



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Christmas Lights Switch-on 2009
Date:	16th September, 2009
Reporting Officer:	Neil Malcolm, Committee Administrator (Extension 6309)
Contact Officer:	Neil Malcolm, Committee Administrator (Extension 6309)

At its meeting on 12th August, the Committee considered a report regarding arrangements for this year's Christmas Lights Switch-on and agreed that for this year only:

- (i) the Christmas Lights Switch-on event be held on Tuesday, 24th November;
- (ii) the "guest area" be located on the Robinson and Cleaver side of Donegall Square North;
- (iii) only the Lord Mayor be on stage to assist with the actual switch-on; and
- (iv) the usual post-event function be replaced by a smaller event for guests prior to the switch-on

I enclose an extract of the minute in this regard.

However at the Council meeting on 1st September, the Chairman of the Committee (Councillor Humphrey) agreed at the request of Councillor Smyth that parts (ii) and (iv) of the decision be taken back to the Committee for further consideration.

The decisions regarding the date of the Christmas Lights Switch-on and Lord Mayor being the only person on the stage to assist with the actual Switch-on were adopted by the Council.

The Committee will therefore have to consider further the location of the "guest area" and whether the usual post-event function be replaced by a smaller event for guests prior to the Switch-on having heard the view of Councillor Smyth.

Extract from minutes of –

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

12th AUGUST, 2009

“Christmas Lights Switch-on 2009

The Head of Civic Events and Venues reminded the Members that the Christmas Lights Switch-on event was attended each year by thousands of people and involved a range of high profile national and local celebrities and, in recent years, the event had been staged at 7.30 p.m. on the third Tuesday in November. However, due to the work which was being undertaken to the pavements and roads in the City centre under the Streets Ahead Programme and the fact that such work in the area of the City Hall was due to be completed not later than 22nd November, he recommended that the Switch-on event be held this year on the fourth Tuesday in November.

He pointed out that, for many years, Councillors, staff and guests had been able to access the event via a ‘guest area’ located adjacent to the stage. However, because health and safety concerns had been raised about the staging projecting into a traffic lane in Donegall Square North, it had become necessary to move the ‘guest area’ to the Robinson and Cleaver side of Donegall Square North. Due to this relocation, he recommended also that only the Lord Mayor go onto the stage to assist with the actual switching-on of the lights. In addition, the Head of City Events and Venues proposed, give the current economic situation and budgetary constraints within the Council, that the normal post-event function in the City Hall be not held this year but be replaced with a smaller function for guests prior to the switch-on.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that for this year only:

- (i) the Christmas Lights Switch-on event be held on Tuesday, 24th November;
- (ii) the ‘guest area’ be located on the Robinson and Cleaver side of Donegall Square North;
- (iii) only the Lord Mayor be on stage to assist with the actual switch-on; and
- (iv) the usual post-event function be replaced by a smaller event for guests prior to the switch-on.”