



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	BCTC/ORANGEFEST, USE OF CITY HALL ON 12 JULY 2012
Date:	18 May 2012
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects
Contact Officer:	George Wright, Head of Facilities Management, ext 5206/6232

Relevant Background Information

A request has been received from Belfast Chamber of Trade & Commerce (BCTC), in partnership with Orangefest, Belfast City Centre Management and Taste of Ulster, to be permitted to use the grounds of the City Hall on 12th July 2012 for an event designed to be 'complementary to the traditional Twelfth celebrations'.

Members will be aware that, for a number of years, the Orange Order has been permitted to use the grounds of the City Hall (specifically the Cenotaph area) for a short commemorative ceremony, following which the participants re-join the main procession.

The request from BCTC envisages a significantly larger event – funded via Peace III - which is family-focussed and which involves “the creation of a family food and regional produce event produced by Taste of Ulster...taking place alongside a range of craft activities, children’s dance groups, face painting and balloon modelling”. As part of the same event, the Festival of Fools street theatre group will be on the streets of the city centre and will be staging a range of performances “from artists of different cultures and reflecting the diversity of the emerging Belfast in a post-conflict environment”.

BCTC have confirmed that Belfast City Centre Management will be facilitating the opening of a large number of shops in the city centre with a view to creating a city which is 'open for business' and which maximises the commercial potential arising from the Orangefest celebrations. The overall aim of the project is to generate at least 1,000 additional visitors to the city centre in 2012 (over and above the estimated 12,000 who normally attend to watch the procession) rising to 1,500 in 2013, which can potentially benefit local businesses and improve the image of the city.

The organisers are requesting the use of the grounds on **12th July 2012** from **09:00 – 17:00** in order to stage the above event.

Key Issues

It is clear from BCTC's submission that there are 2 principal facets to their application: on the one hand to broaden the appeal of the traditional Twelfth celebrations by attracting a more family-oriented and diverse audience and, on the other, to maximise the commercial opportunities arising from the presence of thousands of onlookers in the city centre.

The event is a partnership, principally involving BCTC, Orangefest, Belfast City Centre Management, Taste of Ulster and Festival of Fools, and has the potential to generate significant additional footfall in the city on the 12th July 2012 and thus to have a potentially positive impact on local businesses. It does, however, require a significantly greater use of the City Hall grounds and lawns and for a longer period than in recent years. Although BCTC would be using the front lawns for this event the organisers are not seeking exclusive use of the grounds, and areas such as the Titanic garden will therefore remain open to the public

It is also clear from the BCTC request that, although approval is currently only being sought for 2012, it is their intention is to repeat the event in 2013.

Resource ImplicationsResources:

The organisers would be required to provide appropriate levels of stewarding for the duration of the event and there would therefore be no additional staffing or other costs to the council (except for a very modest amount in relation to electricity usage). The organizers will be required to provide appropriate indemnity insurance and comply with all the usual obligations.

Human Resources:

The organisers will provide all stewarding and staffing requirements themselves, and there will be no direct involvement from council staff.

Assets:

No access to the main building is required at any time. If damage to the lawns is caused it would be the responsibility of the organisers to make good such damage at their own expense.

Decision(s) required

The Committee is requested to consider whether or not it wishes to grant the approval sought for the use of the City Hall grounds for the event outlined above and, if so, whether it wishes to impose any specific conditions. Officers would recommend that Committee agreed to this request.

Key to Abbreviations

None.

Documents Attached

None.