



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Tender for Provision of Café and Bar Services at the Ulster Hall
Date:	10 December 2008
Reporting Officer:	Marie-Thérèse McGivern Director of Development ext. 3470
Contact Officer:	Tim Husbands Managing Director Waterfront and Ulster Halls ext 1400

Relevant Background Information

Phase two of the refurbishment of the grade B1 listed Ulster Hall began in June 2007 and includes extensive work to the main auditorium. A £7.5million capital project will restore this venue to its former glory supported by the aim of providing as wide a public access to the heritage of the Hall as possible, whilst redeveloping the accommodation at the rear of the building, to include provision for the Ulster Orchestra.

The Ulster Hall is scheduled for re-opening in March 2009. A major aim of this work is to increase further the range of use of the building as a whole and improve access for the general public to its important diverse cultural and political heritage. To this end it has been agreed that a café provision should be made available in the main foyer Monday to Saturday operating in line with box office opening hours.

In order to improve the range of customer service provision connected to concerts, a bar service will be available from the Group space on each event.

Key Issues

The tender process for the provision of café and bar services at the Ulster Hall closed on December 5th, and is based on the recommendation approved by Development Department Committee September 2008.

This recommendation was made subject to clarification being provided to the Committee in relation to the proposal to restrict the Ulster Hall catering outlet to provide only one brand of coffee. Members are advised that this restriction has been removed

from the tender documentation.

The tender is for one single catering provider who would operate both Café and Bar provision for the Ulster Hall. This franchisee will be the licensee for the venue, operating under a conference centre license.

The tendering procedure seeks to ensure that the following core values and operational goals are prioritised.

- A commitment to the ethos of the Ulster Hall, and to creating and maintaining a niche cafe space within it.
- A commitment to high levels of customer service in all areas of catering and beverage provision.
- A level of flexibility and innovation in service provision compatible with the requirements of high profile, city centre, mixed use venue.

To contribute to creating a high level throughput of people and events to the venue.

The tender will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- Income to be provided to the Council
- Quality of service delivery, including innovation demonstrated in the approach to it
- Technical capacity and capability
- Experience and ability to work in partnership
- Quality standards, including Health and Safety
- Evidence of environmental management and a commitment to offering ethically sourced and sustainable products, in line with Council Fair Trade policies

Catering functions taking place within the Main Hall are not part of the core catering franchise, in order to maximise the potential of the space as a gala dinner venue, and will be serviced through a selection process in the same manner as the City Hall.

Resource Implications

Financial

The Ulster Hall seeks a financial return on this contract. Tender conditions stipulate interested parties must make a minimum offer of £10,000 per annum reduced by 25% in year one to alleviate the costs of fit out of the spaces at the contractors expense. It is anticipated that interested parties may increase this offer at a flat rate or include the offer of a percentage of profits.

The contractor will be liable for payment of rates relative to the area under their sole occupation.

The contractor is also liable for costs incurred in the attainment of a liquor licence with the exception of a fee of £600 to be paid by Council for the agreement of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board to verify conference centre license eligibility.

Human Resources
None

Recommendations

It is requested that authority be delegated to the Director of Development to accept the successful tender.

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