

**Minutes of the Joint Group of the Party Leaders' Forum
and Historic Centenaries Working Group
Friday, 6th September, 2013**

Present:	Councillors Hendron (Chairman), Attwood, McVeigh and Reynolds. Councillor Jones attended on behalf of Alderman Ekin.
In attendance:	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive; Hazel Francey, Good Relations Manager, Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager, John Walsh, Legal Services Manager, Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects (item 3), Suzanne Wylie (Director of Health and Environmental Services (item 8) and Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.
Agenda Item	1 Apologies
	Apologies were received from Aldermen Ekin, Rodgers and Smyth and Councillors Hanna and Maskey.
	2 Minutes
	The minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 st May were agreed.
	3 City Hall Memorabilia
3.1	The Members were reminded that, at the meeting of the Joint Diversity Group on 1 st March, they had received a presentation from Victoria Kingston on her proposals in relation to the next steps for displays in the City Hall. Ms Kingston had outlined the overarching approach as previously agreed, in line with the recommendations from the relevant EQIA report. A proposed action plan detailing Victoria Kingston's recommendations was also presented at that meeting.
3.2	There were four main principles in her proposals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Represent: to represent all the people of Belfast through the prism of Belfast City Hall and its history - Re-present: to ensure that all the interpretation presented to visitors within City Hall is balanced and inclusive - Reach Out: to attract new visitors to City Hall, and to re-engage and enthuse existing ones - Re-vitalise: to take the best of what is currently offered to visitors to City Hall and enhance the overall visitor experience.
3.3	Members had broadly welcomed the proposals and had agreed that further political discussions needed to take place to determine a prioritised action plan for implementation.
3.4	Party group briefings were held over April and May. As the proposals ranged from re-locating artefacts to major internal redesign and refurbishment, the Good Relations Manager had been accompanied at the party group briefings by an officer from the Property and Projects Department, since that Department had

	overall responsibility for the City Hall and its artefacts, for staff accommodation and for capital projects, all of which had to be considered.
3.5	Despite some general agreement on the broad thrust of the proposals, including the use of the East Wing as a public exhibition space, it was clear that there were very differing views on specific aspects within them.
3.6	In terms of additionality, Members had requested that consideration be given to the recognition of the Jewish community in the city, to the commemoration of the civil rights period, to the inclusion of new stained glass windows which were reflective of the nationalist community in the city and to be more representation of the role of women in the city. With regard to the potential relocation of artefacts to newly designed and dedicated exhibition space, some Members had expressed concern regarding the general aesthetics of the building commenting that that could make the City Hall a very sterile environment.
3.7	Members would also be aware that City Hall was very much a working building both from a political perspective and also from a staff perspective. There were a number of officers currently located in rooms which have been proposed for dedicated exhibition space in the East Wing and re-location costs would have to be considered.
3.8	<p>It was therefore proposed that, as part of the Capital Programme update report, to be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in September, the displays and memorabilia element be added to the Emerging Project list as part of the overall City Hall works project and that a composite Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for all elements be developed which would enable the project to move from Stage 1 to Stage 2. The development of the SOC would also take into account a number of other emerging issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased number of Members and likely meetings post reform of local government • Implications in relation to the City Hall's Grade 'A' Listed status and resultant statutory obligations • Fire authority regulations • Staff accommodation – re-location costs and options to fit in with leases clauses for Adelaide Exchange and Lanyon which were due for review in 2017 • The overall use of the City Hall ,that is, should it become more customer facing with a '<i>One Stop Shop</i>' approach to all services
3.9	It was envisaged that that would be reported to the Committee early in 2014 to enable it to take a decision regarding the allocation

	<p>of funding from the capital programme.</p> <p>That would coincide with the recommendations emerging from the OFMDFM all-party talks, chaired by Dr Richard Haass, who was considering issues related to symbolism and related matters.</p> <p>Prior to its presentation to the Committee, the Joint Diversity Group would be able to consider the SOC in the context of any recommendations from the all-party talks.</p>
3.10	<p>Accordingly, the Members were requested to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the displays and memorabilia element be added to the Emerging Project list as part of the overall City Hall works project and that a composite SOC for all elements be developed which would enable the project to move from Stage 1 to Stage 2. That would be reported as part of the Capital Programme update report.</p>
3.11	<p>During discussion, a Member pointed out that, in terms of additionality, he had requested that more recognition be given to Orangeism and that that had been omitted from the report.</p> <p>A further Member expressed concern in relation to the timetable and stated that he had understood that the detailed report in relation to costings and the narrative for displays was to be presented to this meeting.</p>
3.12	<p>In response, the Chief Executive explained the reasons why the final report had not been completed and assured the Members that a detailed report would be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in January.</p> <p>In the meantime, a high-level report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee, scheduled for 20th September, setting out the timetable for the completion of the SOC.</p>
3.6	<p>Following discussion, the Joint Group noted the comments of the Chief Executive, agreed to adopt the recommendation in relation to the addition of the displays and memorabilia element to the Emerging Project list and agreed also that a consultant be engaged to develop the narrative in relation to the new/additional memorabilia.</p>
Agenda item 4	Decade of Centenaries – Request for Loan of Exhibition
4.1	<p>The Group was reminded that the exhibition <i>Shared History: Different Allegiances</i>, which had been designed and commissioned to cover the period 1912-1914, had been funded by the Office of the First Minister/ Deputy First Minister of the NI Executive at a sum of approximately £47,000.</p>
4.2	<p>It had been open to the public in the East Entrance from August, 2012 till February, 2013 and then on loan to Ballymena Borough Council in the Braid Arts Centre from March till June, 2013.</p>

4.3	The British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA) had visited the exhibition in the City Hall last September and in the BIPA's own report on the Decade of Commemorations it had recommended that this exhibition be displayed in Dublin.
4.4	Dublin City Council had now expressed an interest in the exhibition and had requested its loan for four months later this year in two locations, initially in their own civic headquarters building and then in the Dublin City Library Headquarters in Pearse Street.
4.5	However, Dublin City Council was unable to meet the costs associated with transporting, re-mounting and the display of the exhibition.
4.6	Those costs were estimated to be in the region of £8,000 and the Irish Government's Department of Foreign Affairs had indicated that it would pay half of the cost through its Reconciliation Fund. Since the Council could claim back 75% of the remaining cost from the OFM/DFM through the District Council Good Relations Programme, the total cost to the ratepayer would be only £1,000.
4.9	The Group agreed to commend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it grant authority for the loan, subject to finance from the DFA being made available as outlined above, and subject to the satisfactory completion of an appropriate loan agreement being drawn up by the Legal Services Department.
Agenda item 5	Decade of Centenaries: Proposed Preliminary Programme – World War 1 – Request from Universities Ireland Historians Group
5.1	The Group considered a report in relation to the Decade of Centenaries Proposed Preliminary Programme for the second period 1914-18.
5.2	The Good Relations Manager reported that, since the original report was prepared for submission to Committee two years ago, it gave only a few details regarding a proposed programme for the second period 1914-18. The only firm decisions of the Council for this period were that two exhibitions should be commissioned for 2016, to mark the centenaries of the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme and that a Civic Dinner be held for each. It appeared that at this stage there were few definite plans within NI to mark this period.
5.3	The Joint Group might be aware that a NI World War I Committee had been set up, chaired by Jeffrey Donaldson MP, to examine ways in which the NI Executive and organisations could best commemorate that period; that Committee was just beginning its work.
5.4	The Good Relations Manager explained that a number of academics from the local universities and the Ulster Museum were planning a conference in October on this topic and district councils

	had been invited. She indicated that she would be in a better position to report back after that date.
5.5	In the interim, she had received a request from Dr Fearghal McGarry from the School of History at Queen's University that the Council host the annual conference of the Universities Ireland Historians Group on Saturday 14 th June, 2014.
5.6	Universities Ireland was a network of university presidents and vice-chancellors from Northern Ireland and Ireland which had been founded in 2003. It ran scholarship schemes, linked universities with their counterparts in Britain and Africa and undertook a number of initiatives to bring Northern Irish and Irish universities closer together.
5.7	The Universities Ireland Historians Group had been set up in 2011 and organised a multi-annual programme of activities to reflect on the 1912-22 period, aiming to bring a scholarly contribution to reflection on a decade of history-changing events.
5.8	The Historians Group held an annual conference to disseminate academic research on the period to the public. The audience was composed of the general public, including teachers and curriculum officials, politicians, third sector bodies involved in commemoration, and the media. It was usually sponsored by the Irish Times, and well-attended by prominent public and civic body officials.
5.9	The theme for the 2014 conference would be Ireland and the Great War, and they expected to have speakers addressing the impact in Ireland, including the war's impact on unionism and nationalism, as well as the wider British and global context.
5.10	Since the conference sat well within the Council's own set of principles for the <i>Decade of Centenaries</i> and complemented our own approach, in terms of perspectives and breadth of topics, the Good Relations Manager proposed that this could form a key part of the Council's own programme for this period and that the City Hall would be an appropriate venue for such a prestigious conference.
5.11	The Group agreed to include the Conference outlined in the Council's own programme and approve the use of the City Hall for this purpose, subject to the agreement of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
Agenda Item 6	"The Disappeared" Exhibition
6.1	The Members were reminded that on 1st July, 2013, in response to a Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Attwood, the Council had resolved the following: <i>"This Council notes that it is over 40 years since the first abduction of what would become known as "The disappeared" occurred; and acknowledges that, to date, eight families, five of whom are from the City of Belfast, have been denied the right to bury loved ones because of the actions primarily of</i>

	<p><i>republican paramilitaries who abducted, murdered and hid their victims' remains;</i></p> <p><i>This Council commends the dignified perseverance of the families and the work of the Independent Commission for the Location of Victims Remains (ICLVR) and pledges its support to those families in their ongoing quest to locate their loved ones' bodies, bring them home and give them a Christina burial; and calls on all those with information to co-operate fully with the ICLVR so that this harrowing chapter of our history can be closed.</i></p> <p><i>This Council requests the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee to consider the hosting of an exhibition on "The Disappeared" which would be accompanied by a book of condolence".</i></p>
6.2	The Good Relations Manager reminded the Members that the WAVE organisation had been co-ordinating work around the issue of The Disappeared.
6.3	WAVE did have an exhibition but that was in need of some updating. There had been several new cases that the organisers were not aware of when the original exhibition had been created and a number of individuals had been found in the interim.
6.4	WAVE also had a number of images from the areas where searches had been or were currently being conducted, showing the sheer scale of the searches and the barren nature of the land being searched. They hoped to transfer those images onto photographic boards to complement the main exhibition.
6.5	WAVE would be re-launching a book on The Disappeared in October and the BBC and RTE planned to have a simultaneous broadcast of a major joint documentary film on the subject in late October/early November 2013.
6.6	The best timing for maximum impact for the exhibition in the East Entrance would therefore be October/November 2013 and that had already been booked provisionally.
6.7	The cost of up-dating the exhibition was approximately £3000 plus £1000 for the additional photographic boards = a total of £4,000.
	It was likely that 75% of that could be reclaimed from the OFM/DFM under the District Council Good Relations Programme.
6.8	The Group agreed to commend the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to approve the holding of the exhibition as outlined.
Agenda Item 7	Language Policy - Update on Progress
7.1	The Good Relations Manager provided the Group with an update on the progress of the Language Policy.
7.2	The Group noted the information which had been provided.

Agenda Item 8	Issues at Council Properties
8.1	The Director of Health and Environmental Services provided the Members with an update in relation to issues regarding the flying of flags at a number of Council-owned properties and answered a number of questions thereon.
8.2	After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided.