

CAL Committee meeting on 4th November 2010 - Briefing Paper on the Commemorations Strategy.

Background

1. The Minister met with representatives from Arts Council of Northern Ireland ("ACNI"); National Museums Northern Ireland ("NMNI"); Libraries NI; Public Records Office NI ("PRONI") and the Ulster-Scots Agency in January 2010 to explore a strategic approach to the various 100th and 400th anniversaries that are approaching over the next decade or so. As a result of that meeting a Commemorations Project Steering Group (PSG) was set up in March to consider a strategic approach to Commemorations. The PSG (comprising representatives of DCAL, DETI, ACNI, Ulster-Scots Agency, PRONI, Libraries NI, NMNI and Northern Ireland Museums Council) met on 23 March 2010.

Key Themes

2. As a result of that PSG meeting three key strategic themes for forthcoming commemorations in Northern Ireland were identified, namely Plantation, Titanic and 100th anniversaries for the decade 1912 to 1922.

The Strategic Approach & Support Available To Event Organisers

3. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure is supportive of those wishing to arrange events however the department does not commemorate historic events directly and has no specific budget for this activity.
4. The Minister has written to the ALBs and PRONI to encourage them to facilitate and support those in the community who are interested in organising events. The events to receive such support should be linked to the key themes in a way that delivers value for money, builds knowledge and understanding and contributes positively to a shared and better future.

5. The Minister has indicated that he expects that the plans and programmes being developed by the ALBs and PRONI will be in the context of the Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland and the NITB 'NI2012' project and he welcomes their work in that regard.
6. A key role for the ALBs and PRONI is to alert the local community to the fact that existing resources (such as venues, records, artefacts, staff and technology) may be used to facilitate and support groups wishing to commemorate particular events. The department's ALBs and PRONI have been asked to work together where possible to ensure value for money.
7. The department has not been prescriptive about what should be supported and any Community Group that wishes to organise an event which fits with the key themes may seek support. The events and activities to be supported should however be creative, exploratory, multi-dimensional, educational and non-exclusive.