



Belfast City Council

Report to: Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject: London 2012 Cultural Olympiad - Live Sites Screen
Date: 23 October 2009
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Relevant Background Information

In May, August and December 2008 the Development Committee of the Council received details of plans for the Cultural Olympiad to be staged leading up to and during the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games. As part of the original ethos, Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Movement, mirrored the classical Greeks in maintaining that the purpose of the Olympic Games was to celebrate mind, body and spirit. Up until 1948 medals were awarded for sculpture, music, literature and art. The modern Cultural Olympiad, which will be part of the 2012 Games, will focus on the following themes:

- Bringing together culture and sport
- Encouraging audiences to take part
- Animating public spaces – through street theatre, public art, circus skills, live big screen sites
- Using culture and sport to raise issues of environmental sustainability, health and wellbeing
- Honouring and sharing the values of the Olympic and Paralympic Games
- Encouraging collaborations and innovation between communities and cultural sectors
- Enhancing the learning, skills and personal development of young people by linking with education programmes

The key to this process for the 2012 Games has been the development of a series of 'live sites' which involve large LED screens being installed within public performance spaces across the United Kingdom. In December 2008 the Development Committee received formal details on the costs for such a project. The Development Committee agreed the concept, which was then subsequently referred to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in January 2009 for formal consideration. At this point the report was withdrawn due to a lack of financial resources being made available.

Since this date DCAL and LOCOG have restructured the financial commitment required from Council, which has been reduced from an original figure of £70,000 to £20,000. A report detailing the new financial arrangement was then presented to the Development

Committee in September and again in October 2009 when the Committee agreed to provide funding for a three year period towards the costs of the Live Sites Screen.

Members of the Strategic, Policy and Resources Committee are now being asked to approve the use of the City Hall grounds for this project.

Key Issues

London 2012 Cultural Olympiad - 'Live Sites' Public Screen

The proposal would see a 25sq m screen, valued by the BBC and LOCOG 2012 at £500,000, positioned in the heart of the city centre. Therefore LOCOG, along with DSD, are proposing that the screen be located within the grounds of City Hall – probably facing into the lawn from Donegall Square West. The initial concept was for the screen to be positioned as a permanent feature, but LOCOG will now accept a three year term for the screen at City Hall. This would mean that a secondary position, post 2012, will need to be sought along with funding for the removal and installation from all partners. It is likely that the new site would be somewhere in the city centre.

The concept would mean that the BBC, LOCOG 2012 and BCC would share broadcasting time on the screen which would operate approximately between twelve and sixteen hours a day, 364 days a year. The screen could also be utilised for major events including a number of London 2012 events. After the Council's rejection of the December 2008 report, due to its indicative costs, LOCOG and DCAL have resubmitted new proposed costs, which are stated below.

- Installation - £50k and planning £6k (DSD) one-off fee
- Maintenance - £20 k (BCC) per year
- Event programming & management - £30k (NITB's event funding) per year for 3 years
- Screen programmer - £20k (DCAL) per year for the first three years

In total BCC would have an estimated annual cost of £20,000 for maintenance of the screen, inclusive of security costs, plus have input to the screen programmer funded by DCAL. Should the Council agree to support this initiative BCC officers have agreement in principle from DSD, as part of their 'Streets Ahead' programme, to meet the installation costs which includes the cost of a 1 m x 1 m control room in the basement of City Hall. For the 3 year period leading up to the 2012 Olympics the screen would be the property of LOCOG with a guaranteed link to the BBC's national public screens programme for BCC. After this period the screen would become the property of BCC and its local partners with a similar link to the BBC's public broadcast network.

Live Screens Location

The proposed location, if approved by Members, would be within the grounds of City Hall, with a suggested location being the west side of the grounds (CGI images of the screen will be presented to Members at Committee). The installation of the screen would not only be subject to approval by the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee but also subject to an economic appraisal by DSD, planning approval by the NI Planning Service and full legal agreements with all the relevant bodies and funders.

Resource Implications

Financial

The Council funding would involve £20,000 annually. This has been approved for a three year period by the Development Committee at its October 2009 meeting.

Recommendations

Members are requested to approve the use of the City Hall grounds for the project for three years and to agree to the use of an area 1m x 1m in size for use as a control room for the screen.

Documents Attached

None

Abbreviations

BCC – Belfast City Council

DCAL – Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

LOCOG 2012 – London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games 2012

DSD – Department of Social Development

CGI – Computer Generated Image

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