

City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group

Wednesday, 13th August, 2025

THE CITY HALL/CITY HALL GROUNDS INSTALLATIONS WORKING GROUP MINUTES

Members present: Aldermen Lawlor and Rodgers; and
Councillors Beattie, de Faoite, Flynn and Murray.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;
Ms. K. Mullen, Programme Delivery Manager;
Ms. J. Murray, Civic Services Manager; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Committee Services Officer.

Election of Chairperson

Moved by Alderman Rodgers,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie and

Resolved – that Councillor Flynn be elected to serve as Chairperson
of the Working Group until the Annual Meeting in June 2026.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 14th April, 2025 were taken as read and signed as
correct.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Restricted Item - City Hall Christmas Tree

The Civic Services Manager updated the Working Group in relation to the possible
procurement of an artificial Christmas Tree for the City Hall Grounds. She provided an
overview of the benchmarking process, the costs of renting in comparison to buying, and
an estimated timeline.

The Working Group was advised that, due to long lead in times, a real tree had
been secured for Christmas 2025.

It was noted that the additional time would allow colleagues to collaborate more closely with the Culture and Tourism Unit to ensure that the new tree would align with the City Centre lighting scheme.

In response to a Member's query as to why an artificial tree was being purchased instead of a real tree, she explained that, over that past few years, the structure of the real Christmas trees had been weaker due to changes in the climate and that an artificial tree would be more sustainable.

After discussion, the Working Group agreed to recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee:

- to agree to purchase a "Real Branch" artificial Christmas Tree, rather than renting, given the limitations of suppliers within the local market via the Council's Capital Programme;
- that an artificial Christmas Tree be erected, commencing Christmas 2026;
- to agree to the tree being stored alongside the Council's other Christmas decorations at Duncrue and to be included in the PMU Christmas works, with future costs to be agreed.

Stained Glass Windows - LGBTQ+ and Health Service

The Programme Delivery Manager presented the following report to the Working Group:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

To provide and update feedback on the installation of the LGBTQ+ stained glass window in City Hall and to agree to progress the design, manufacture and installation of the health service window.

2.0 Recommendations

The Working Group is asked to

- **Note the feedback received on the commissioning, installation and unveiling of the LGBTQ+ stained glass window on 22 May 2025**
- **Note that the Health Service window will be located in the North West corridor of City Hall in one of the free spaces**
- **Note the feedback received from Bereaved Families to Covid NI**
- **Note that it is proposed that the installation of the health service stained glass windows is Stage 2 - Uncommitted on the Capital Programme to allow procurement to commence with final approval on designs and costs being taken by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee based on recommendations from Installations: City Hall/City Grounds Working Group. This will be subject to planning and listed**

building consent being obtained and a satisfactory tender being returned. It is recommended that an indicative budget be set to allow for the process to commence in terms of design, fabrication and installation. In line with the three stage approval process Members are asked to note that the final budget will only be agreed upon the receipt of a satisfactory tender

- To give consideration to key stakeholder groups who should be consulted with in relation to the final design for the Health Service window
- Agree that procurement be by way of a two stage open submission process

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

Members will be aware that the new LGBTQ+ stained glass window was unveiled by Lord Mayor, Councillor Micky Murray, during his term of office on 22 May 2025. A commemorative bookmark was produced and distributed free of charge to those in attendance. Families of individuals depicted in the window were invited to a private unveiling in advance of the official ceremony.

The event on the morning of 22 May 2025 was extremely well attended by invited guests and members of the public. Members will be aware that there was significant press coverage and social media interaction, a summary of which is attached as Appendix One. Corporate Comms have indicated that press coverage for the installation of the new window was strong and in the main positive. List of media articles contained within Appendix One.

Members will be aware that it was agreed at Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 22 September 2022 that the health service stained glass window be moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted on the capital programme. In line with previous arrangements for LGBTQ+ window it is recommended that design, manufacture and installation take the form of a two stage procurement process with selection by way of a two-stage open submission process as set out below.

STAGE 1

Contractors are required to submit:

- a current CV including name, address, telephone number and email address

- up to 10 original images of recent work e.g. on a CD, slides, memory stick, photographs etc. featuring at least 3 different pieces of work
- details of similar/relevant commissions over the past 4 years
- an expression of interest to describe how they will approach this brief and a description of what their concept will depict
- a clear indication of the proposed design
- details of the competent contractor who will be responsible for technical details regarding the removal of the existing window, installation of new frame if required, and proposed manufacture and method of installation of the new window. Details relating to this aspect should reflect the City Hall's listed status

STAGE 2

At Stage 2 of the process, up to 3 selected contractors will each be awarded a fee of up to £100 to develop their proposal. This fee will be inclusive of travel and all other expenses.

Stage 2 proposals will be expected to include:

- a visual representation of the proposed work – with maquette
- an explanation of the concept for the artwork and how it relates to the theme
- plans for how the contractor would approach and project manage the design, fabrication and installation of the work
- method statement regarding working in a listed building, proposed fixing details and health and safety issues around working in an active public building
- a budget breakdown
- a timescale for production and delivery
- details of any particular maintenance requirements for the artwork

The wording contained in the Notice of Motion is set out hereunder:

[Recognition of the Health Service in Belfast \(Notice of Motion 03/05/2016\)](#) which noted – *‘Over the years this Council has regularly highlighted the dedication and service of all those working in the Health Service in Belfast. To recognise this caring and dedicated group of people across a broad range of different specialties and services, the Council agrees to the installation of a stained glass window in the City Hall to commemorate and celebrate the contribution that those*

working in the Health Service have made to the lives of the citizens of our City'.

Members will also be aware that Strategic Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting on 19 January 2024 agreed: *that a report on potential options and associated cost for the facilitation of memorial wall which allows people to remember their loved ones, recognising the pain, suffering and loss caused during the Covid-19 pandemic and the trauma of those bereaved and those still suffering with long covid.*

Officers have engaged with Families Bereaved through Covid in light of the notion of motion for a pandemic wall to seek their views on whether they felt this could be incorporated into the design of the Health Service window. Feedback from the group would suggest that whilst they would welcome being included in the new window and would be happy to participate as a key stakeholder in the development of the final design there is the desire to have a space for reflection where loved ones can come to reflect. They have indicated that a conference is being organised by Cruise Bereavement Services which will take place in December 2025. This will focus on provision of bereavement services and explore options for a permanent memorial. The preference being a space within an existing park or new park in the form of a garden or walk. The group are working closely with Department for Sports, Media and Culture based in London and have made approaches to NI Assembly. They have agreed to extend an invitation to Council to the conference.

The new window will be located in one of the free spaces to the right of the 'Belfast Women's Window' North West corridor. Officers are currently engaging with Corporate Fire Health and Safety Advisor in relation to the fire doors shown in the image below. Changes in legislation have resulted in fire certificate requirements being superseded by the requirement for a building owner to undertake a fire risk assessment. This could allow these doors to be located open (automated closure solution activated should a fire alarm be raised) to facilitate public access to window in this corridor with the no access barrier being located further along this corridor.

Financial and Resource Implications

Budget – to be worked up

Resources – Office time as required to work up proposals

Equality or Good Relations Implications

As required."

A number of Members thanked the officers for the work which had been undertaken in respect of the LGBTQ+ window and that they hoped that the Health Service window would draw even more people into the City Hall to view it when it was installed.

The Working Group agreed to recommend that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee would adopt the recommendations within the report.

International Overdose Awareness Day

The Programme Delivery Manager advised the Working Group that officers had been advised of a request which was received to mark the International Overdose Awareness Day, on 31st August, 2025. The Members were advised that an event was being held to mark the occasion in the City Hall on 29th August, 2025, with the building being illuminated on 31st August, 2025.

The Members were advised that an additional request in the form of planting purple flowers and a commemorative tree in the City Hall grounds had also been made.

The Civic Services Manager had suggested that, given the current capacity within the City Hall grounds, one of the Council's parks might be a better location for the planting. The Members were advised that the planting of trees within the City Hall required HED consent and planning approval. With regards to the planting of flowers, the only space available would be located in the East wing, which would not be a suitable location.

The Programme Delivery Manager suggested that officers could liaise with colleagues in respect of the Million Trees project.

A Member stated that they felt that it was important to try and facilitate the request, given that many citizens had lost loved ones due to an overdose within the City. He stated that he felt that the tree and flowers should, ideally, be within the City Hall grounds, or located within the City centre. He added that a new tree did not necessarily have to be planted.

The Director of Property and Projects suggested that officers could look at other options, perhaps within the Cathedral Gardens area of the City.

Other Members stated that, while they recognised the request, the Council could not accede to every request for commemoration and that they did not want to set a precedent.

As there was no agreement, the Working Group agreed to note the request.

City Hall Exhibition - verbal update

The City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services advised the Members that the Council had been approached about featuring Dame Mary Peters within the City Hall Exhibition.

A Member stated that they felt it was important, given her significant contribution to the City. Other Members stated that they were not opposed to the idea but that there were other figures who should also be recognised within it.

The Director of Property and Projects advised the Working Group that Dame Peters was already featured within the Freedom of the City area of the exhibition and that any changes to the current exhibition would have cost implications and would need to be considered from an operational perspective. She added that it was best practice that exhibitions, such as the one in City Hall, were reviewed and refreshed after a number of years and any changes would be best considered in the context of a wider review.

During discussion, a number of Members agreed that a review of the exhibition was due. It was agreed that officers would submit a report to a future meeting on the potential for a review of the exhibition space.

Chairperson