



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Transfer of Members back to the City Hall
Date:	21 st August, 2009
Reporting Officer:	George Wright – Head of Facilities Management, Ext5206/6232
Contact Officer:	As above

Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that the re-occupation of the City Hall will commence in September 2009. This report seeks to set out the associated timescales and issues so far as they will impact on civic office-holders, elected Members and political parties.

In terms of our statement of principle, it is the intention of the decant team to try to ensure that the political process is fully operational from the beginning of the first day of the decant, namely **Monday 14th September 2009**. To achieve this a number of steps are necessary, as follows:

- the furniture currently in storage will be re-instated in the various party rooms during the period 31st August 2009 – 10th September 2009;
- the meeting tables and chairs currently in the party rooms in Adelaide Exchange will be transported to the City Hall commencing 9th September 2009 (some basic alternative office furniture will be provided during this period to facilitate party meetings etc);
- the wall-mounted televisions (not the security systems) will be transported to City Hall on Monday 7th September 2009 and will therefore not be available during the final week;
- the art, artefacts and other decorative items held by the Lord Mayor's unit and currently located in Clarendon Dock will be re-located in the City Hall during the week-commencing 7th September 2009 and the main art/artefacts restoration will also be complete by this time;
- at 3:00pm on Friday 11th September 2009 all PCs and printers etc in all the members' rooms and in Clarendon Dock will be powered down and transferred to City Hall, re-connected and tested;

- during week-commencing 7th September 2009 live filing for the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor, High Sheriff, all members' rooms plus all support staff will be transferred to City Hall, with a final lift on the 11th September 2009 at 3pm;
- during the first week of decant only one Committee room will be in operation; the first meeting to be held in this room will be the meeting of the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee scheduled for **18th September 2009** (the second room will come on stream the following week);
- the first meeting of full Council will take place in the City Hall on **1st October 2009**;
- the Member Services team, together with all PCs and equipment etc, will also be transferred over the initial weekend (i.e. on 11th September 2009), and will thus be in a position to support Members immediately;
- the Chief Executive and secretariat staff will also be transferred over the initial weekend and will also be available to Members immediately; *and*
- telephonist, reception and security staff will all be in position as normal from Monday 14th September 2009.

The entire decant process is scheduled to be complete on 3rd October 2009 with all staff transferred and all relevant areas of the building open to the public for tours etc. on **Monday 5th October 2009**.

Clearly, during this period of decant there is bound to be some disruption; we regret this and will obviously try to keep it to a minimum and we would ask for members' forbearance during this period.

Coffee-shop/exhibition area

Members will also be aware that the coffee-shop franchise has been let and that the design for the main exhibition area is at an advanced stage. A report was recently tabled to the memorabilia working group setting out the proposed approach and content for the exhibition area, and the group indicated that it was satisfied that the brief – to celebrate the evolution of the city into a leading industrial centre through the contributions of its working men and women – was comprehensively addressed by the proposals.

It is intended that the main coffee-shop and exhibition area will be open to the public from **5th October 2009**, together with the updated (and now interactive) 'No Mean City' display. However, before this area is opened up to the public we would like to be able to extend an invitation to all members to attend a fairly informal ceremony in the new exhibition area in order to have a preview of the finished product, followed by a light buffet lunch in the Reception Room. **We will come back to Committee with a firm date subject to fit out progress.**

Key Issues

The Committee is asked to note and endorse the general decant proposals set out herein. The Committee is also asked to approve the proposed general invitation to members to attend the coffee-shop & exhibition area preview.

Resource Implications

There are no direct financial, human resources or asset implications arising from this report.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee note and endorse the general decant proposals, and approves the request to host a members' preview of the coffee-shop/exhibition area.

Decision Tracking

The main decant will commence on 11th September, 2009 and will be complete and the building fully operational by 5th October, 2009.

If approved, invitations to attend the preview event will be issued in early September 2009 to all members.

Key to Abbreviations

None.

Documents Attached

None.

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