

Appendix 1

Belfast: Future City conference 2014: Workshop Discussion Sessions

Belfast and its talent

Workshop hosts and facilitators — Gavin Poole, Eddie Friel and Prof Tony Gallagher

People, their talent, creativity and energy are the drivers of the modern economy and Belfast must develop the best in its domestic population and attract in-migration of skilled newcomers. Belfast's growing role as NI's regional and economic hub has seen the transformation of the city centre as a place where people make decisions to invest, live or start a business. This session will focus on the encouragement and expansion of innovative and entrepreneurial activity in the city centre as well as a discussion on how best to maximise the impact of our educational anchors and the University of Ulster's regenerative opportunities in the city centre's northern end.

Belfast and its Waterfront

Workshop hosts and facilitators — Eddie Smith and Mike Smith

Belfast's river and waterfront location is still an unrealised opportunity. A transformative plan for the river corridor will help increase Belfast's attraction as a waterfront city and better connect the core to regeneration areas north and south of the city centre. New open spaces can provide focal points for development and attract the clustering of new office spaces and residences. This session will focus on the creation of new neighbourhoods in the city centre and the regeneration of the Lagan River Corridor

Destination Belfast

Workshop hosts and facilitators — Terry Stevens and Anne McReynolds

Tourism is a critical industry for a contemporary city centre and one which appears to still have room for substantial growth in Belfast. Contemporary tourism is much more than specific attractions or events – the whole city is the destination. Belfast has made great strides in this regard, particularly with the success of Titanic Belfast. This session will discuss how to turn Belfast into both a popular weekend destination and attractive place to do business through the employment of additional attractions, improvements to a wide range of activity and attractions and greater branding of the city's distinct culture.

Belfast and its connectivity

Workshop hosts and facilitators — Jerome Frost and Ciaran de Burca

City centres have to work for people on foot and Belfast has made a lot of progress in this area in recent years. There are however still too many places in the city that feel too far away. Connections within the centre and to adjacent neighbourhoods can create a more interesting and attractive pedestrian experience. The introduction of Belfast Rapid Transit system has the potential to transform the city centre into one that encourages the use of transit as an alternative to driving. Belfast's flat terrain and relatively wide right of ways

provide prime conditions for cycling. This session will focus on city wide connectivity and the encouragement of alternative transport options within the city centre.

Belfast and its city centre economy

Workshop hosts and facilitators — Christine Addison, Paul McMahon and Paul McErlean

Retail activity in city centres across the UK is undergoing fundamental change. The competition from out-of-centre shopping, new format retail and e-retailing has the potential to provoke dramatic changes in the requirement for conventional city centre retail space. These trends require that city centre retail management be highly directed and realistic. Belfast's office market is also experiencing great change. The city's low office rents, whilst attractive to FDI clients, present difficulties in supporting new office construction. This is exacerbated by the fact that much of the city's office stock is housed in much older buildings, not appropriate for modern working environments. An office strategy for the city centre needs to be implemented to ensure the trend of near-shoring continues and to provide the city with a plentiful employment base