



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Application by North Belfast Paranormal Research Group to undertake a paranormal investigation in the City Hall</b>
<b>Date:</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> October 2011
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects, Ext: 6217
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	George Wright, Head of Facilities Management (Ext 6232/5206)

### 1.0 Relevant Background Information

1.1 Members will be aware that the Committee has delegated authority for routine requests for use of the City Hall to the Director of Property & Projects on the basis of an agreed set of criteria. However it was recognised that there would still be occasions on which the nature, scale and/or scope of the request means that it is appropriate to place the matter directly before the Committee. The request from the North Belfast Paranormal Research Group (NBPRG) below is considered to fall into this category, and the direction of the Committee is therefore sought.

1.2 The NBPRG consists of 12 individuals and has been in existence since February 2011. The group carries out paranormal investigations in older type buildings which may or may not have a history of paranormal activity. Some of the buildings investigated to date include Mossley Mill, Ballygally Castle and Grace Neill's Bar.

1.3 The investigation would involve NBPRG investigators coming into the City Hall on an agreed evening between 9.00pm and 4.30am. Ideally the buildings would need to be empty of people and it may be necessary to shut down as many of the mechanical and electrical systems as possible.

1.4 The group would bring in a range of hand held equipment into the building including temperature gauges and meters, voice and white noise recorders and CCTV monitors etc.

### 2.0 Key Issues

2.1 NBPRG are very aware of the sensitivities around using the City Hall, and as a result the group is content to have nothing publicised following their visit, although they do stress that a 'good news' story could be run if it suited Belfast City Council. There remains however a risk to the reputation and prestige of City Hall depending on how the media react to this type of event.

2.2 If permission in principle is granted further discussion will be needed with the investigation organiser to ascertain what is involved with switching off mechanical and

electrical plant, systems etc. before the final go-ahead can be given.

### **3.0 Resource Implications**

3.1 Some costs maybe incurred from bringing in staff to close down plant and systems. It may also be necessary to have a BCC staff member accompany the group. Any costs arising from this will be covered by NBPRG.

3.2 The group will also indemnify the Council against injuries, damage etc.

### **4.0 Decision (s) required**

4.1 The direction of the committee is sought on whether or not to approve the request from NBPRG for the stated purpose and, if so, whether it wishes to impose any specific conditions.

### **5.0 Key to Abbreviations**

5.1 None

### **6.0 Documents Attached**

6.1 None