



Belfast City Council

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Report to: | Development Committee |
| Subject: | Christmas Lights Switch-on 2010 |
| Date: | 9 June 2010 |
| Reporting Officer: | Tim Husbands, Head of City Events and Venues, ext 1400 |
| Contact Officer: | Gerry Copeland, City Events Manager, ext 3412 |

Relevant Background Information

Over that last twenty five years Belfast City Council has developed the annual Christmas Lights Switch-on event. Originally the event involved a number of school choirs and took place in the middle of November, with a small crowd in attendance. The event is now attended by thousands (last year the audience was estimated at 8,000) and involves a range of high profile national and local celebrities.

Correspondence has been received (as per appendix 1) from Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM), supported by the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce, requesting that Council give consideration to moving the day of the event from a Tuesday evening to a Saturday evening (in 2010 which would be 27 November).

Key Issues

Timing

Members have been presented with details in regard to the timing of the Christmas Lights Switch-on event over the last three years with the 2009 event being staged on Tuesday night at 7.30pm. BCCM have now requested that the event move to a Saturday evening at approximately 6.30pm to 7.30pm.

Date

Due to the structural re-landscaping of the pavements and roadways as part of the 'Streets Ahead' programme, undertaken by the Department of Social Development, the earliest Saturday evening available would be the 27 November. This is because the moratorium on physical building work will not start until the 23 November 2010 and any attempt to stage an event, in the area in front of City Hall, prior to this date, would in essence have to take place on a 'building site'.

Site Layout

The site layout will be the same as 2009, with the Council's guest area adjacent to the stage, which would be facing down Donegall Place.

Resource Implications

Financial

In February 2010 Members agreed to the overall annual events BCC programme and its accompanying budgets. The Christmas programme budget of £155,000 covers the Switch-on event, a major Christmas schools carol concert at the Waterfront and the maintenance and installation of festive lighting on and around City Hall.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to consider the request to the change in day of the Christmas Lights Switch-on event to a Saturday.

Decision Tracking

To provide feedback via the City Events Unit's KPIs

Timeframe: March 2011

Reporting Officer: Tim Husbands

Key Abbreviations

BCCM – Belfast City Centre Management

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Email from BCCM