



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	London 2012 Cultural Olympiad - Live Sites Screen
Date:	10 December 2008
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Relevant Background Information

In May and August 2008 Belfast City Council received details of plans for the Cultural Olympiad to be staged leading up to and during the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic games. As part of the original ethos, Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Movement, mirrored the classical Greeks in maintaining that the purpose of the Olympic Games was to celebrate mind, body and spirit.

From this a Cultural Olympiad was established to include all cultural events of the Olympic Movement. This Olympiad is a period when artists from around the world showcase their work in the lead up to the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Up until 1948 medals were awarded for sculpture, music, literature and art. The modern Cultural Olympiad will focus on the following themes:

- Bringing together culture and sport
- Encouraging audiences to take part
- Animating public spaces – through street theatre, public art, circus skills, live big screen sites
- Using culture and sport to raise issues of environmental sustainability, health and wellbeing
- Honouring and sharing the values of the Olympic and Paralympic Games
- Encouraging collaborations and innovation between communities and cultural sectors
- Enhancing the learning, skills and personal development of young people by linking with education programmes

The key to this process has been the development of a series of 'live sites' which involve large LED screens being installed within public performance space across the United Kingdom. Belfast City Council has now received formal details on the costs for such a project.

Key Issues

London 2012 Cultural Olympiad - 'Live Sites' Public Screen

In August the Council received details on the 'Live Sites' public screens from LOCOG 2012. The proposal would see a permanent 25sq m screen, valued by the BBC and LOCOG 2012 at £500,000, positioned in the heart of the city centre. The initial proposal was for the screen to be located in Donegall Place, but this has been rejected by LOCOG on the basis that the screen would not be in position until after 2012 Olympics have been staged. Therefore LOCOG, along with DSD, are proposing that the screen be located within the grounds of City Hall – facing into the lawn on Donegall Square East. The concept would mean that the BBC, LOCOG 2012 and BCC would share broadcasting time on the screen which would operate approximately twelve hours a day, 365 days a year. The screen could also be utilised for major events including a number of London 2012 events and enhance current Belfast City Council events staged at City Hall. In this regard the event would enhance events such as the Proms and Continental Market and would have no negative operational implication for such events.

The key indicative costs of the proposal that BCC are asked to address are as follows.

- Planning permission and process as one off payment estimated at £6,000
- Operating costs (annually) including electricity and maintenance estimated at £20,000
- BCC Project co-ordinator (annually) estimated at £20,000
- Annual programming costs for the next four years of £30,000

In total BCC would have an estimated one-off cost of £6,000 and £70,000 costs per year for the next four years. Should the Council agree to support this initiative BCC officers have agreement in principle from DSD, as part of their 'Streets Ahead' programme, to meet the installation costs of approximately £65,000 including the cost of a control room in the basement of City Hall. For the four year period leading up to the 2012 Olympics the screen would be the property of LOCOG with a guaranteed link to the BBC's national public screens programme for BCC. After this period the screen would become the property of BCC with a similar link to the BBC's public broadcast network.

The installation of the screen would not only be subject to Council approval, but also requires an economic appraisal by DSD, planning approval and full legal agreement with all the relevant bodies.

Belfast City Council Operational Issues

The Events Unit of the Council has liaised with potential key partners both within and external to the Council who are happy with the concept of the screen including BCC's Corporate Communications Unit. However in order to ensure a return for the investment in this project, by positively promoting the council, it will be necessary to create a post to manage the content and it is recommended that it should be part of the Corporate Communications team. The funding for this post is included in the proposal.

Resource Implications

Financial

The Council funding would involve an estimated one-off cost of £6,000 and £70,000 costs per year for the next four years. Members should note that this money is not currently in the Department's budget.

Recommendations

Members are requested to approve the required funding as outlined:

- Approval from Strategic Policy and Resources Committee re the utilisation of the City Hall grounds
- Funding from DSD, which is subject to a full economic appraisal
- Legal agreements between all stakeholders
- Planning consent from NI Planning Service and agreement from NI Environment Agency

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – CGI image of screen in the grounds of City Hall.

Abbreviations

BCC – Belfast City Council

DCAL – Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

LOCOG 2012 – London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games 2012

DSD – Department of Social Development

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