



### Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Belfast Wheel
<b>Date:</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> May, 2009
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Tim Husbands, Head of City Events and Venues (ext. 1400)
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Gerry Copeland, Events Manager (ext. 3412)

Relevant Background Information
<p>In March 2006 Council agreed to the temporary installation of the 60m high Belfast Wheel in the grounds of City Hall (Donegall Square East) with a further extension of the Wheel being agreed by Committee in December 2007 and November 2008. To date the wheel has had has been extremely popular with visitors, attracting considerable positive media attention and is seen by many city centre based businesses as a key draw for creating additional footfall in the city.</p> <p>On the 1 May BCC Chief Executive received a request from WTA to further extend the operational stay of the wheel in the grounds of City Hall (see appendix 1). This letter highlights the support that WTA have for the Belfast Wheel's continued operation in the heart of the city. This support comes from retailers, BCCM, BCTC and the Minister for the Environment, Mr Sammy Wilson, MP, MLA. Operationally WTA are looking to extend the wheel's stay for another 24 months from 1 September 2009.</p> <p>The period, requested by WTA, would not only necessitate Council approval but also require an extension of the current planning consent granted by Planning Service (NI). The application for this extension would be made by the wheel's operators WTA .</p>

Key Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Cost to the Council.</b> There would be no cost to Council. However the current agreement with WTA is a monthly payment BCC of £4,500 plus VAT. Therefore, if the Belfast Wheel were to stay to for further 24 month period this would generate £108,000 plus VAT revenue for the Council.</li><li>- <b>Location.</b> The Belfast Wheel is currently sited on the Donegall Square East car park of City Hall and it would stay in situ if the Council were to agree to the extension.</li><li>- <b>Site Inspection.</b> A site inspection of the wheel has been undertaken and regular additional site checks are on-going. No issues arising.</li><li>- <b>Temporary Planning Permission.</b> This has been granted until the end of August 2009. Any extension would be subject to Planning Service approval.</li></ul>

- **Contract.** The existing contract with WTA would expire at the end of August 2009. A new contract would be required for any agreed date extension.
- **Duration.** Total duration, of the requested date of extension, would be 24 months. After this period WTA would then assess the viability and potential of re-siting the Belfast Wheel to a location in another part of the city.
- **Operation during Key Civic Dates (Remembrance Sunday).** The project is required to cease during events like Remembrance Sunday. This condition is included in the Council's contract with WTA.
- **Early termination.** Both the Council and WTA would hold the right to terminate the contract earlier.

### **Resource Implications**

#### Financial

If the Council agreed a further extension for another 24 months, the total income generated for Council would be in £191,328 plus VAT for entire operational period of the wheel's stay.

#### Human Resources

None

#### Asset and Other Implications

Use of Council property.

### **Recommendations**

Members are requested to approve an extension to the period of operation for the Belfast Wheel staying in the grounds of City Hall for further 24 months from 1 September 2009, subject to Planning Service approval.