



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Special Development Committee
Subject:	Titanic Quarter Update
Date:	5 November 2010
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Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware of the financial commitment of £10million to be made by this Council towards Titanic Belfast – the iconic tourism signature project. Construction on Titanic Belfast is now well under way and is on target to be completed by the first quarter of 2012, in time for the centenary of Titanic's launch.

As a condition of Council funding to this project, Titanic Quarter Ltd (TQL) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Council in June 2009, setting out its commitment to work actively with the Council, key government departments and the community to optimise the city and community benefits of the wider Titanic Quarter development.

At a special meeting of the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources (SP&R) committee, it was agreed that that Committee would exercise oversight of the construction and funding elements of Titanic Belfast while the Development Committee would take the primary role in relation to the implementation of the MoU.

At a further meeting of SP&R Committee on 18 June 2010 it was subsequently agreed that in addition to the above arrangements, an all Party Group should be established as the key mechanism for Elected Members' engagement on issues relating to Titanic Belfast.

Key Issues

Construction update

To date, £26.1million of spend has been certified on the project.

In terms of design and operation, Titanic Foundation Limited (TFL), the independent charitable trust established to oversee the delivery of Titanic Belfast, is currently considering proposals for the inclusion of an Immersive Theatre as opposed to the previously agreed Flying Theatre concept. Clearly, such consideration is subject to the impact on projected tourist numbers and cost. The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee considered the Immersive Theatre proposals at its meeting on 20 August 2010 and was supportive of the concept.

Memorandum of Understanding Update

The MoU sets out a three tier governance structure and management arrangements for taking the process forward. The current structure involves a Strategic Advisory Board, a Co-ordinating Steering Group and six Thematic Action Groups covering the priority areas of:

- Employment, Education and Skills (TQ Work)
- Accessibility and Transport (TQ Access)
- Housing (TQ Housing)
- Community Outreach (TQ Outreach)
- Tourism Development and Promotion (TQ Tourism)
- Quality Open Space and Public Art (TQ Space).

Although the MoU was signed in June 2009 and shall remain in effect for a maximum of five years, the official sign-off on the contract did not take place until late November 2009. The existing agreement is subject to annual review, with the first review scheduled for end November 2010.

In addition to the MoU, a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with East Belfast Partnership (EBP) is also in place. Their role is to act as a managing agent on behalf of the Belfast Area Partnerships (BAPs) in order to facilitate city-wide community engagement. The agreement is in place for 12 months (1 December 2009 – 30 November 2010). Titanic Quarter Ltd currently funds the support cost for the SLA in addition to its other funding commitments as part of the MoU, including the provision of a community fund (total commitment – around £100,000). The SLA will be evaluated as part of the forthcoming review of the MoU.

1. Achievements to date

a. Progress in achieving the MoU work programme

A summary of the achievements against the MoU work programme are detailed below.

(i) Strategic Advisory Board

- Consists of representation from senior government departments and community representation through BAPs
- Its principal functions are to ensure satisfactory progress of the scheme according to the framework established in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and to take responsibility for ensuring appropriate commitment to the MoU by its agencies and officers.
- Agreement has been sought by representatives to attend bi-annual meetings and to commit appropriate resources to 'champion' or participate in the six Thematic Action Groups.
- Meetings held to date: 29 March 2010 & 14 September 2010.

(ii) Co-ordinating Steering Group

- Informal meetings have been held between Titanic Quarter Ltd, Belfast City Council and a lead representative on behalf of the Belfast Area Partnerships (BAPs) to monitor progress of the Action Groups and to ensure liaison with the SAB representatives.
- Formal meetings held to date: 2 March; 27 July & 6 September 2010.

(iii) Thematic Action Groups

- Four of the six action groups have been established and are making positive progress - TQ Work, TQ Housing, TQ Access and TQ Space.
- A summary of achievements and key issues for each of the action groups are contained in Appendix 1.
- Issues have arisen with regards to the clarity of position of TQ Tourism and TQ Outreach and further details are provided in Appendix 1.

(iv) Service Level Agreement with EBP

Several activities have been delivered as part of the current city-wide community engagement process including:

- TQ community information events held in each of the five Partnership Board areas offering attendees information about the developments taking place at

Titanic Quarter; how the project will engage with communities and information on future employment and training opportunities (170 attendees)

- TQ community open days offering members of the public information about the plans for the area (200 attendees)
- Development of the first Titanic Quarter community e-zine for community stakeholder use – to be circulated November 2010
- Development of a new community section of the Titanic Quarter Ltd webpage (www.titanicquarter.com/tqcommunity - soon to be live).

Key issues arising:

- Feedback at recent elected member party briefings indicated varied levels of support with regards to the adequacy of the current arrangements for community engagement i.e. through the BAPs. Members therefore recommended that additional/complementary means of communication and engagement should be explored e.g., utilising council resources and other existing mechanisms to disseminate information and tapping into existing communications channels such as City Matters.
- Feedback from Titanic Quarter Ltd indicates it will have to re-assess the use of its community fund at the end of this calendar year.

b. Other current projects

Construction Supply Chain Model

As a means of addressing the potential under-representation of Belfast-based sub-contractors – and subsequently improving the number of local apprentices benefiting from the development - we have been successful in getting funding from Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) to support the development of a Construction Supplier Model. This funding will allow us to support 50 sub-contractors from the local area to take part in a development programme which will improve their chances of gaining work on the build.

Although we had initially planned that the project would focus on Titanic Quarter, the slowdown in the building work because of current market conditions means that we will now consider how this model could apply outside of Titanic Quarter as well. This might include the Council's capital programme and other private development taking place – particularly those projects in which Council has made some investment.

2. Role of Council

At a meeting of Strategic Policy and Resources (SP&R) Committee on 5 March 2010, it was agreed Development Committee would take the primary role in relation to the implementation of the MoU while SP&R Committee would exercise oversight of the construction and funding elements. It was also agreed that joint meetings of both Committees (to which all Councillors would be invited) would take place twice a year to exercise oversight and influence over all the key stakeholders who will need to work together to ensure that the development of the Titanic Quarter benefits all of the City.

At a further meeting of SP&R Committee on 18 June 2010 it was subsequently agreed that in addition to the above arrangements, an all Party Group should be established as the key mechanism for Elected Members' engagement on Titanic Belfast issues. It may be pertinent to consider whether this group's remit should be widened out to cover the 2012 events programme.

Key issues arising:

- During recent party briefings, Members noted concerns regarding the lack of challenge presented by the social clauses in the construction element of the TSP. The existing social clauses in the construction element of the TSP require that Harcourt Construction NI Ltd (or their suppliers/subcontractors) employ 1 long-term unemployed person for every £5million of public money and recruit 1 apprentice for every £2million. With a contract value of £60million, this equates

to 12 long term unemployed (LTU) and 30 apprentices.

- Members also expressed disappointment at the reticence of some departments to take seriously their responsibility in relation to the delivery of this project (DRD unwilling to ‘champion’ TQ Access and DCAL unwilling to ‘champion’ TQ Space).
- Additional mechanisms should be adopted for communicating the benefits of the MoU and outcomes of the Thematic Action Group plans among all target audiences.
- At the August 2010 meeting of the Development Committee, several Members expressed concern in relation to a number of issues contained within the MoU, particularly with regard to the perceived lack of consultation with the public. During this meeting, the view was also expressed that representatives of Titanic Watch and Titanic Quarter Ltd should be invited to a future meeting to address the concerns of the Members.

Wider issues for consideration

Communications issues

- In light of the communication issues summarised above, it is recommended that a marketing and communications group be established. The remit of this group would be to put in place an effective stakeholder engagement plan ensuring rate payers, councillors, partner organisations, business community, community groups, potential tourists to the city, potential investors and the wider NI public receive regular positive stories regarding the development, helping to create a sense of community ownership and civic pride.
- It is proposed this group would meet quarterly and would comprise of marketing, communications and web experts from Council, Titanic Quarter Ltd, Titanic Foundation Ltd and central government as well as the ‘champions’ of the six thematic action groups. If there is agreement, Council would be willing to chair this group.
- If adopted, this group would:
 - oversee the delivery of key messages (via coordination of press briefings and regular updates with the media, hosting press visits to the site so the media can see progress, issuing regular press releases and using speaking opportunities, particularly those from north, south and west to show this is a city-wide initiative)
 - consider other channels of communications (twitter, facebook, City Matters);
 - agree timings (i.e., landmarks for releasing information of progress and creating a calendar of announcements and events involving all partners to ensure no clashes) and
 - continually evaluating to review if messages are reaching target audiences
- The need to communicate more effectively among all audiences is a priority. There are already “good news stories” emerging from the TQ Work group however the central role of Council is not currently being recognised. There is a need to work with partners so that an agreed approach to media activity can be established and to agree roles and responsibilities with regard to issuing press releases, conducting media interviews, protocols for spokespersons and photo line-ups.

Resource Implications

Financial and Human Resources

There are resource implications in terms of Council committing both officer and Member time in engaging and overseeing the established governance arrangements for the MoU.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the upcoming review of the MoU and suggest possible methods to enhance its impact and effectiveness from a Council perspective
- Agree that the all Party Steering Group set up to oversee Titanic Belfast will also consider the Council's input into the 2012 Events programme and the development of the Titanic Quarter.
- Consider opportunities for wider community input into and engagement with the thematic action groups, through existing Council work and structures
- Agree the need for a marketing and communications strategy to promote the developments to the wider community.
- Note the proposal to widen the supplier model project out to look at potential opportunities arising from capital schemes with which Council is involved as well as private developments.
- Agree to a presentation from TQL, TFL and Titanic Watch to the All Party Steering Group

Key to Abbreviations

BAPs – Belfast Area Partnerships
DEL – Department for Employment and Learning
LEMIS – Local Employment Intermediary Service
LTU – Long Term Unemployed
MoU – Memorandum of Understanding
TFL – Titanic Foundation Limited
TQ – Titanic Quarter
TQL – Titanic Quarter Limited
SLA – Service Level Agreement
EBP – East Belfast Partnership

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 - Thematic Action Groups: Progress to date