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| <b>Report to:</b>         | Strategic Policy & Resources Committee   |
| <b>Subject:</b>           | <b>Request for a Special Committee Meeting on the 'Review of the future use and management of the City Hall'</b> |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 10 December 2010   |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects  |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects  |

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| <b>1.0 Purpose of report</b>               |  |
| 1.1  | The purpose of this report is to ask Members to agree to the holding of a special meeting of the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee to discuss the future use and management of the City Hall.   |
| <b>2.0 Relevant Background Information</b> |  |
| 2.1  | The City Hall is the most prestigious building in Belfast and is one of the most instantly recognisable symbols of the city. It has a unique, iconic status and is very much seen as the 'heart of the city'.  |
| <b>3.0 Key Issues</b>                      |  |
| 3.1  | As Belfast's most impressive and iconic asset it is crucial that the City Hall is protected and maintained for current and future generations to enjoy. It is therefore important that a robust framework is put in place which contains the policies and processes needed to govern its future role, management and use. Members will be aware that while there are currently a number of established policies and processes in place for the use and management of the City Hall many of these policies were created when the City Hall was less frequently used and/or they predate the Council's current organisational and decision-making structures. There are a number of other areas for which there are no explicit policies in place or else there are historic outdated policies.  |
| 3.2  | A detailed report (13 pages) has been prepared by officers which outlines a number of options which could help streamline the current processes and address any gaps which may exist in current policies. This options paper has been prepared in consultation with staff from departments and services across the Council including Chief Officer's, Democratic and Legal Services, the Facilities Management Unit, the Events Unit and the Culture & Arts Unit.  |
| 3.3  | <p>The options paper outlines some of the general issues in respect of the management and governance arrangements for the City Hall and looks in detail at a number of key inter-related issues including -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Booking of events in the City Hall,</li> <li>- Criteria for the use of the City Hall</li> <li>- Scope to introduce a policy for the charging of function room hire in City Hall</li> <li>- Catering for City Hall events</li> <li>- Tours</li> <li>- City Hall Grounds – criteria for the use of City Hall grounds, accountability and scope to introduce charging for use of the City Hall grounds</li> </ul> <p>Members will appreciate that this is a complex, detailed and interrelated piece of work and will therefore require time for Members to consider, in detail, the emerging proposals and the associated implications for the Council.</p> |
| 3.4  | However all the policy areas, issues and options presented in the options paper fundamentally raise the key question of ' <b><i>What is/should be the role of the City Hall and what sort of building do Members want the City Hall to be in the future?</i></b> ' Members are therefore asked, in advance of and in preparation for the proposed special meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, to consider the central issue of what the role of the City Hall is/should be e.g.   |

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|     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- should it remain an open, accessible, free building for all?;</li> <li>- should the Council seek to ensure that its costs are covered as a minimum so that these are not passed onto the ratepayer?; or</li> <li>- should it operate on a more commercial type basis?.</li> </ul> <p>Within this context, the draft detailed paper prepared sets out a number of options which are available to in respect to the potential scope to introduce charges for room hire, tours or for use of the City Hall grounds.</p> |
| 3.5 | <p>While these options will be explored in detail at the proposed special meeting, it should be noted the preferred options which will subsequently be progressed will be driven by the central decision taken by Members in respect to the future role of the City Hall.</p>   |

#### **4.0 Resource Implications**

Members are asked to note that the resource implications of the options outlined in the paper have not been quantified as the final resource implications (financial and human) will be dependent on the options which Members chose in relation to each policy area. Further work will be carried out in relation to these areas when Members have agreed the way forward.

#### **5.0 Recommendations**

Members are asked to agree to the holding of a special meeting of the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in order to allow for detailed discussion on the future use and management of the City Hall.