

City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group

Wednesday, 31st August, 2022

THE CITY HALL/CITY HALL GROUNDS INSTALLATIONS WORKING GROUP MINUTES

HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillors Beattie (Chairperson), Lyons and O'Hara.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;
Ms. K. Mullen, Project Sponsor;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer;
Ms. V. Smyth, Democratic Services Officer; and
Mrs. G. Boyd, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

There were no apologies received.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 31st May, 2022 were taken as read and signed as correct.

Election of Chairperson

It was proposed by Councillor O'Hara and agreed that Councillor Beattie be appointed as the Chairperson to the Installations Working Group from August, 2022 until the Local Government Elections, scheduled to be held in May 2023.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Stained-Glass Windows

The Director of Physical Programmes provided the Members with background to obtain agreement on the process around the design, procurement and installation of two new stained-glass windows in the City Hall and to confirm the final location. She reported that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 20th May, 2022, had agreed:

- (i) That the stained-glass windows in recognition of the Health Service; and the contribution of the LGBT citizens be progressed to Stage 1 – Uncommitted on the Capital Programme: and

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- (ii) To keep the remaining proposals under review.

She advised that, following agreement from the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, officers had explored a number of potential locations in the City Hall where two new stained-glass windows could be located. The preferred location was to the right of the Women's History stained-glass window, located in the North West corridor of City Hall. Previously identified locations such as available windows within the City Hall exhibition were not suitable as it was felt inclusion of stained-glass windows within the exhibition area would detract from the exhibition content in the relevant rooms. Based on previous design, manufacture and installation of stained-glass windows, it was proposed that the commission process be two-stage with selection by way of a two-stage open submission process.

The Director of Physical Programmes asked the Members if they were content with the locations identified. A Member questioned an available window in the Rotunda area as a location for the LGBT window. The Project Sponsor agreed to take a photograph of the window in question which has 3 panels and would provide an update at the next Working Group.

The Members noted that it was proposed that the installation of two stained glass windows would be moved to Stage 2 - Uncommitted on the Capital Programme to allow procurement to commence with final approval on designs and costs being taken by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee based on recommendations from Installations: City Hall/City Grounds Working Group. This would be subject to planning and listed building consent being obtained and a satisfactory tender being returned. It was 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, the Members noted that the final budget would only be agreed upon the receipt of a satisfactory tender.

The Members agreed:

- with the recommendation that the two new stained-glass windows should be located to the righthand side of the Women's History window in the North West corridor of City Hall (*subject to the Project Sponsor obtaining information relating the aforementioned window in the Rotunda area in relation to the LGBT window*).
- to give consideration to which key stakeholder groups should be consulted in relation to the final design for both windows; and
- that the same artist be commissioned for both windows and that procurement be by way of a two-stage open submission process.

Carson Tile

The Director of Physical Programmes reminded the Members that, following discussion at the previous Working Group on 31st May 2022, concept designs for the Carson Tile had been circulated to Party Group Leaders for confirmation of the preferred design. To date, five responses had been received as detailed in the report and responses were outstanding from three remaining parties. The Director of Physical

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Programmes explained that, in order for Officers to proceed to next stages, that is, final design and associated costs, the Members would be required to confirm a position on the preferred concept design.

The Director of Physical Programmes stated that there had been two preferences for Option 1, one for Option 2 and two for Option 3. Therefore, no consensus had been reached. Given this the Director confirmed that she was seeking agreement from Members on the option to be recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to allow detailed design and final costings to be prepared. At the meeting a further preference was expressed for Option 3 and, given this, it was agreed that this would be the preferred option to be recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval in advance of manufacture and installation.

Frederick Douglass

The Director of Physical Programmes provided a progress update and reminded the Members that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 23rd October 2020, had received confirmation from the Minister for Communities indicating that she would be content for her Department to partner with Council in erecting a statue in Rosemary Street in remembrance of Frederick Douglass. The Minister had indicated that, should Council establish a steering group to take the project forward, her Department would provide part funding.

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at that meeting had granted approval for the Council to establish and lead the Working Group tasked with delivering the project and agreed that it should also consider how the City's wider association with slavery during that period in history could be recognised.

Following ongoing Steering Group meetings and updates provided to the Installations: City Hall/City Hall Grounds Working Group, final procurement documents had been prepared which had been issued via eSourcing NI on 26th August, 2022.

The Director of Physical Programmes explained that this would be a two-stage procurement process, with one artist appointed to undertake the design, installation and manufacture of a statue to Frederick Douglass.

Based on previous experience of commissioning public art pieces, it was expected that the process could take 6 to 9 months, dependent on the project plan submitted by the appointed artist and subject to obtaining the necessary statutory approvals. It was envisaged that the final piece should be installed in Summer 2023. This was caveated by securing all the necessary approvals, that there was no time delay or costs implications of materials selected by the artist for the final piece and that there were no issues/delays with services given the piece will be located in the City Centre.

The Director of Physical Programmes advised that regular updates would be provided to the Installations: City Hall/City Hall Grounds Working Group during this process. As the project moved forward, the Members would be asked to give consideration to the planned public unveiling.

The Members agreed with the recommendations.

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Bereaved Families to Covid NI

The Project Sponsor provided the Members with background to Bereaved Families to Covid in Northern Ireland, a support group for Covid bereaved families. She explained that it was established by the Family of Ruth Burke, Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim who suffered the devastating loss of their mother on March 24th, the first woman to pass away to Covid19 in Northern Ireland. In Strabane, Co. Tyrone, Bredge and Owen Ward would pass away within 12 hours of each other on 16th November 2020. Another family left devastated. The Ward and Burke families like so many others who had lost loved ones during the pandemic had no goodbyes. Traditional funerals were restricted, the norms were suspended. Two families, like thousands linked together by a common loss during the pandemic.

Ciaran Ward (Son of Bredge and Owen) and Brenda Doherty (daughter of Ruth) had come together to discuss ways they could support other families bereaved through Covid19, while honouring the loss of all the families bereaved during the pandemic, whatever the illness. They had established a private Facebook group - Support Group for Covid Bereaved NI, in May, which had 138 members.

The Project Sponsor continued to highlight that those bereaved through Covid19 had faced similar grief, unable to visit hospitals to hold their loved one's hands, comfort them, no wakes, restricted funerals. In some cases, unable to touch/carry the coffin, unable to dress their loved ones in their final clothes. After the funeral was over, they were unable to meet family or friends to comfort each other, tell stories or share in collective grief.

A representative of the Group had contacted the Council to request that it give consideration to:

- I. The erection of a permanent memorial for all of those who lost their life during the Covid pandemic
- II. A permanent location for the Memory Stones of Love; and
- III. Give consideration to hosting the Lost Lace Project in Belfast.

Erection of Permanent Memorial

The Project Sponsor advised that officers had held exploratory meetings with representatives of the Group who had requested that Council give consideration to the erection of a permanent memorial to those who lost their lives during Covid. It had been suggested that this might take the form of a living memorial located in one of Belfast City Council's parks. The Group had suggested:

- A living memorial, centre piece designed artwork, possibly around a fountain (Fountain of Life);
- Trees to signify the loss of life, seen as a lasting symbol of life, giving family and friends a place to visit and feel close the person who has passed away;
- Flowers for seasons, wall of colour eg March daffodils;
- Benches/picnic tables, areas to meet and talk to share experiences; or
- Plaques telling the story of the pandemic

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It was proposed that the memorial tell the story of the pandemic recognising the impact it had on the community of Northern Ireland not only on those families who suffered bereavement due to Covid related illnesses but other families who suffered bereavements during this period but were unable to attend funerals for their relatives and as such go through the grieving process.

The Project Sponsor explained that Members were only requested to provide initial views on the request for the erection of a permanent memorial. The Members noted that at this stage this would be subject to further discussions with Elected Members and Committee approval, subject to budget availability and all necessary due diligence requirements.

Memory Stones of Love

The Project Sponsor informed the Members that The Memory Stones of Love had been on display in the Lord Mayor's Parlour during the previous Lord Mayor's term of office. The group had requested that Council give consideration to hosting the Memory Stones of Love on a permanent basis. She provided additional background to The Memory Stones of Love which had come about as a result of the group wanting to begin to create a memorial for all of those who had lost their lives during the pandemic. It was inspired by Rami's Heart in New Jersey with now over 300 stones representing not only people from across Ireland but with stones from abroad as well.

The Project Sponsor stated that the group advised that they saw the Memory Stones of Love as a beginning of a permanent memorial. They group had commented that it would be good to see that local council districts had acknowledged the lives lost through the pandemic by adding memorials to our towns and cities. In addition, they had hosted an event in Stormont, stating that the response from the MLA's that took time out to see the stones and met with families was positive. They hoped in the near future to see their request for a permanent memorial to honour the lives lost as well as essential/key workers, community groups and volunteers would become a reality.

The Members were asked to provide initial views and thoughts on the request to permanently host the Memory Stones of Love Project.

The Members noted that at this stage this would be subject to further discussions with Elected Members and Committee approval, subject to budget availability and all necessary due diligence requirements.

Lost Lace - Request for Council to Host Exhibition

The Project Sponsor provided the Members with background to 'Lost Lace' which was a commemorative arts project comprising of 10,000 lace roses remembering all those lost to Covid across Ireland. The project had been funded by the Dublin City Arts Office and the Office of Public Works and would be on display in Dublin during October 2022 and Bereaved Families to Covid in Northern Ireland had requested that an invitation to attend be extended to the Lord Mayor of Belfast.

The Project Sponsor advised that, in addition, they had requested that Belfast City Council give consideration to hosting the exhibition in Belfast next year 2023. The group had indicated that there had been no public commemoration held in Northern Ireland and

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suggested that hosting the project could be used to publicly commemorate those whose lives had been impacted by the pandemic and recognise the impact it had on society.

The Members were asked to provide initial views on hosting the Lost Lace commemorative art project.

The Members noted that at this stage this would be subject to further discussions with Elected Members and Committee approval, subject to budget availability and all necessary due diligence requirements.

The Director of Physical Programmes advised the Members that a commitment was not required in this first instance and that the scope of the project needed further exploration.

The Members agreed to give consideration to the erection of a permanent living memorial to those who lost their lives during the Covid pandemic; to give consideration to a location for the permanent location for the display of the Memory Stones of Love; and to give consideration to hosting the Lost Lace commemorative arts project in Belfast in March 2023 on the basis of no commitment by Council at this stage and that all proposals would be subject to budget availability and further due diligence. Officers undertook to provide a further update report to the Working Group in due course.

City Hall Statues

The Director of Physical Programmes provided an update on the progress of the City Hall Statues programme. The Members were reminded that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 28th March, 2022, had agreed that City Hall Statues – Winifred Carney and Mary Ann McCracken be moved to Stage 3 – Committed on the Capital Programme and that the necessary procurement processes be initiated, as required with contracts to be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tenders and full commitment to deliver. The Installations: City Hall/City Hall Grounds Working Group, at its meeting on 31 May, 2022, had considered a draft Artist’s Brief and agreed to a two-stage procurement process for commissioning one artist to design, manufacture and install both pieces, subject to necessary statutory approvals.

The Members of the Working Group noted that the procurement documents for the installation of the Winifred Carney and Mary Ann McCracken statues would be issued in late September 2022 and that the expected timeline for design, manufacture and installation of the two new statues (subject to necessary statutory approvals being in place). The Members further noted that one artist would be appointed to undertake the design and installation of both the Winifred Carney and the Mary Ann McCracken statues, which would ensure there was complementarity between both pieces. The Members gave consideration to public unveiling arrangements and developing a narrative around each of the new pieces.

A eMmber raised the matter of the timeframe and the public relations promotion to give the project international exposure. The Director of Physical Programmes provided assurance that Corporate Communications would be involved and she provided the rationale around the timeframe which had been timed deliberately in line with other projects.

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Working Group**

Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Installations Working Group was scheduled for 26th
October 2022 at 12.00PM.

Chairperson