

Chief Executive's Office		
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2 STOCKBRIDGE LANE
DONAGHADEE
CO.DOWN
BT21 0RA

12 July 2010

Dear Peter

ULSTER SPORTS MUSEUM

I am writing to bring you up to date with progress in establishing the Ulster Sports Museum and to invite the Council to consider whether it wishes to become a partner in the process.

To recap,

*The USM Association has been working for over three years towards establishing by 2012 a permanent museum to celebrate Ulster's greatest sports men and women.

*In order to provide a taste of what might be delivered in the museum, we created a temporary exhibition which was launched in the City Hall in December 2009; it has moved to Bangor and Downpatrick and will be on display in a number of locations over the next year; it has proved very successful and has already been visited by an estimated 25,000 people

*We have also started, with the help of the Somme Heritage Centre, to create an oral archive based on the memories of leading sports people; 12 interviews have been completed to date

Earlier this year, we advertised to identify potential partners interested in hosting the museum. We interviewed a number of those who replied and selected the three most promising responses. They are in Bangor, Belfast and Newtownabbey. We have started detailed discussions in respect of each location.

The broad outline of the possible arrangements involves-

- 1 the host meeting the capital costs of providing the premises and then leasing them to the Association;
2. the Association meeting the cost of fitting out and running the museum; and
3. the relevant local authority making an annual grant to the Association to cover the

leasing and other costs;

though there is scope for working out other arrangements that might better meet the needs of the different partners.

The Belfast location is the former Bank of Ireland building at the corner of North Street and Royal Avenue. (The earlier option of the Old Museum Building has had to be set aside because of the costs).

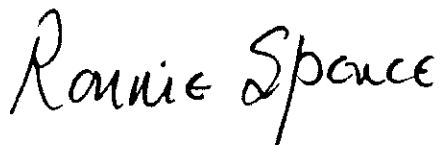
Following a recent meeting with the DCAL Minister, we hope shortly to engage museum design consultants to assist in our evaluation of the three locations.

There are strong arguments for locating the sports museum in Belfast city centre. But if this is to happen, we need now to engage seriously with the City Council. Our timetable requires us to reach a final decision on the location of the museum before the end of 2010.

It will, I think, be clear that if the sports museum is to be located in Belfast, the Council would need to agree to become a partner in the process and to participate in the next phase of negotiations. If on the other hand, the Council did not feel able to commit to participation, it is unlikely that the museum will be located in the city.

We would, therefore, welcome an early indication of whether in principle the City Council is willing to consider becoming involved in this sort of partnership arrangement in order to secure the Ulster Sports Museum for Belfast. We would be very happy to talk further to officers and the relevant committee.

Yours sincerely



R.B.Spence
Chairman

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