



<b>Subject:</b>	City Hall Update - Exhibition Area; changes to layout & pricing
<b>Date:</b>	November 2016
<b>Reporting officer:</b>	Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	George Wright, Head of Facilities Management

<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Is this decision eligible for call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of report or summary of main issues</b>
1.1	To seek the Committee's approval to make a number of changes to the overall visitor experience and the pricing regime in respect of the new Exhibition & Memorabilia Area.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	It is recommended that the Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopts the proposals in respect of the operation of the new Exhibition Area as set out at below, and notes the other issues raised.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	Members will be aware that the preparatory building work in respect of the new Exhibition Area is progressing on schedule, and that the relevant areas will shortly be handed over to the principal contractor, Marcon Ltd, to begin the actual exhibition build and fit-out.
3.2	On foot of detailed planning workshops, a number of proposed changes to the layout and operation of the Exhibition are now set out below for the Committee's consideration:-
3.3	a) On foot of advice taken from specialist merchandising consultants it is proposed to build a new Tours & Exhibitions Reception area just inside the main entrance of the City Hall, rather than in the original location in the old PUP party room area. This will allow both for better management of visitors when they enter the building and also allow a much more effective merchandising offer in the designated area because it provides a much larger retail space and also faces the visitors as they complete the

exhibition route, while at the same time minimising so far as possible the potential for losses of the dedicated multi-lingual head-sets provided. These changes are illustrated in more detail in **Appendix 1**.

- b) Members will also be aware that entrance to the exhibition is free, although charges will be levied for head-set hire, souvenir booklet and app downloads etc.

3.4 However, it is proposed here that entrance charges be introduced solely for commercial tour groups (e.g. cruise-ship bookings etc), where each participant pays a significant premium to the relevant tour operators. This mirrors the approach recently adopted by the Committee in relation to the council's standard public tour offer and which has produced additional income of £12,067 in the 2016/17 financial year to date (1<sup>st</sup> 6 months). It is proposed to adopt the same approach to charging for the new Exhibition Area, and would involve a charge broadly in the order of £2 per person, but with discounts available in respect of the provision of multi-lingual head-sets when booked as a group, in order to encourage use and enhance income.

3.5 c) The overall logo and strap-line to be used for the Exhibition Area is to be changed from the previous 'City Hall for All' approach simply to 'Belfast City Hall' and using the same graphic as previously agreed. The new logo - which will be used on associated signage, promotional material and merchandising etc. – was tabled and approved at a recent party group leaders' forum and is set out for note by the Committee in Appendix 2. Also included for note at Appendix 2 is the artwork to be used for the refurbished Bobbin coffee-shop area (which is intended to be operational by early March 2017) together with the proposed layouts for the area (Appendices 3).

3.6 The new Reception facility will, if approved, be designed and delivered by the council's principal consultants in the project, Redhead Ltd. On foot of the building's listed status any such facility will be required to match the general ambience and décor of the existing area in order to be acceptable to the NIEA Heritage Service, and Redhead will ensure that this is so.

3.7 The area formerly set aside for the Reception area (i.e. the old PUP party room) will instead be brought into use as an educational resource room to allow us to enhance our outreach and offer to local schools, while the area opposite it in the entrance hall will be used as a separate waiting area for commercial groups.

3.8 It should also be brought to the Committee's attention that adopting this proposal could potentially have adverse impacts on the Lavery Room in terms of possible noise etc, and

	that it may be necessary to consider the use of the Conor Room for the Committee's meetings if the Exhibition proves to be very popular and regularly attracts a significant number of visitors during peak hours.
3.9	These changes are recommended to the Committee on the basis that they produce a more effective, cohesive and cost-effective solution to the management of the facility.
	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>
3.10	This work is within the existing budget.
	<u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u>
3.11	None.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
4.1	<p><b>Appendix 1</b> – Proposed revised Reception layout, Exhibition Area</p> <p><b>Appendix 2</b> – Proposed new Exhibition logo and Proposed new Bobbin logo</p> <p><b>Appendix 3</b> – Bobbin area – planned layout &amp; design and Bobbin area – new overflow room: planned design &amp; layout</p>