



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Seymour House, 9 Gloucester Street, Belfast
<b>Date:</b>	18 May 2012
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects, Ext. 6217
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Cathy Reynolds, Estates Manager, Ext. 3493

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	Originally constructed as a warehouse, Seymour House was acquired by the Council in October 1988 and renovated to facilitate the Council's computer suite and provide office space. Managed by ISB, the premises in recent years have primarily been utilised for computer based training facilities, but have also provided office space for Audit, Governance & Risk Services (now located in Adelaide Exchange) and have until recently provided accommodation for the Reprographics Unit – recently relocated to ISB premises at 22-38 Gloucester Street.
1.2	The requirement for use of these premises for ISB training purposes has also now ceased with courses now facilitated within their premises at 22-38 Gloucester Street.
1.3	Consequently the premises are surplus to the operational requirements of ISB and, having been recently vacated, it is proposed to transfer Seymour House from the management of ISB to the Corporate Landbank to be managed by the Estate Management Unit pending further decisions to be taken by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	Seymour House is now surplus to the operational requirements of ISB as all previous operational uses by the Reprographics Unit and as ancillary Council office accommodation has ceased.

2.2	As the premises are now vacant and closed it is proposed to transfer the premises into the Corporate Landbank with interim management passing from ISB to the Estates Management Unit.
2.3	Future use options for these premises will be brought back to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration in due course. Effectively these options may be either to retain Seymour House for an as yet unidentified requirement, or dispose of the asset on the open market – either lease or outright sale.
2.4	The short-term options would be to effectively “mothball” the premises for future Council use eg decant office accommodation, as required, or the premises could be made available to let under a commercial lease arrangement providing an annual income to the Council. Alternatively Seymour House could be sold as a surplus asset - the adjoining land owner had previously expressed an interest in acquiring Seymour House as part of redevelopment plans for Centre House. In the medium-term, utilisation of these premises to accommodate additional staff resources resulting from RPA could be considered.
2.5	A report is however to be brought back to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in the very near future on proposals for a longer term Accommodation Strategy in respect of all the Council’s city centre office accommodation and this Strategy will also factor in the future use of Seymour House.

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>Reduction in annual running costs of a vacant building with potential income from an interim leasing option. Disposal of the premises could yield additional capital income.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>Staff Resource, primarily from the Estates Management Unit, to deal with the management of the property and to take forward proposals for future use options.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u></p> <p>The declaration of Seymour House as surplus to the requirements of ISB and its transfer into the Corporate Landbank will allow the Council to consider the most appropriate future use of the premises.</p>

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Implications</b>
	There are no equality implications to this proposal

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	The Committee is requested to note the content of this report and that Seymour House has been transferred into the Council's Corporate Landbank.

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
	The Director of Property & Projects to ensure that matters are dealt with in a timely manner.

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
	ISB – Information Services Belfast RPA – Review of Public Administration

<b>8</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 – Location Map