed pre-employment programmes have been developed to suit local needs.

- Through the DEL jobcentreonline and Belfast City Council websites citizens are regularly updated of upcoming job opportunities. Citizens can register their interest in employment, training or skills opportunities within Titanic Quarter and their details can be added to an employment database on request. Those on the database are alerted when a particular job that suits their requirements becomes available.
- Social clauses in the construction element of Titanic Belfast have been applied and are based upon government guidelines as set out by the Central Procurement Directorate. DEL has agreed protocols with EC Harris and Harcourt for the sharing of information and the validation of long-term unemployed and apprentices.
- A series of employer events and community information sessions will be held in September, October and January to gauge recruitment and upskilling plans for companies in Titanic Quarter and to inform local communities of upcoming employer vacancies in Titanic Quarter including the Titanic Belfast attraction.

2.4 TQ Access

- Provision of a dedicated high frequency bus service linking Titanic Quarter and the City Centre commenced on 1 September 2011 and operates every 12 minutes at peak times and every 20 minutes at other parts of the day.
- The Strategic Investment Board (SIB) has commissioned a study into the potential for enhanced pedestrian and cycle connections to Titanic Quarter. RPS Consultants have identified a number of existing and potential routes that could be enhanced including connections to the Connswater and Comber Community Greenways. Project plans for each route are being considered by the different stakeholders and the TQ Access Group is considering the potential for the different elements and the prioritisation of activity.
- A Connect2 project is one of the links in the RPS report and Sustrans has approached the Council in relation to the potential for a partnership project that would connect Titanic Quarter with the Connswater and Comber Greenways via a new route through Bridge End Halt, Fraser St (re-opened) and Sydenham Rd. At SP&R Committee on 19 August, 2011 Council agreed to take the lead partner role for this project and approved

the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. The role of the Council as lead partner is to ensure the completion of three broad work packages which make up the overall project, including the:

- i highway crossing and potential traffic calming between the Bridge End Halt and King's Road;
 - ii improvement around the Bridge End Halt; and
 - iii re-opening of Fraser Street and the connection into the Titanic Quarter via the Sydenham Road.
- Fraser Street which was closed some 10 to 15 years ago after a security incident is part of the Connect2 project and Belfast Harbour has agreed in principle to open up the connection as part of the joint scheme.
 - Bridge End Halt will be upgraded in parallel with the works under the Connect2 project finishing March/April next year and Translink are in the process of formally considering the name change to Titanic Halt or Titanic Quarter Halt.

2.5 TQ Outreach

- Council has embarked on a major engagement exercise with every section of society in partnership with TFL, ensuring that everyone in Northern Ireland can benefit from the substantial public investment in Titanic Quarter.
- A Community Engagement Plan has been developed. To assist with its implementation Council has designed a 2012 Ambassador Programme and has recruited 50 suitably skilled individuals to be the public face of the outreach programme. Training and support for Ambassadors is currently being designed.
- Whilst a number of individuals across Council and in partner organisations have agreed to participate on the Ambassador Programme, it is requested that Elected Representatives also consider championing the Titanic/2012 brand, promoting all activities and events and helping sell its key benefits across the city.
- Key projects to be delivered locally are being identified in partnership with members of the local community and partnership boards.
- Council has commenced a process internally to review ways in which grant funding activities might be re-branded to support Titanic related activity and how Titanic/2012 opportunities can be profiled at Council led events.

- Area Partnership Boards have provide details of key local groups to be engaged with; local communication mechanisms to tap into; potential programmes, events and activities taking place in their respective areas and likely local issues to be aware of when delivering outreach initiatives.
- Internal and external contact databases have been created which will be used as a distribution list for information to be communicated locally.
- Hard hat tours to Titanic Belfast have been facilitated for Members, Officers and Ambassadors during July - September.

2.6 TQ Tourism

- The Belfast Tourism Forum, including representatives from key private and public stakeholders has been established to oversee delivery of the Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework 2010-2014 and a number of Titanic related actions have been prioritised for 2011/2012.
- Council is leading on the implementation of a Titanic signage project aiming to connect pedestrians to the Titanic Quarter. This project includes the design, development, manufacture and installation of motorway and city based tourism signs as well as the design, production and distribution of Titanic and Maritime Visitor Trail maps.
- Council, Translink, BVCB and NITB have piloted a new Belfast Visitors Pass for 2011 linking integrated bus and rail travel across the city to discount schemes in attractions and retail and catering outlets. The pilot will be reviewed later this year in anticipation to making improvements for 2012.
- The Strategic Investment Board (SIB) commissioned Deloitte to develop an implementation and funding plan for the maritime heritage assets of Titanic Quarter. The report sets out a number of development requirements and specific funding opportunities associated with each of the individual assets.
- An industry engagement programme in support of Titanic 2012 has been developed. This programme presents a series of integrated events and activities to be delivered by BVCB in partnership with Council, BCCM and BCTC at a variety of audiences at different levels who need to be fully engaged and informed about Titanic 2012 including those individuals, organisations and businesses involved in Belfast's tourism development and promotion.

- Council has secured £400k of European funding to deliver 'Destination Belfast' - a programme aimed at supporting a range of initiatives for the tourism sector in Belfast including increased customer care, business skills, product knowledge and maximising the opportunities arising from 2012 and 2013.
- Tourism Ireland, NITB and BVCB will all focus marketing activities for 2012 on Titanic Belfast which will support the city to increase its share of visitors from ROI and GB in particular.

2.7 TQ Housing

- A condition in the original planning agreement for Titanic Quarter is that a minimum of 15% of the residential accommodation shall be allocated for affordable housing, of which a minimum of 10% shall be allocated within Phase 2. The remaining 5% may be in offsite locations in the Belfast Metropolitan Area.
- Whilst the current downturn in the housing market has delayed the construction of Phase 2 TQL is committed to ensuring that social and affordable housing units will be pepper potted throughout the development and will be indistinguishable from the private housing units in each block.
- Until TQL has a better sense of when Phase 2 will begin the TQ Housing group is content to leave the date of next meeting on a 'to be confirmed' basis, with TQL having agreed to come back to Council when there is a greater understanding of market demand for Phase 2.

2.8 TQ Space

- A network of open spaces and public realm will be provided as an integral part of the Titanic Quarter development including:
 - i. The 'Kit' by Tony Stallard is the first public artwork for the Titanic Quarter and is sited in the public realm area facing the Abercorn Basin. Production of the artwork coincided with completion of Phase 1 of the ARC development in October 2009.
 - ii. A new area of open space opened in December 2010 at Abercorn Basin (in front of the ARC Apartments) incorporating a new Marina within the Basin and new dock walls.

- iii. **Titanic Belfast will be iconic in design and is due to open to the public at the end of the first quarter, 2012. The creation of a piazza around this building will act as a major public space for the city.**
- iv. **The slipways of Titanic and Olympic will together create a high profile area of public realm.**
- v. **Heritage Lottery Fund recently announced confirmed funding of £3.2m to enable the Nomadic Trust to restore the last remaining White Star Vessel, *SS Nomadic*, and the Hamilton Graving Dock. External and internal refurbishment works will be completed in 2012.**

In order to effectively engage, disseminate information and seek local views on the operation of the Memorandum of Understanding and wider Titanic Quarter development, Council is now asked to consider Member nominations to participate on a Titanic Quarter All Party Working Group.

3 Resource Implications

- 3.1 **There will clearly be resource implications in terms of the Council committing both officer and Member time in engaging the established governance arrangements for the Titanic Quarter MOU.**

4 Recommendations

4.1 Members are asked to:

- i. **Note the contents of the report;**
- ii. **Consider Member nominations for a Titanic Quarter All Party Working Group and to meet informally regarding MOU progress;**
- iii. **Consider Member nominations to support the 2012/Titanic brand; and**
- iv. **Note a further report on MOU progress will be presented to Committee in due course.”**

Prior to the admission to the meeting of the representatives of Titanic Quarter, a number of Members referred to the contents of the Memorandum of Understanding and expressed concern as to whether the Council's original expectations in respect of social clauses therein had been met regarding the creation of sustainable employment, the enhancement in both economic and cultural terms of local communities and in the establishment of social housing. The point was made that, given the significant contribution which the Council had made to the project, there existed an expectation that the representatives of Titanic Quarter would be able to provide tangible evidence of the benefits which had been realised through the Memorandum of Understanding.

The Director outlined the principal aspects of the report and reminded the Committee that, since the Memorandum of Understanding had been signed in 2009, the economic recession had impacted greatly on a number of objectives as set out in the document. He indicated that this had been most acute in respect of the plans for the establishment of housing within the Quarter. In response to a Member's question regarding the legal status of the Memorandum of Understanding, the Director pointed out that the social clauses were subject of a contract between Titanic Foundation Limited and the contractor, Harcourt Construction (Northern Ireland) Limited, and could not be enforced legally through the Memorandum. He added that Memorandum was statement of agreed aims, principles, themes and priorities between the Council and Titanic Quarter Limited.

It was reported that Mr. C. Harvey, Director of Operations of Harcourt Construction; Mr. M. Smith, Chief Executive and Managing Director of Titanic Quarter Limited; Mr J. Hagen, Chairman of the Titanic Foundation; and Mr. T. Husbands, Chief Executive of Titanic Belfast were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman (Alderman Stalford).

Each of the representatives proceeded to outlined to the Committee the aims, objectives and achievements to date of the Titanic Quarter. Mr. Harvey stated that Titanic Quarter represented one of the most prestigious waterfront developments in Europe which offered a wide range of investment opportunities. He added that the project would create approximately 25,000 jobs over a period of fifteen years. Mr. Smith apprised the Committee on the effects which the economic downturn had had upon the development of housing within Titanic Quarter and submitted figures on the numbers employed currently at the various locations in the Quarter. Mr. Husbands gave an overview of the anticipated visitor numbers which Titanic Belfast would attract when it opened in March 2012 and clarified matters relating to social clauses in so far as they related to employment at the building and the engagement of contractors. Mr. Hegan provided figures in relation to the number of local people who had found employment, received training or had benefited from educational programmes through the development of the Titanic building. He added that, for this purpose, a working group viz., TQ Work, had been established and it worked closely with the Department for Education and Learning and the Council to maximise opportunities for local people.

Ms. Sloan then provided an overview of work of which she oversaw on behalf of the Council, in conjunction with the Department for Education and Learning in her role as Chairman of the Titanic Quarter Working Group. She gave an indication of the types of jobs and training which had been delivered to local people through the various projects. Mrs. McCartney gave a presentation on the levels of community engagement which the Council had undertaken through the project and outlined plans for further work in this regard.

A prolonged discussion ensued in respect of the presentations. A Member suggested that the figures disclosed in respect of the numbers of local people who had been employed through the project were somewhat disappointing. He made the point that the benefits which had been accrued by local communities had been minimal. On the issue of the establishment of social housing within the Titanic Quarter, the point was made that, regardless of the downturn in the housing market, there existed an acute need for social housing within Belfast and, within this context, any housing developments envisaged within Phase 2 of the project should be re-assessed.

In response to a Member's question regarding the figures presented regarding employment, training and skills development, Mr. Hagen indicated that the representatives of Titanic Quarter Limited would be prepared to attend a future meeting of the Committee to discuss the matter further. In addition, an undertaking was given that information would be provided to the Committee in respect of the number of individuals who had been recruited for trade apprenticeships within Titanic Quarter. In conclusion, Mr. Harvey reassured the Committee that the representatives of Titanic Quarter remained wholly committed to the Memorandum of Understanding and, in particular, to the achievement of the aims as outlined in the social clauses within the document. The Chairman (Alderman Stalford) thanked the representatives for attending the Committee and they retired from the meeting.

After discussion, during which the Director clarified a number of issues on the Memorandum of Understanding from a Council perspective, the Committee agreed to adopt the recommendations as set out in the report and noted that a further report in respect of the issues raised would be considered by the Committee in due course.

Chairman