



<b>Subject:</b>	Review of Illuminate Policy
<b>Date:</b>	24 January 2025
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Aisling Milliken, Functions and Exhibition Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>									
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p><b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b></p> <p>Insert number <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li> <li>6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction</li> <li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>									
<p><b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b></p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To consider the proposed updated criteria for illumination requests

2.0	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consider the recommendations made in regard to application and approval process.</li> <li>• consider the recommendations made in regard to updated criteria.</li> <li>• consider annual dates/ celebrations to be added to the illuminate calendar.</li> </ul>
3.0	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Background information</u></p> <p>Members will be aware the ILLUMINATE LED lighting system installed in 2013 on the north, east and west facades of the City Hall has been very successful allowing the council to mark significant dates, occasions or achievements using bespoke lighting scenes.</p>
3.2	<p>In September 2016 Members recognized the growing demand for illuminations and operational constraints and committee agreed to enhance the criteria and governance arrangements. A copy of the current criteria is in Appendix One.</p>
3.3	<p>In recent years, there has been an increase in illuminate requests and members have sought an updated report on Illuminate governance arrangements and recommendations for their consideration.</p>
3.4	<p><b>Additional illuminations approved</b> – Committee approved 14 dates for inclusion in the annual illumination calendar (a copy is in Appendix Two). By way of illustration, 50 additional illuminations were approved in 2024; 69 in 2023; 56 in 2022.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p><b>Increasing Demand</b> - There is an inexhaustible supply of deserving organizations and causes who seek to mark their own particular function, group or cause.</p>
3.6	<p><b>Operational and Resourcing Issues</b> – The life expectancy of the luminaires system was 2023 so in due course the hardware will need to be replaced and upgraded if members seek to continue this service and feature of City Hall. Maintenance of the system to keep it operational is approximately £10,000 per year.</p>
3.7	<p>In addition, the increasing number of requests now being approved is also causing operational problems, both in terms of the overtime costs associated with creating the bespoke scenes and also because the hardware in use cannot now accept any further stored scenes as it is at full capacity. All new scenes must be manually created and switched on/off etc; each additional scene above the 14 annual dates, must be programmed by a trained member of staff at an estimated at £10,000 per annum.</p>

3.8	<p><b>Public Confusion</b> – Due to increasing number of illuminations being approved and programmed, it is often the case that the general public do not understand why the City Hall is lit in a particular bespoke colour scheme on a given day, as the colours themselves are often only of significance to the adherents of the particular group requesting them. Council’s Marketing and Comms team do list all illuminates on website and promote on socials where possible and appropriate, however 64 illuminations programmed and promoted in 2023 dilutes the impact and uniqueness of each illuminate.</p>
3.9	<p><b>Fairness</b> – Officers are concerned that the increased number of approvals outside the criteria will lead to difficulties for the Council, from both an officer and Member perspective, where requests are refused. In addition, illumination requests are being presented for review by differing mediums and channels which limits the ability to review all requests against criteria in transparent and consistent procedure.</p>
	<p><u>Recommendations</u></p>
3.10	<p>To address the points noted previously and to enhance the governance and management arrangements of this popular service, the Committee is asked to consider the recommendations noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The introduction of an application form</b></li> <li>• <b>Enhancements to the current criteria</b></li> <li>• <b>Additional dates to be added to the Illuminate Calendar</b></li> </ul>
3.11	<p><b><u>AN APPLICATION FORM</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A dedicated application form must be completed for all illumination requests. Information of the illumination process – form, timeframes and criteria will be promoted on the Council’s website, with contact info to engage with the City Hall Functions Team; consistent with other processes such as function hire.</li> <li>• The criteria for the illumination programme will be promoted online.</li> <li>• The form must be submitted by the requestor 4 weeks before the preferred illumination date to allow time for review, processing and programming if approved.</li> <li>• The new form will enable more time control measures for requests to facilitate a review of the application against the criteria by officers – approval and programming if request meets the criteria.</li> <li>• The application form process will reduce the multi channels for requests and negate the need to bring Notices of Motion to deal with illumination requests.</li> </ul>

**ENHANCEMENTS TO THE CURRENT CRITERIA**

- **Annual Dates**

Committee have previously approved 14 annual days for City Hall illumination as listed in Appendix 2. The following causes and dates have been requested and approved for the past number of years and Members are asked to consider if they wish to consistently support these and include in the Illuminate calendar.

- Holocaust Memorial Day – 27 January
- Ramadan – *date tbc each year*
- National Day of Reflection (Covid) – 3 March
- World Fair Trade Day - May – date tbc
- Easter Sunday - *date tbc each year*
- Darkness into Light – May – date tbc
- International Day of Peace – 21 September
- Babyloss Awareness – 15 October
- Diwali Festival of Light – *date tbc each year*
- Recycle Week – *date tbc each year*
- World Mental Health Day- *October – date tbc*
- Organ Donation Week – September – date tbc
- Black History Month *October – date tbc*

- **Organisations only** - Applications only considered from a registered charity, public-sector, community or other non-profit making organisation. Illuminations applications from individuals and commercial organisations will not be approved.
- **Anniversary opposed to Annual Day** - Illumination applications will not be approved to mark an event/occasion that occurs repeatedly, for example an annual Day or Week, unless it is a significant anniversary of that event/occasion eg 10<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup>, 75<sup>th</sup> or 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- **Medical Causes** – applications only considered from registered medical charities and organisations to mark a significant anniversary rather than annual day.
- **Festive Programme** – due to the intricate programming required of the Building and LED system during the Festive Lighting programme, additional applications will not be approved during this festive period annually mid-November to 6 January.
- **1 in 3 year** - additional Illumination requests approved, delivered and promoted by council will be subject to “1 in 3 year approval” relating to any subsequent applications received by the same cause. This will enable a larger number of other charities,

causes and organisations to have increased opportunity for their illumination application to be approved in calendar year.

3.13

**REVISED CRITERIA FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

Illumination will take place as follows:

- on the 14 agreed annual days, plus additional days noted in this report if approved.
- any council-run events
- one illuminate for each charity nominated by the council's three civic dignitaries in their term of office.
- where a charitable, community or other non-profit-making organisation based in or having a strong connection to Belfast is celebrating a significant anniversary.
- where a sporting team or organisation with a connection to Belfast has achieved a significant accolade or anniversary
- where an event not 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 is taking place;
- no applications in respect of medical or other support groups will be accepted.
- no applications can be approved or facilitated during the festive lighting programme at City Hall annually a date mid-November until 7 January.
- where a request is made by an individual civic dignitary or elected member or officer to mark a specific event or occurrence (*e.g. natural disaster, terrorist atrocity, one-off sporting achievement, birth/death of notable person etc*). These requests should be made to the Director of Legal and Civic Services, who will review if the request meets the criteria and can be facilitated and then will liaise with party group leaders to see if a consensus to proceed exists. If so, the request will be facilitated; if not the request will either be rejected or, exceptionally, may be presented to the full Committee for a decision if time permits.
- Where a request is facilitated either under delegated authority or by decision of the Committee this can be done on a '**once-in-three-years**' basis to prevent annual requests for the same dates being made repeatedly. (This rule will not apply to those charities which have been illuminated by virtue of being a civic dignitaries nominated charity).

3.14

**Financial & Resource Implications**

Committee should be minded that as each additional scene must be programmed by a trained member of staff, there will be additional staffing costs for each additional illumination approved beyond the Illumination calendar as set out in the report.

3.15	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></b></p> <p>Equality or good relations implications may arise where significant numbers of requests are being facilitated outside of the agreed criteria, as is happening at present. The recommendations detailed above if approved would aim to address these concerns.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 - Current Criteria for illumination approved by Committee in September 2016</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Current Annual Illuminate Dates</p>