



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	(i) Ulster Hall – Ulster Orchestra Licence Agreement (ii) Loop River Play Centre – Licence Agreement Renewal
Date:	25 October 2013
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects Department, Ext. 6217
Contact Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Estates Manager, Property and Projects Department, Ext. 3493

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>(i) Ulster Hall – Ulster Orchestra Licence Agreement</p> <p>At its meeting on 25 October 2006 the former Community and Recreation Committee approved the terms and conditions of a Partnership Agreement with the Ulster Orchestra which provided them with a Lease for accommodation within the refurbished Ulster Hall. The Lease was for a term of 25 years from 29 May 2009 at a rent of £36,500 per annum with the option for the Ulster Orchestra to terminate the agreement should their funding for operating the premises cease or be reduced. Subsequently on the 22 March 2013 the Ulster Orchestra received a notification from the Arts Council Northern Ireland that their funding was to be significantly reduced. The Ulster Orchestra then served notice on 25th June 2013 to terminate their Lease and sought to reduce their area of occupation and therefore their accommodation costs.</p>
1.2	<p>(ii) Loop River Play Centre – Licence Agreement Renewal</p> <p>The Council have occupied Courtney Hall, a building owned by the Trustees of the 26th Scout Group and situated on the Cregagh Road since 2007, as alternative accommodation for Loop River Play Centre. Community Services have confirmed a continued need for this facility for a programme of activities during the day. The current Licence was renewed in July 2011 for 18 months with the play centre having use of the building from Monday to Friday. This Licence has been continued on a month by month basis with the Council continuing to pay £190 per week as originally agreed in 2007. At its meeting on 17 September 2013 the Development Committee approved the renewal of this Licence for a further 24 months from 1 November 2013, subject to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approval in accordance with Standing Order 46.</p>

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>(i) Ulster Hall – Ulster Orchestra Licence Agreement</p> <p>A reduced area of office accommodation totalling approximately 1,468 sq ft has now been agreed with the Ulster Orchestra subject to a rent of £1,298 per month plus service charge. This is equivalent to the pro-rata rental rate payable under the terminated Lease. The Ulster Orchestra wish to hold this area under a licence agreement until they finalise a new business plan and partnership arrangement with the Council under which they may require a new lease. They have indicated that this is due for completion within the very near future. The proposed term of the licence agreement is 6 months from 25th July 2013 and month to month thereafter solely at the discretion of the Council.</p>
2.2	<p>(ii) Loop River Play Centre – Licence Agreement Renewal</p> <p>At the Council's request the Trustees have undertaken remedial works including removing an old ceiling and replacing lighting. These works have brought the centre up to the required health and safety standard as required by the Council's Facilities Management Unit. The Trustees in turn have asked for a longer licence agreement than the present month by month arrangement. A further 2 year agreement has been proposed by Community Services.</p>

3	Resource Implications
	<p>(i) Ulster Hall – Ulster Orchestra Licence Agreement</p>
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>The proposed licence agreement would operate with the Ulster Orchestra paying £1,298 per month and a pro-rata service charge. This represents an annual reduction in rent of approximately £20,923 and the Development Department will have to absorb this within their departmental budget but will endeavour to do this in a way that has the least impact on service delivery.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>Staff resource, primarily from Estates Unit and Legal Services will be required to complete the Licence Agreement.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u></p> <p>Ulster Hall can utilise the additional space not required by the Ulster Orchestra for operational purposes.</p>
3.4	<p>(ii) Loop River Play Centre – Licence Agreement Renewal</p>
	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>The proposed licence would operate with the Council continuing to pay a rental amount inclusive of heat and electricity of £190.00 per week which would be met from within existing budgets.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>Staff resource, primarily from Estates Unit and Legal Services will be required to complete the Licence Agreement renewal.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Screening
4.1	There are no Equality or Good Relations issues pertaining to these Agreements.

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>(i) Ulster Hall – Ulster Orchestra Licence Agreement</p> <p>It is recommended that Committee agree to a temporary licence agreement with the Ulster Orchestra for 6 months and month to month thereafter at the Council’s discretion subject to a fee of £1,298 per month plus service charge.</p>
5.2	<p>(ii) Loop River Play Centre – Licence Agreement Renewal</p> <p>It is recommended that Committee agree to a further licence from Trustees of the 26th Scout Group for 24 months at £190.00 per week.</p>

6	Decision Tracking
Subject to the Committee decision the Estates Manager to liaise with Legal Services to complete each agreement.	

7	Key to Abbreviations

8	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – Development Committee minute of 17 September 2013	