



Belfast City Council

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| Report to: | Development Committee |
| Subject: | Titanic and Maritime Heritage Tourism Update |
| Date: | 15 February 2011 |
| Reporting Officer: | John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470 |
| Contact Officer: | Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459 |

| 1 | Relevant Background Information |
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| 1.1 | One of the key visionary drivers within the Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework 2010 – 2014 is Titanic/Maritime Heritage. To progress this theme, Belfast City Council, in partnership with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the Department of Social Development, commissioned a study to map current assets and provision in the area of maritime and Titanic heritage and identify possible future developments and provision. |
| 1.2 | A progress report was taken to Committee in August. The contract was awarded to a consortium with a wide range of expertise led by CHL Consulting. Specifically the consultancy team was asked to consider the future of HMS Caroline to inform an appraisal process being led by DCAL. |
| 1.3 | The report provides an executive summary, action plan (short term up to 2012, medium term and longer term), an audit of current attractions and assets linked to Belfast's Maritime Heritage and an overview of current and future developments including Titanic Quarter, Odyssey Complex, City Quays, Sirocco Works, Donegall Quay, Lanyon Place, Central Station and the Gasworks. A copy of the draft executive summary and action plans are attached as Appendix 1. As well as on ground work, desk research was carried out on all major plans relating to the waterfront areas and review of best practice in Glasgow, Liverpool and Bristol was also completed. |
| 1.4 | The suggested vision to guide the work is 'to preserve, enhance and promote Belfast's Maritime Heritage as a foundation of the city's historic and dynamic character, as a source of pride for its people and as a defining and compelling experience for its visitors.' |

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| 2 | Key Issues |
| 2.1 | <p><u>2012 Priorities & Delivery</u></p> <p>Whilst the report lists short, medium and long term actions, there are a number of immediate priorities that need to be addressed prior to 2012. These include completing key capital projects such as Titanic Belfast and the Slipways, producing directional and interpretative signage, integrating ticketing between key maritime / Titanic attractions and developing a Titanic Trail linking to the rest of the city.</p> |
| 2.2 | <p>The study proposes that the Belfast Tourism Forum, identified in the Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework 2010 – 2014 and approved by Development Committee in November 2010, should be tasked with overseeing the implementation of these actions.</p> |
| 2.3 | <p>Members' will be aware that there is also a requirement to establish a TQ Tourism group under the BCC/TQL Memorandum of Understanding. Having reviewed the roles and compositions of both groups, there is significant duplication and it is recommended that the role of the TQ Tourism group is fulfilled by into the Belfast Tourism Forum. The focus of the Belfast Tourism Forum in 2011/2012 period will be ensuring that the tourism priorities outlined in the Belfast Titanic and Maritime Heritage study or raised as part of the wider TQ/BCC MOU discussions with stakeholders across the city, are implemented.</p> |
| 2.4 | <p>A copy of the Terms of Reference, proposed membership and draft short term action plan for the Belfast Tourism Forum are attached as Appendix 2. The action plan is due to be reviewed both internally across Departments and at a workshop with NITB and BVCB during February. Members' views and input would be welcomed.</p> |
| 2.5 | <p><u>HMS Caroline</u></p> <p>HMS Caroline is to be decommissioned at the end of March 2011, when she will pass into the ownership of the National Museum of the Royal Navy, the trustees of which will make a decision as to whether the ship should remain in Belfast or be transferred to Portsmouth. In either case it is intended that the ship becomes a heritage asset and tourist attraction. HMS Caroline has been in Belfast since 1924 and is of very considerable historical importance. She fought in the only major naval battle of the World War I and whilst in Belfast played a key part in World War II's Battle of the Atlantic. Her centenary and that of the start of World War I are coming up in 2014.</p> |
| 2.6 | <p>The Maritime Heritage Study identifies a shortage of tourism and heritage assets actually on the water and suggests that ships are crucial in emphasising the connection of a place with the sea. It recommends that HMS Caroline remains in Belfast but recognises that there associated capital and revenue costs. Wherever the ship goes, external funding will need to be sought and Belfast may have a stronger case for attracting this than any alternative.</p> |
| 2.7 | <p>The Strategic Investment Board has been commissioned to undertake further work on prioritising and securing investment into the maritime heritage assets on Queen's Island. They have included HMS Caroline with this brief. DCAL continues to undertaken an appraisal of HMS Caroline staying in Belfast.</p> |

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| 2.8 | The Royal Navy and National Museum of the Royal Navy are seeking Belfast City Council's position on keeping HMS Caroline in Belfast before a decision is made in March 2011 to move her elsewhere. Given that the Belfast Titanic and Maritime Heritage Study recommends she stays in Belfast, it would be preferable to keep the ship in Belfast for 2012 to add to the Titanic and Maritime Heritage experience whilst allowing an opportunity to undertake a feasibility study and test potential funding streams. There will be some costs (in the region of £150,000) involved during this period and these would need to be split between a range of stakeholders. Any longer term decision on keeping HMS Caroline in Belfast would depend on the funding secured towards capital costs and the ongoing subsidy required to maintain the ship. |
| 2.9 | <p>Members' are asked to endorse this approach to secure HMS Caroline in Belfast for a further year, subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the findings of the Strategic Investment Board's report (due before end of March 2011) and DCAL's economic appraisal; - detailed costs for keeping the ship in Belfast until the end of 2012 and carry out relevant studies - securing financial commitment towards any costs that would be incurred during this period from the Royal Navy/National Museum of the Royal Navy and Government Departments - the level of funding required from Belfast City Council being acceptable to the Council. |

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| 3 | Resource Implications |
| 3.1 | There are resource implications to deliver the short term priorities outlined in Appendix 2. £120,000 has been included in the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit's budget estimates for 2011/2012, on the basis that this will lever funds from NITB. Once the action plan is finalised, Members' will be provided with firm costings. |
| 3.2 | No budget provision has been made for HMS Caroline at this stage however there is likely to be a cost to BCC if the ship is to remain in Belfast for a further year. |

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| 4 | Equality Implications |
| 4.1 | The Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework has undergone equality screening. Further screening will be required on the action plan attached as appendix 2. |

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| 5 | Recommendations |
| 5.1 | Members' approve the recommendations in the draft Belfast Titanic and Maritime Heritage Study. |
| 5.2 | Members' agree to the outline terms of reference for the Belfast Tourism Forum. |
| 5.3 | Members' agree to secure HMS Caroline in Belfast until the end of 2012 subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 2.9 above. |

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| 6 | Decision Tracking |
| Timeframe: March 2011 Report back on HMS Caroline Reporting Officer: Kerrie Sweeney | |
| Timeframe: March 2011 Establish Belfast Tourism Forum Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay | |

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| 7 | Key to Abbreviations |
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| DCAL: Department OF Culture, Arts & Leisure DETI: Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment NITB: Northern Ireland Tourist Board BVCB: Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau. DRD: Department of Regional Development DSD: Department of Social Development SIB: Strategic Investment Board BCCM: Belfast City Centre Management TFL: Titanic Foundation Limited TQ: Titanic Quarter TIL: Tourism Ireland Limited. | |
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| 8 | Documents Attached |
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| Appendix 1 - Summary of the Belfast Titanic and Maritime Heritage Study Appendix 2 - Terms of reference for Belfast Tourism Forum | |
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