



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	VIP Visit to City Hall
<b>Date:</b>	Friday, 9th October, 2009
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Mr Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services (extension 6325)
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mr Liam Steele, Head of Committee and Members' Services (extension 6325)

### Relevant Background Information

The US Secretary of State, Mrs Hillary Clinton, will be paying a visit to Belfast on Monday next, 12th October. Mrs Clinton has fond memories of her previous visits to the City and has expressed a desire to once again visit the City Hall.

### Key Issues

Discussions have been held with the US Consul General and it has been agreed that a lunchtime reception will be held in the City Hall Banqueting Hall. An invitation list is being drawn up currently in conjunction with Mrs Clinton's staff in Washington but it is anticipated that some 250 guests, including all Members of Council, will be invited to attend.

Detailed arrangements for the visit are being made on an on-going basis and, while it is recognised that such a high-profile visit will obviously cause a certain degree of inconvenience and even disruption, nevertheless the occasion represents an opportunity to present the City in a positive and favourable light. All of these arrangements are unavoidably last minute but the Chief Executive and the Lord Mayor's staff are doing everything possible to ensure that the event will be a success and will reflect well upon the City and the Council.

Mrs Clinton is keen to mark her affinity with Belfast and with the City Hall in particular, where she feels that her husband and herself were made extremely welcome when they visited in 1995, and she has indicated that she would like to repay the City in some manner. It was felt that it might be appropriate, given the re-opening of the City Hall after a two-year closure period, to have Mrs Clinton perform a simple ribbon-cutting opening ceremony upon her arrival on Monday. Mrs Clinton has agreed to this and again appropriate arrangements, including photo-opportunities incorporating all Members of Council, are being put in place.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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<p>The Committee is asked to approve the use of the City Hall on Monday, 12th October for the hosting of a VIP visit by the US Secretary of State, Mrs Hillary Clinton, for the provision of hospitality in the form of a finger buffet reception and the holding of a simple ceremony to mark the re-opening of the City Hall after closure for refurbishment.</p>
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