



**Belfast City Council**

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Board of the Ulster Orchestra Society Limited
<b>Date:</b>	Friday 23 September 2011
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext. 6314)
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Gareth Quinn, Senior Democratic Services Officer (ext. 6316)

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	Members will recall that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 19 August, considered correspondence from the Ulster Orchestra Society Ltd which indicated that the status of the Council representation on the Board has been changed from that of a 'representative' to that of a an 'observer'.
1.2	The Committee agreed that in the first instance the Chairman and the Council's current representative on the Board meet with representatives of the Ulster Orchestra Board to discuss this change of status.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	The Council's representative on the Board of the Ulster Orchestra Society Limited (Cllr C Maksey) has since had a discussion with Mr Declan McGovern, the Chief Executive of the Ulster Orchestra, and raised with him the concerns which had been expressed by Members at the meeting of the Committee. The Town Solicitor/Assistant Chief Executive also had a subsequent discussion with

	Mr McGovern for the purpose of clarifying some of the background issues.
2.2	<p>Mr McGovern has explained that, following the appointment of a new Chairman to the Ulster Orchestra, a major review was carried out in relation to its governance. This included the appointment of a consultant to carry out a good governance review. Out of that review, a number of recommendations were made. One of these was that there were too many directors and that the Board should be reduced from fourteen to seven. The review also concluded that there needed to be a reduction in the number of Board meetings, and that there was a need for the members of the Board to receive full training.</p> <p>A key recommendation arising out of the review was that any member of the Board who represents a funding organisation should not be a formal director, but should rather have status as an “observer”. However, as an observer, that individual will still receive all Board papers and will have the right to participate in discussions at the Board meetings, but would <b>not</b> have any formal right of voting. Mr McGovern has explained that this recommendation has been made in order that there can be a board of directors which is seen to be completely independent in terms of its formal decision making.</p>
2.3	The Chief Executive of the Ulster Orchestra was keen to reiterate that those individuals with observer status will have access to the same information as other board members. He has also pointed out that the governance proposals have been fully supported by the Arts Council, which is a primary stake holder, and that the reality is that almost all decisions of the Board are taken by consensus, and that it is rare to require a vote.
2.4	It is to be noted that the Council itself will be looking at its own governance issues over the next few months and that the Town Solicitor/Assistant Chief Executive will be leading on taking a report back to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in relation to the creation of a constitution for the Council, which will include a review of issues such as relationships with outside bodies and the role of Members who are appointed to or nominated to those bodies.

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	N/A

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality Implications</b>
4.1	N/A

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	It is recommended that the Committee notes the foregoing report and that the issue of the role of Members on outside bodies will be given fuller consideration

	in the context of the forthcoming report to be brought by the Town Solicitor/ Assistant Chief Executive.
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<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
Officers responsible:  Gareth Quinn, Senior Democratic Services Officer  October 2011	

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
N/A	

<b>8</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>