



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	City Hall 'Illuminate' Revised Governance Arrangements
Date:	22 August 2014
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects, Ext: 6217
Contact Officer:	George Wright, Head of Facilities Management, Ext: 5206

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	On 18 February 2013 a report to SP&R provided information on the 'Illuminate' project and outlined governance arrangements. The Committee agreed to review the management and control arrangements after 12 months in order to permit any changes to be made.
1.2	Since being installed the City Hall LED floodlighting has received numerous favourable comments and has proved an attraction for both local people and visitors from further afield.
1.3	For the majority of the time the City Hall is illuminated in a soft white light which is in keeping with the historic listed status of the building and which best highlights the many architectural features on the building's facades.
1.4	Members will be aware that the current governance arrangements limits access to the lighting facilities to (a) the 12 charities nominated by our civic office-bearers, (b) events organized or supported by the council and (c) 10 approved additional days. Any request not falling into these categories currently requires the approval of the Committee.
1.5	Over the last year there have been a number of requests from charity, sporting and other organisations to have the City Hall illuminated in specific colour/s to help promote their particular event. To date 21 additional dates have either taken place or have been approved to take place in the future.
1.6	In recent months the number of requests has increased substantially as more people see permission being granted to other organisations. Processing these requests involves significant officer time and costs are also incurred for the programming and testing of the lighting when permission has been granted.

1.7	Increasingly it is proving difficult for officers to turn down requests especially when similar requests have been looked on favourably in the past, and the time of the Committee is increasingly being taken up dealing with these requests. In order to try to enhance consistency in terms of the granting of permission for special illuminates and also to allow some additional flexibility in dealing with such requests, some changes are proposed to the current criteria.
1.8	<p>It is proposed that, in addition to the criteria outlined in 1.4 above, the following changes are introduced:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where a charitable, community or other non profit-making organisation based in or having a strong connection to Belfast is celebrating a significant anniversary (e.g. 50th, 75th or 100th etc) it may be permitted to have the City Hall illuminated in appropriate colours; • where a sporting team or organisation with a connection to Belfast has achieved a significant accolade (e.g. winning a notable national or international competition) permission may also be granted to have the City Hall illuminated in appropriate colours; • it is also proposed that any event, not itself organised by Belfast City Council, but which can legitimately be regarded as being of significant benefit to the city from a promotional or tourism perspective may also be permitted to have the City Hall illuminated in appropriate colours.
1.9	It is proposed that, in the first instance, requests falling into these categories should be dealt with by extending the authority currently delegated to the Director of Property & Projects. Where, however, the request is of large scale and/or could be regarded as potentially contentious, the matter would be laid before the Committee for approval in the usual way.
1.10	In order to avoid doubt and to give more clarity regarding requests for use of the facilities it is recommended that senior Officers are briefed and the revised criteria are published on our internal and external websites.

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>The key issues are, firstly, whether or not the Committee is minded to extend the range of groups to whom access to the ILLUMINATE facilities might be granted, and secondly whether or not to extend the degree of authority currently delegated to the Director of Property & Projects in relation to such requests.</p> <p>At present, delegated authority can only be used in circumstances where the proposed timescales make it impractical to seek the approval of the Committee.</p>

3	Resource Implications
3.1	There are no direct resource implications in respect of this report.

4	Equality and Good Relations Screening
4.1	An equality and good relations screening was carried out for the original governance arrangements and then revised for the 4 additional annual days. No further equality and good relations screenings have taken place.
4.2	Since the new lighting has been installed a record is being kept of requests received and those which have been granted permission.
4.3	The Equality and Diversity officers have advised that consistency of approach in terms of access to ILLUMINATE facilities will be essential where there is a potential widening of access. Where new categories of request are permitted, these must be assessed in the same way as previously in order to ensure equality of opportunity and the promotion of good relations, in line with our statutory obligations. This will be done on a case-by-case basis in liaison with the Good Relations Unit should the Committee be minded to extend the authority delegated to the Director of Property & Projects as proposed herein.

5	Call-in
	This decision is subject to call in.

6	Recommendations
6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) that the existing criteria as outlined in 1.4 are retained and are supplemented by the additional criteria outlined above; and b) that the authority currently delegated to the Director of Property & Projects be extended to cover the types of request outlined above.

7	Decision Tracking
	N/A

8	Key to Abbreviations
	LED – Light-emitting diode

8	Documents Attached
	None