



Report to: Strategic Policy & Resources Committee

Subject: Development of work programme for City Hall memorabilia and related equality considerations regarding memorabilia and the Council's current flag flying policy

Date: Friday 15 April 2011

Reporting Officer: Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager

1	Relevant Background Information
	<p>Members will be aware that the Memorabilia Working Group was re-established around the time of the re-opening of the City Hall after refurbishment.</p> <p>Since that time it has met on a number of occasions and has completed several actions but, given that a number of applications for external funding have been unsuccessful, the Council will now have to consider whether it wishes to establish its own internal budget to facilitate any major changes that might be agreed. It is also important to note the progress that has been made in terms of changes and adaptations to the City Hall over the past 5-6 years (bearing in mind that the building was closed for almost 2 years in that time). A list of major changes made is attached for information in Appendix 1.</p>

2	Key Issues
	<p>Some time has now elapsed since the adoption of the consultant's report "Reflecting the People – a City Hall for the 21st Century" in February 2010, with considerable time and energy expended on unsuccessful attempts made to attract external funding. Members will recall that certain additional items – plaques, the Somme resolution etc – also involved lengthy discussions and debate.</p> <p>An inter-Departmental Working Group of officers, chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive, has met recently and has been tasked with generating ideas and specific proposals to reflect a more contemporary and representative view of Belfast within the building, which would meet the Council's stated aim of addressing the current imbalance in the City Hall memorabilia. These proposals will be used to develop a firm programme of work which will be submitted to the Memorabilia Working Group as soon as possible after the elections for consideration by the newly elected Councillors.</p>

3	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
	<p><u>Memorabilia</u> This programme of work would assist in achieving the Council’s stated aim of addressing the current imbalance within City Hall memorabilia.</p> <p>In view of the fact that over a year has elapsed since consideration of the consultant’s report noted above, and since a current review is being undertaken of the overall management of the City Hall, it is an opportune time to refresh our approach to memorabilia in general.</p> <p>In addition, the Chief Executive has recently received correspondence from the Sinn Féin party group which requests that a formal EQIA of memorabilia displayed within the building be conducted.</p> <p>It should be noted that although an EQIA on the Council’s flag flying policy was conducted in 2004, a formal EQIA of memorabilia was not pursued at that time, following a Council decision that attempts should be made to change the current policy through discussions of the (then) Good Relations Steering Panel.</p> <p>Accordingly the Council will now have to carry out a formal EQIA on memorabilia and we recommend that this be conducted by an independent consultant.</p> <p><u>Flag Flying policy</u> The Sinn Féin correspondence also refers to the Council’s current policy of flying the Union Flag and states their concerns in relation to this. Members will be aware that a very comprehensive EQIA on this was completed and reported to the (then) Policy & Resources Committee in March 2004, when the Committee determined not to make any change to the policy.</p> <p>In this regard, the Town Solicitor/Assistant Chief Executive recommends that this EQIA be refreshed and up-dated, in order to ascertain whether the situation has changed and if any intervening adverse impact has been identified. This EQIA will also be carried out by an independent external consultant, which will include updating the advice from the Equality Commission. The Town Solicitor will also update the legal advice which accompanied the original report to Committee in 2004 and bring a composite report to a future meeting of the Working Group and the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee for consideration.</p>

4	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Memorabilia work programme</u> At present, no budget has been allocated for work relating to memorabilia. Following the development of a firm programme of work and the costing of this work, the Memorabilia Working Group will be requested to recommend to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee that an appropriate budget stream be identified to support the programme of work agreed which will enable its effective implementation.</p> <p><u>EQIAs – memorabilia and flag flying policy</u> It is anticipated that both could be completed for around £12,000; the costs of these can be accommodated within the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee’s revenue budget.</p>

5	<p>Memorabilia Working Group approval</p> <p>This report was considered by the Memorabilia Working Group at its meeting on 4 April. The Group agreed to note the information, approve the report and recommend to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee that EQIAs be completed as outlined above and that updated legal advice and advice from the Equality Commission be obtained.</p> <p>The Memorabilia Working Group also agreed that a separate report on this item be submitted to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee.</p>
6	<p>Decision required</p> <p>The Strategic Policy & Resources Committee is therefore requested to grant approval to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the carrying out of a formal Equality Impact Assessment on the City Hall memorabilia by an independent external consultant • the refreshing/up-dating of the Equality Impact Assessment on the Council’s policy of Flying the Union flag by an independent external consultant • the up-dating of both legal advice and of advice from the Equality Commission on the matter by the Town Solicitor. <p>The Town Solicitor will bring a composite report to a future meeting of the Memorabilia Working Group and the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee for consideration in due course.</p>
7	<p>Officers to contact for further information</p> <p>Ciaran Quigley, Town Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive, ext. 6038 Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager, ext. 6020</p>
8	<p>Abbreviations used</p> <p>EQIA = Equality Impact Assessment</p>

Appendix 1

Changes made in City Hall as a result of recommendations from Memorabilia Working Group:

- re-naming of the Committee Rooms and installation of works by Conor and Lavery
- commissioning of the Mary Ann McCracken bust
- displaying of all the Lord Mayors' portraits, reflecting Belfast's political changes
- theming of the Bobbin coffee shop and exhibition space to reflect Belfast's industrial past and in particular the contribution of the working class
- *No Mean City* photographic exhibition
- display of gifts from minority and ethnic groups
- display of a 18th century Irish manuscript in the East Entrance
- improved interpretative signage
- installation of the Dockers' Strike stained glass window
- installation of a multi-lingual Welcome sign at Reception
- donation of a flag to the Girl Guide Association
- donation of the *Accounts of 1690* to the Grand Orange Lodge
- inclusion of Irish and Ulster-Scots events in the City Hall re-opening programme
- display of the restored Trade Union banner
- donation of regimental and naval plaques to the 38th Irish Brigade HQ (Thiepval) and the Royal Naval Association respectively
- commissioning of artwork to reflect Irish history and heritage in the city
- extension of the Somme Resolution to include 16th Irish Division and other forces
- staging of a range of community exhibitions in the East Entrance area
- commissioning of a Blitz exhibition and lecture in April 2011