

# City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group

Wednesday, 22nd May, 2024

## THE CITY HALL/CITY HALL GROUNDS INSTALLATIONS WORKING GROUP MINUTES

### REMOTE MEETING VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Aldermen Lawlor and Rodgers;  
Councillors de Faoite and Flynn.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor/Director of  
Legal and Civic Services;  
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;  
Mr. M. McCann, Belfast City Innovation Programme Lead;  
Ms. C. Campbell, City Innovation Programme Officer;  
Ms. B. Murphy, City Innovation Broker,  
Ms. K. Mullen, Client Manager;  
Ms. A. Milliken, Functions and Exhibition Manager; and  
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services and Governance  
Coordinator.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillor Beattie (Chairperson).

(Alderman Lawlor in the chair).

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 8th and 14th February, 2024 were taken as read and signed as correct.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

### **Presentation - Immersive Rooms City Hall - Content Framework**

The Belfast City Innovation Programme Lead reminded the Working Group of the Smart Belfast Project - 'Belfast City Hall Immersive experience' in collaboration with BT(NI) to establish a world class emotionally engaging immersive experience in the City Hall exhibition to complement and enhance the existing exhibition. He highlighted that this would contribute to the wider aims of Belfast 2024, and the team had also collaborated with the Belfast Stories and Functions Team to determine what the experience might look like.

He advised that the Council was working with Jam Creative Studios to develop the experience, and the Project was also being submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in May for consideration, with the plan to develop the concept over the summer months to launch in early Autumn.

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Mr. A. Martin-Jones and Ms. L. Warwick to the meeting, representing Jam Creative Studios.

Ms. Warwick explained the development of the concepts and content behind the experience that would be sensitive to the themes of the existing exhibition.

She described how the immersive experience would focus on three rooms on the east side of City Hall (7, 8, and 9) which make up the 'City Speech' and 'City Streets' exhibitions themes. The new experience would use this existing content as a jumping-off point for an experience that allowed visitors to explore these rooms in novel ways.

She advised that each room would be equipped with iPads (while also offering the option for visitors to use their own mobile devices), guiding visitors through the rooms with immersive, augmented reality moments, which would include sound installations, virtual vignettes, designs in 3D, interactive games and Instagram-able wall art.

During discussion, the representatives explained further how the proximity based augmented reality in Room 7 would work and how the flow of visitors would be managed.

One Member suggested that the Working Group could be used for testing the new experience.

After discussion, the Working Group noted the information provided and welcomed the forthcoming immersive experience.

### **Inclusion of new artefact in the City Hall Visitor Exhibition**

The Working Group considered a report which sought approval for a new artefact in the City Hall Visitor Exhibition of a replica of Wayne McCullough WBC Bantamweight belt produced by the World Boxing Council to recognize his role as an ambassador for the sport.

The Members of the Working Group approved the inclusion of the new artefact in the City Hall Visitor Exhibition.

### **City Hall Statues Update**

The Working Group was reminded that the unveiling of statues of Winifred Carney and Mary Ann McCracken took place on Friday, 8th March (International Women's Day).

The Client Manager provided an overview of the special ceremony in the grounds of the City Hall, together with the panel discussion, and advised that the events had been extremely well attended by invited guests and by members of the public. She highlighted that it had been one of the most publicised events in terms of press coverage and media attention for the Council in recent years.

The Client Manager highlighted that officers were currently engaging with the Foundry in Dublin to have brass plaques containing QR codes placed on both statues.

The Director of Property and Projects explained that there was a maquette of each of the sculptures from the preliminary design stage and suggested that the Council contact the relevant organisations which had been involved in the process to explore if they wished to display the maquettes.

During discussion, Members of the Working Group thanked the officers for their hard work and successful events.

After discussion, the Working Group noted the feedback received on the commissioning, installation and unveiling of both Mary Ann McCracken and Winifred Carney and the associated programme of events. and agreed that the Council contact the relevant organisations to display the maquettes.

### **Stained Glass Windows City Hall**

The Working Group was reminded that Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 23 September 2022, had agreed to the creation of two new stained glass windows at City Hall, in recognition of the Health Service in Belfast and the acknowledgment of the positive role of the LGBT community in Belfast, be moved to Stage 2- Uncommitted on the capital programme.

Furthermore, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 19 January 2024 had agreed that a report on potential options and associated cost for the facilitation of a memorial wall which allows people to remember their loved ones, recognising the pain, and loss caused during the Covid-19 pandemic and the trauma of those bereaved and those still suffering with long covid.

The Director of Property and Projects advised that officers had met with HED in relation to the request for inclusion of two new stained glass windows in the City Hall. HED had considered the replacement of two existing windows in the City Hall with new stained glass windows and had agreed in principle, subject to Listed Building Consent being obtained. This must include a Design and Access statement indicating justification and storage of the original windows. In addition, HED had stated that windows on the first floor should be retained as is with original sash windows with the ground floor corridor locations preferred giving the precedence set by other stained glass window commissions.

She explained that officers had had early engagement with a number of Elected Members in relation to the LGBT window. It was suggested that both windows be taken forward as separate projects with separate procurement processes.

She highlighted that the Working Group was requested to give consideration to the suggestion that officers engage with Families Bereaved through Covid in light of the notion of motion for a pandemic wall and whether the subject matter could be incorporated into the design of the Health Service window.

She pointed out that the Health Service window would be located in the North West corridor. Officers were currently engaging with Corporate Fire Health and Safety Advisor in relation to the fire doors. She advised that changes in legislation had resulted

in fire certificate requirements being superseded by the requirement for a building owner to undertake a fire risk assessment. This could allow these doors to be located open (automated closure solution activated should a fire alarm be raised) to facilitate public access to window in this corridor with the no access barrier being located further along this corridor.

After discussion, the Working Group:

- Agreed that the design, manufacture and installation of the LGBTQ and Health Service window be taken forward as two separate projects;
- Agreed that the LGBT window be located in the reception area of the City Hall;
- Agreed the Health Service window be located in the North West corridor of the City Hall in one of the free spaces;
- Agreed that officers engaged with Bereaved Families to Covid Northern Ireland group to ascertain if they would be happy the request for a memorial wall be incorporated into the design of stained glass window for Health Service;
- Noted that it was proposed that the installation of two stained glass windows was Stage 2 - Uncommitted on the Capital Programme to allow procurement to commence with final approval on designs and costs being taken by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee based on recommendations from Installations: City Hall/City Grounds Working Group. This would be subject to planning and listed building consent being obtained and a satisfactory tender being returned. It was recommended that an indicative budget be set to allow for the process to commence in terms of design, fabrication and installation. In line with the three stage approval process Members noted that the final budget will only be agreed upon the receipt of a satisfactory tender;
- Noted that key stakeholder groups be consulted with in relation to the final design for both windows;
- Agreed that design, manufacture and installation should be undertaken separately for both windows, with two separate procurement processes; and
- Agreed that procurement be by way of a two stage open submission process.

### **Belfast Blitz Memorials - City Hall and Cathedral Gardens (Verbal Update)**

The Client Manager provided an update on the installation of a permanent memorial to all of the Fire Service efforts during the Belfast Blitz.

The Working Group was reminded that, at its meeting on 8th February, it had granted approval for officers to seek quotations for the Belfast Blitz Memorial City Hall in order to determine a pre-tender estimate figure with a view to moving the project to the next stage on the capital programme, namely, Stage 3 (Committed); and agreed to the inclusion of the Women's Voluntary Service cap alongside the Fire Service helmets.

In relation to the Fire Service helmets, the Client Manager advised that officers had been contacted by historians regarding the involvement of the Dublin Fire Service in the Belfast Blitz Memorial (City Hall). She advised that there was a potential opportunity to work in partnership on the delivery of the piece and requested that consideration be given to exploring their interest.

She informed the Working Group that the sculptor R. Sander had been commissioned for the permanent Belfast Blitz NI War Memorial in Cathedral Gardens and suggested that the Council approach Dublin City Council for a contribution towards the overarching Belfast Blitz Memorial.

The Working Group:

- Granted approval for officers to engage with the two organisation Fire Brigade Unions Belfast and Dublin; and
- Agreed that the Council approach Dublin City Council in relation to a contribution towards the Belfast Blitz (NI War Memorial) in Cathedral Gardens.

Chairperson