



Belfast City Council

Report to	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Request for the Use of the City Hall for an Event to Commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Signing of the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant
Date:	24th August, 2012
Reporting Officer:	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (Ext 6314)

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Council, at its meeting on 1st May, 2012, agreed for the use of the City Hall and the Covenant Table to be granted to the Ulster Centenary Committee on 29th September for a re-enactment of the signing of the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant. This was based upon the Group satisfying the Council that its event was in keeping with the principles which had been established by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in relation to applications for the use of the City Hall for events linked to the Decade of Centenaries commemorations.
1.2	Members will recall that the Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and the Historic Centenaries Working Group, at its meeting on 10th May, agreed that the principles which had been established previously by the Committee had been intended primarily to be applied to centenary events which were being organised directly by the Council and that it was somewhat inappropriate to apply those to requests for the use of the City Hall for such events from outside organisations. Accordingly, the Joint Group agreed that a different set of principles for such events should be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.
1.3	A report in that regard was considered by the Committee at its meeting on 18th May. The Committee was recommended to adopt a new statement on diversity and a new set of principles and also to adopt a procedure whereby any applications for the use of the City Hall for events associated with the Decade of Centenaries by outside organisations would, where time permitted, be first circulated for information to the Joint Group with the decision on the matter being taken by the Committee. The Committee agreed that the statement on diversity, the set of principles and the process to be applied to such applications be referred to the Joint Group.

1.4	The Joint Group considered the matter at its meeting on 15th June and it was agreed that the individual Parties on the Council would discuss the issues raised and come back with views to a future meeting of the Joint Group. Given the Summer recess, no further discussion on these issues has taken place.
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2	Key Issues
2.1	The Council has, on 17th August, received a letter (copy attached) from the 2012 Centenary Committee which points out that some of its members will not be able to attend the event on 29th September in the morning as they will be engaged in another event elsewhere. The Centenary Committee has requested that the Council permit them to repeat the taking of a photograph at the Covenant Table between 1.00pm and 1.30pm that day.
2.2	Such a request would normally be referred in the first instance to the Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum and the Historic Centenaries Working Group after officers have had time to have a full application form submitted by the organisation, but there would not be sufficient time for this to be done in this instance. In these circumstances, we are bringing the request to the Committee's attention to seek direction on how the Council wishes to respond to the request.

3	Resource Implications
	None.

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	None

5	Recommendations
5.1	The Committee is requested to consider the request from the 2012 Centenary Committee and to decide if it wishes to grant the use of the City Hall for the event.

6	Decision Tracking
<p data-bbox="236 1868 884 1906">Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager</p> <p data-bbox="236 1935 469 1973">September, 2012</p>	

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Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Letter from the 2012 Centenary Committee.