



Subject:	Request for use of City Hall grounds – Belfast Photo Festival Photographic Exhibition in June 2024
Date:	23 February 2024
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Aisling Milliken, Functions and Exhibition Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Information relating to any individual Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) Information in connection with any labour relations matter Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
<p>After Committee Decision</p> <p>After Council Decision</p> <p>Sometime in the future</p> <p>Never</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
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1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To consider a request from Belfast Photo Festival for the use of City Hall grounds on from 8 to 28 June 2024 to host a photographic exhibition. This is an annual exhibition which has been held in the grounds in previous years.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Authorise Belfast Photo Festival to use City Hall grounds from 8 to 28 June 2024 to display a photographic exhibition as part of the Belfast Photo Festival. 2. Authorise the exhibition in line with similar events previously approved by Council.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<u>Background Information</u>
3.1.1	<p>Members will be aware that requests for the use of City Hall are normally dealt with under the authority delegated by the Committee to the Director of Legal and Civic Services using criteria agreed for this purpose. Occasionally however, it is necessary to place such requests directly before the Committee, and the request set out below falls into this category.</p>
3.2	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.2.1	<p>A request has recently received from the organiser of the Belfast Photo Festival (BPF) to have a photographic exhibition in the grounds of the City Hall from 8 – 28 June 2024.</p> <p>The BPF is the visual arts festival of Northern Ireland and one of the leading photography festivals in the UK. Launched in 2011 and in 2023 the festival attracted 100,000 visitors across 24 city centre venues and is one of the city’s major art events.</p>
3.2.2	<p>Each year the city-wide festival includes the grounds of Belfast City Hall as a primary location for both photographic exhibitions and other events. Previous exhibits have included the DeLorean Print Project in 2015 which proved to be very successful and brought a real spectacle to the City Hall lawns. In 2018 the exhibition looked at music & photography, 2020 exhibition theme “The Man Machine’ shows ‘speculative fictions’ where artificial creatures, robots and other avatars interact with man in everyday life scenarios. The 2022 exhibition is ‘Lockdown Collages’ by Nico Krinjo and in 2023 the theme was ‘Journey’, focusing on photography’s ability to capture and reflect the world around us, from journeys of self-discovery, migration and spiritual journeys.</p>
3.2.3	<p>Belfast Photo Festival have provided two exhibition proposals for 2024 Festival and wish to seek committee approval for both; however only one proposal will be chosen, and BFF will confirm the proposal they wish to host in City Hall grounds.</p> <p>The theme for 2024 is Divergence and focusing on photography’s ability to capture and reflect the world around us. BPF 2024 will explore how contemporary photographers are responding to and offering reimagining to overcome the profound polarity and divisions prevalent in our globalised world.</p>
3.2.4	<p>The proposals are from two contemporary artists.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Photo with a teddy bear by Polish artists Barbara Caillot and Aleksandra Karkowska. As an antidote and provocation, during such uncertain times ... perhaps

	<p>we all need a teddy bear to hug? Why are people so eager to take photos with a white bear? What is mythical, magical and universal about it that everyone has a photo with it?</p> <p>The 'Photo with a Teddy Bear' project received the Honorary Partnership of the City of Zakopane and was under the patronage of the Tatra Museum. Dr. Tytus Chalubiński. It will be Barbara Caillot and Aleksandra Karkowska debut in Northern Ireland</p> <p>3.2.5 2. <i>Walking Back to Happiness</i> by British Artist Maisie Cousins. The selected work will present a combination of Cousin's close-up and visceral photography, delving into the artist's obsessive search for reliving childhood memories. The exhibition marks an inaugural solo presentation of Cousins' work in Northern Ireland, and 'Walking Back to Happiness' series was listed as the Guardian's best photographic exhibitions of 2023.</p> <p>3.2.6 There will be 8 exhibition framework structures installed on the lawns of Belfast City Hall, weighed down with metal bases and water butts for additional weight and stability. They are a safe, sturdy, stable and accessible form of exhibition structure for all locations and weather conditions and do not need to be affixed or pinned to the ground. .The exhibition would be installed on the West & East Lawn of City Hall grounds on 8 June and dismantled on 28 June 2024. It would be free for members of the public to view daily in line with the opening times of the grounds.</p> <p>3.2.7 Belfast Photo Festival have a dedicated Front of House Team who will be roaming throughout their open-air public exhibitions across the city. They will engage with visitors/ publics to talk about the work, as well as ensure any maintenance, graffiti or other issues arising.</p> <p>3.2.8 Good Relations and Corporate Communications will review the exhibition images included in the proposal but presently no negative good relations implications identified that should stop the exhibition being hosted at City Hall. A copy of the two exhibition proposals are included in Appendix 1.</p> <p>3.3 <u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> There are no direct resource implications in terms of staff time or additional costs associated with this request and hosting of the exhibition.</p> <p>3.4 <u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> Good Relations will be consulted on this request and the exhibition content, but don't foresee any negative implications.</p> <p>4.0 Appendices – Documents attached</p>
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	<p>Appendix 1 - Exhibition Proposal - artwork for two potential exhibitions – only 1 will be exhibited in the grounds</p>
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	<p>Appendix 2 – Exhibition site map in City Hall grounds</p>
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